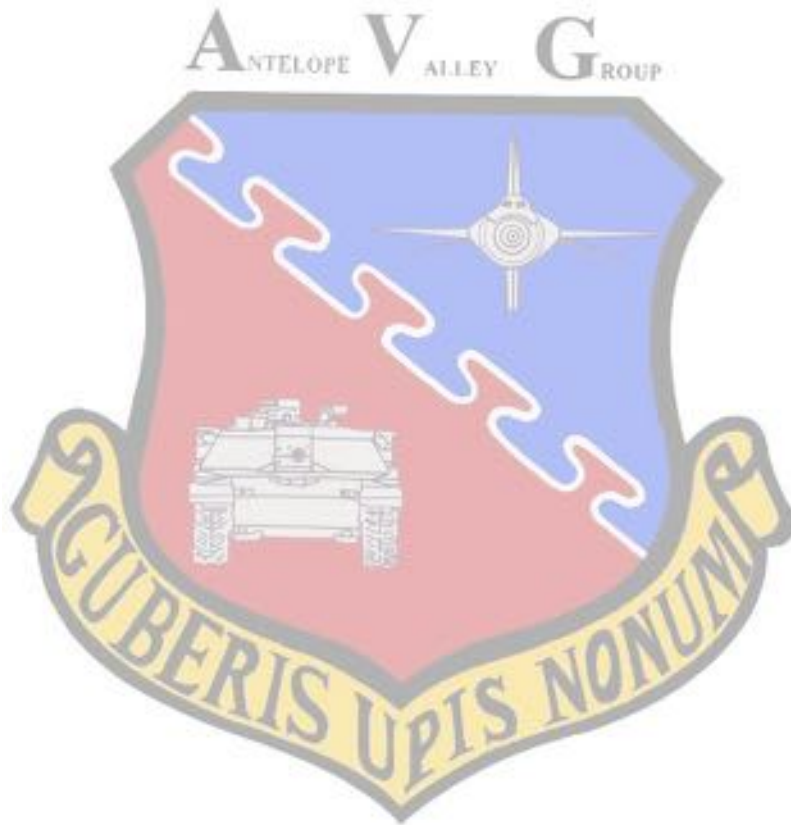


The Smoking Hole

A Publication of the Antelope Valley Group IPMS

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Club News and Business

AUGUST MEETING IS CANCELLED

July Meeting General Meeting Notes:

At the risk of sounding like a broken record (remember what those were?), the July meeting was canceled , due to the closure of the Kern County Library system

Latest Club Status.

The COVID stats are not trending in the right direction in Kern County. In fact, Kern recently had one of the highest positive test ratios in the country and the Central Valley was cited by the CDC as a potential hot spot. I'm pessimistic that the Kern Library system will open at all for in-person services this year. We're still considering other possible other meeting sites should the conditions improve,, but I suspect we will remain "virtual" for some time.

West Coast Contests Cancelled, Postponed or Rescheduled

Not a whole lot of news here

I checked Mick's site to see what's going on with Silicon Valley contest. He's updated his site (the announcement of our cancellation is there) and apparently IPMS Silicon Valley is still planning to hold the Silicon Valley Classic in September. Currently this is the only remaining contest on the entire West coast for 2020. They are also planning a model expo to coincide with Open Cockpit day on the USS Hornet on October 24. Will be interesting to see how this all plays out.

2020 Meeting Schedule

Primary	Activities	Refreshments	Demo	Review
18 Jan	Member Dues Collected	Steve/Mike -Main Jim- Drinks Jay - Chips		
15 Feb		Bill, Mike O.		
21 Mar		CANCELED		
18 Apr		CANCELED		
16 May		CANCELED		
20 June		CANCELED		
18 July		CANCELED		
15 Aug		CANCELED		
19 Sept (TBD)	In-House Contest "Jurassic Plastic" (POSTPONED)	Luis, Stephen		
17 Oct (TBD)		Steve		
31 Oct	2020 Desert Classic (CANCELED)			
21 Nov (TBD)	2021 Club Officer Nominations	Dwight		
19 Dec (TBD)	Gift Exchange, In-House Contest "Your Personal or Professional Experience" (POSTPONED)	Everyone!		

The Tool Crib

Nothing to see here. Move on

Club Demos

Little bit hard to do demos during “social distancing”, though suppose you could do a YouTube demo or Zoom session.

Anyway, hope to see some demos when we all get back together.

Kit Review

Tamiya 1/48th Lockheed P-38H Lightning (special release)



A surprise new release from Tamiya is the H variant of their P-38 Lightning. This is a ‘white box’ special release and there will be only one mold run.

Many references have stated the P-38H was identical to the late P-38G, but this is not correct, as there were a number of small, but noticeable changes, all of which Tamiya has captured.

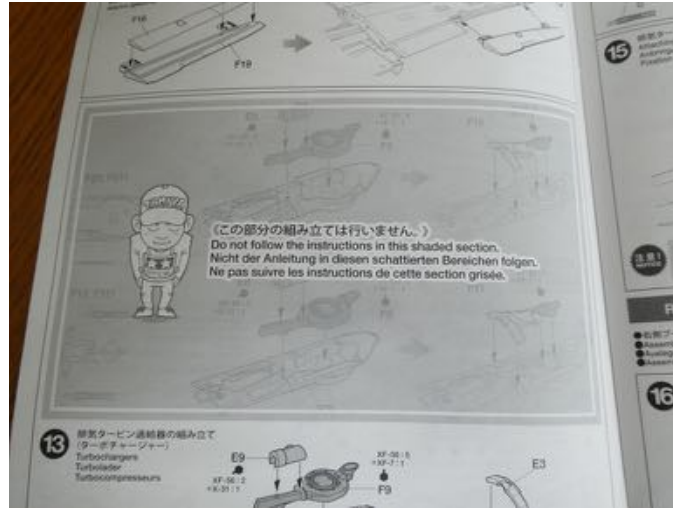
The entire P-38F/G kit (with one small exception) is included. The H-model changes are captured by 2 new sprues.



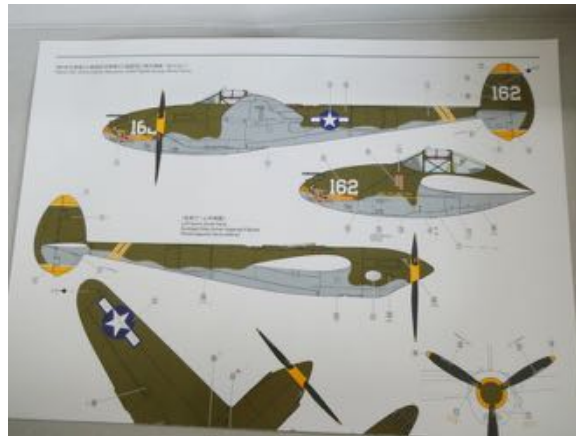
A small gray plastic sprue contains most of the differences, including the strengthened landing gear, new instrument panel, nose landing gear door with re-shaped nose wheel depression, different guns, turbocharger bearing cooling inlets and P-38J-style carburetor inlets. The inlets are 2 piece, so for my build I will likely replace them with Quickboost resin intakes to I don't have to deal with the seam.



The other change is to the clear sprue. The P-38H-5 and later had a new rear canopy without the internal reinforcements, and Tamiya had provided. Unfortunately, they have removed the earlier piece with the reinforcements. This is somewhat odd as all the rest of the earlier canopy parts are there, including the side-opening canopy top for the P-38F. So even though all the rest of the earlier kit parts are there, you cannot build a P-38F/G, nor can you build a P-38H-1, which still had the reinforcements.



Tamiya took an interesting approach with the instructions. The original F/G steps are still there, but they are grayed out. New steps for the H have been added. I'm speculating they did this so you can identify the F/G parts (which are still in the kit) so as not to use them by mistake.



Marking for only a single subject are included, for the rather well-known "23 Skidoo". They are on a small supplemental sheet in addition to the F/G sheet, which is included. There are other markings available from the aftermarket. Jennings Heilig has a number of H options on his new Fundekals P-38 supersheet. I have other plans. Eduard did extensive markings research for their "Early Lightnings" kit and discovered the famous 459th Fighter Squadron "Twin Tail Dragons" had a single P-38H painted in their spectacular dragon livery, and included those markings in their kit. I have those decals and plan to use them on this model



The rest of the kit is typical Tamiya, with canopy masks (that you still have to cut out yourself) and the 3 ball bearing nose weights included.

There is also a small modeling techniques brochure in the box and a rather interesting little postcard for these COVID times, signed by Mr. Tamiya



Retail is the same as for the F/G kit (about \$80), but they can be had for less. If you want one, however, you need to act fast. There will only be one run, of this kit and I note many shops are sold out. I got mine from Tower Hobbies, which still had stock. I'm a long-time Tower customer, so they are always sending \$15 coupons, which they honored. This took care of the tax and shipping, so I actually got it a little cheaper than the basic Sprue Brothers price.

Highly recommended for P-38 fans.

Member Show and Tell, 6th COVID Edition

Not too many e-mail posts from members this month, but what I've seen is great.

First, John S. has a really neat little build.



Here's what John has to say about the model:

This one was built for inclusion in a display put on by the Northwest Scale Modelers at the museum of Flight in Seattle. The theme is "Women in Aviation" This is a model of a Nicholas-Beazley NB-3 Flown by Ruth Alexander to a record 26,600 feet over San Diego on July 11, 1930. (On a normally aspirated engine no less!) I modified the fuselage from the Smer kit of an Avia BH-11, used the kit engine and wheels and scratch-built the rest. If you look closely, you'll see that the wings are corrugated..All I had for references were a handful of grainy photos found on the internet.

John also posted a pic of his Ryan L-1. Don't have any info on this one (maybe I missed it)



Our Jurassic Kit Game Warden Rich R. has been building his usual esoteric stuff. He sent me 4 build write up. I'm including 2 here and will save the rest for next time:

Builder: Rich Ribaudo

Kit: Glencoe (Strombecker) 1/72 (1/66) "scale" RM-1 Retriever Rocket

Finish: MRP and Model master enamels. Kit decals.

Aftermarket: None. Decals from the spares box.

HISTORY:

This model depicts a "moon rocket ship" from Walt Disney's 1955 animated film "*Man and the Moon*". The design was a serious concept that appeared on the cover of LIFE magazine, in books about future space travel, and on the postage stamps of other nations. Its purpose was to perform a reconnaissance of the Moon from lunar orbit, looking for sites that could be used by the first fleet of landers (of a variety of designs and sizes). Apollo 8 would carry out this reconnaissance for real in 1968. Another duty was to be ferrying crews and supplies between space stations and the moon.

Dr. Werner von Braun did a great job of getting his designs and plans for space flight in front of the American public. His mission plans, spacecraft designs and authoritative treatises about the future state of manned spaceflight often and regularly appeared in magazines such as Colliers, Life, Popular Science and in several Disney films.

THE BUILD:

First released by Strombecker around 1955 this kit shows its age in many ways. Glencoe re-released the kit in 1993 and again in 2016, but the plastic inside the box remains unchanged from 65 years ago. Thick parts, thick sprue attachment points, flash and mismatched alignment holes abound in this kit. But hey; I knew the job was dangerous when I took it and I looked forward to the challenge. Besides, it's just a really neat looking model of a rocket ship!

No surprises were discovered when trying to mate vintage plastic of this era. Back then if the parts got close to fitting you were in good shape. I invested the expected amount of labor into making parts fit, making round things... well... ROUND, filling seams and working out step gaps. The clear parts were ridiculously thick by today's standards but with a complete absence of an interior it really didn't matter. I simply installed the cockpit transparency, filled and polished the edge gaps and painted the windows black. The round fuselage windows were made with Micro Clear and Testors Window Maker. In the end it looked just fine. The struts that connect the tanks to the main fuselage were the biggest area of concern. None of the attachment holes were close to being in the right spot. Each hole was filled and the completed tank assembly with the struts attached was offered up to the fuselage so the locations for the holes could be marked and drilled. Once past that problem the rest of the kit went together without any big issues.

The kit comes with an astronaut in a "Bottle Suit" which docks beneath the spacecraft via a friction fit. I wanted to depict a busy scene with a few crew transfers going on, so I cast some copies of the bottle suit body and the astronauts in resin using kit parts as a master. The top of the suit was made by vacuum forming a copy of the kit part using clear plastic and painting the top, leaving the dome unpainted. Clear acrylic rods suspend the bottle suits above a weighted resin base at different lengths. I didn't want to drill into the base, so the weighted stands offered a good alternative for placement around the ship.

PAINT AND FINISHING:

All those gap and step height issues demanded lots of filler and polishing. Several coats of Tamiya white primer were applied over all of the sub-assemblies and quickly revealed the need even more filling and polishing. Once I was satisfied everything was smooth the model received 3 coats of Tamiya Pure White. For visual interest and to break up the stark white paintjob, I finished two of the seven fuel tanks in Alclad aluminum. I reasoned these were replacements put into service before they had a chance to be painted. The detail parts including the antenna dish, fuel manifolds and rocket motor parts were finished in various shades of Alclad and added to the model. A wooden base was made from some scrap maple covered with Famowood Bar Top Resin and the acrylic support rod was bent with a heat gun. Most of the decals came from the spares box. The little pinup girl (from Starship Modeler) carries the American tradition of nose art into the 21st century. I'm still thinking of a name to put on the nose next to her; AVG Annie perhaps?

CONCLUSION:

I earned every minute of fun I had building this kit. I can't recommend it as a first model considering all the modern kits available today as a better choice. But if a modeler is willing to spend some elbow grease and use a little imagination, I think they can produce a finished product Doctor von Braun himself would approve of. This kit allows artistic license to run wild and it's a nice break from striving for the "accuracy" modelers get caught up in. I have several more of these old Von Braun designs in the stash and look forward to finishing them. It's a great way to look back at an era when optimism suggested that anything was possible.

Glencoe Kit Box Art



Strombecker Original Box Art Circa 1955

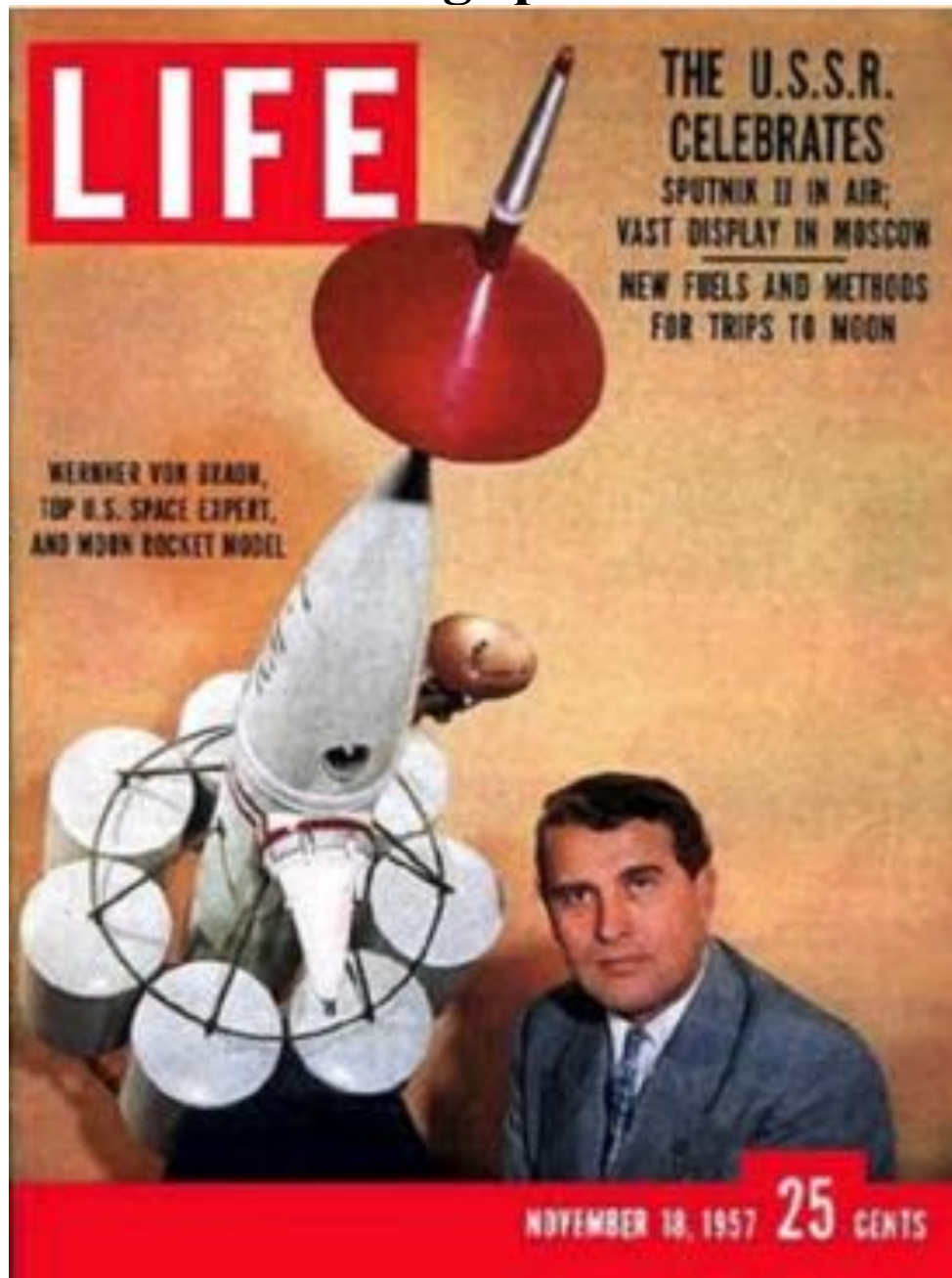


Kit Sprues

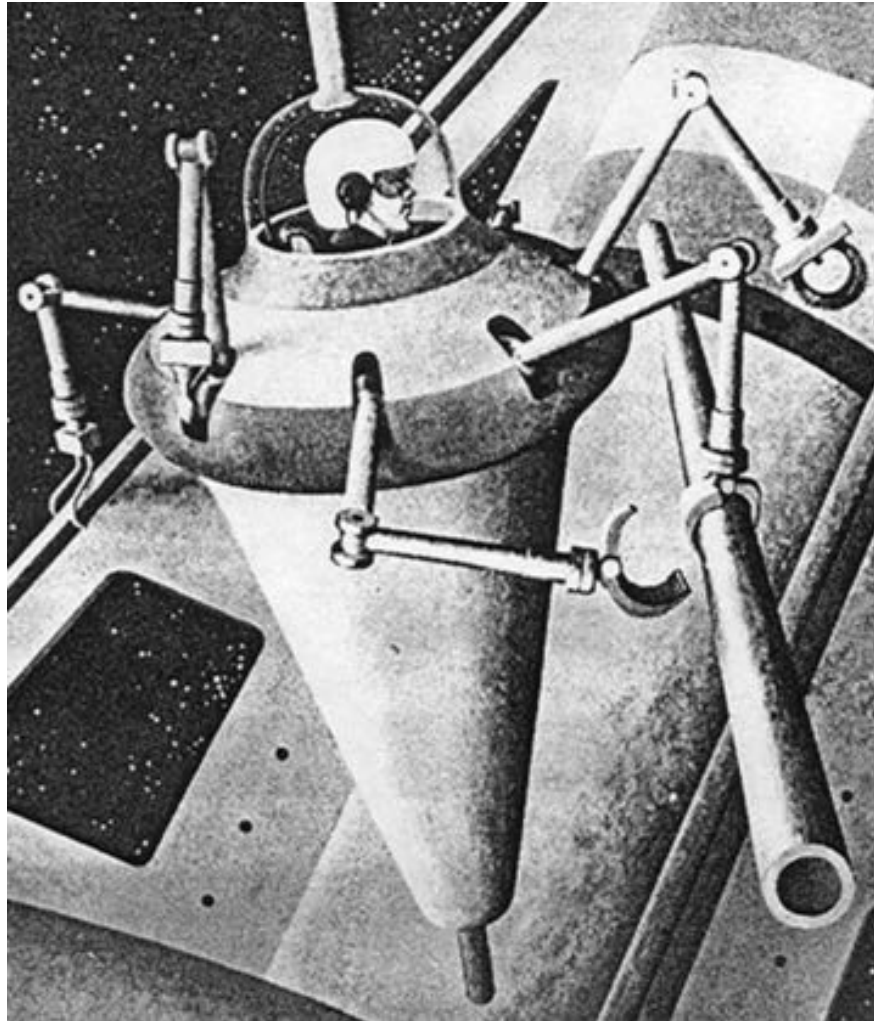
Lots of “opportunities” to perfect your filling and polishing skills and some excellent practice at making things round!



“LIFE” in 1958. Werner Von Braun and his concept of the RM-1: A Retriever/Shuttle rocket for traveling between the moon and earth orbiting space stations.



Bottle Suit



In order to assemble his proposed space station Von Braun designed a new, one-man type of spaceship, a spacesuit. The Bottle suit evolved as part personal spaceship and part Swiss Army Knife.

This was probably the first space suit von Braun had designed specifically with the idea of allowing a single person extended duration in space. It would be used to assemble, not only the space station, but all the additional ships needed for his proposed Moon and Mars expeditions.

A versatile suit for construction, it was Gyro stabilized and had seven arms with different tools attached to each arm for the operator to use. Because you cannot put tools “down” when working in space you better always have them attached to you to prevent them from floating away. And because of that, the Bottle suit was well equipped for construction jobs in space.

Also interesting is that it had rocket propulsion both at the top of the suit and below the suit to ensure it could both accelerate and decelerate. No yaw or pitch thrusters to control its movement are visible. Therefore, it must have been using gyroscopes internally for rotating in these axes. This is an important pioneering development of a truly radical concept that would allow humans to work in space.

[Http://cyberneticzoo.com](http://cyberneticzoo.com)











Builder: Rich Ribaud

Kit: 1/48 Renwal "Aero-Skin" Curtiss F-11C Goshawk

Construction Time: 12 hours

Finish: Model master basic colors and kit provided "Aero-Skin" covering

Aftermarket: None.

Wikipedia tells us...*The Curtiss F11C Goshawk was a 1930s United States naval biplane fighter aircraft that saw limited success but was part of a long line of Curtiss Hawk airplanes built by the Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Company for the American military. In April 1932, when Curtiss was planning the Model 35B, the United States Navy contracted with the manufacturer for an improved derivative of the Model 34C, F6C as the F11C. It contained major changes that included the 600 hp Wright R-1510-98 radial engine, single-leg cantilever main landing-gear units, a slight increase in the interplane gap, metal- rather than fabric-covered control surfaces, and armament based on two .30 in fixed forward-firing machine guns supplemented by a hardpoint under the fuselage for the carriage of a 474 lb. bomb, or an auxiliary fuel tank. Curtiss designed the type as the Model 64 Goshawk, with the U.S. Navy designation XF11C-1 (later XBFC-1 after the adoption of the BF for Bomber-Fighter category). The aircraft was of fabric-covered metal construction, used the wing cell structure of the dismantled YP-23, and was delivered in September 1932.*

Shortly before ordering the XF11C-1, the Navy had bought a company-owned Model 64A demonstrator. This had a Wright R-1820-78 Cyclone engine, slightly longer main landing-gear legs carrying wheels with low-pressure tires, a tailwheel in place of the tailskid, fabric-covered control surfaces on the tail, and external provision for underwing racks for light bombs as well as an under-fuselage hardpoint for either a 50 gal (189 l) fuel tank or the crutch that would swing a bomb clear of the propeller disc before release in a dive-bombing attack. The XF11C-2 came to be regarded as the prototype for the F11C-2, of which 28 examples were ordered as dual-role fighter-bombers in October 1932. The F11C-2 Goshawk was produced in two export versions as the Hawk I and Hawk II fighters.

The only U.S. Navy units to operate the F11C-2 were the Navy's famous "High Hat Squadron", VF-1B, aboard the carrier Saratoga, and VB-6 briefly assigned to Enterprise.

Morton T. Seligman: An interesting article about the aviator whose airplane is the subject of this Renwal model kit can be found here... https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morton_T._Seligman

So, what exactly is "Aero-Skin"???

Around 1966 Renwal introduced the Aero-Skin concept with their line of Pre-WW I "Fabulous Flying Machine" kits. You got two models (1/72-ish scale?) in a box for a dollar. What a deal! They were molded in black plastic and included a simple piece of silk span tissue and a bottle of cement to cover the model. In a sense, they reached back to the "stick and tissue" age for the skin covering but put a modern twist on it by using an injection molded kit to ease and speed up construction. Subjects included the likes of early Farman, Voison, Curtiss, Avro, and Bleriot machines. It was like a scene from the 1965 movie "*Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines*".

These were plastic injection molded kits with ribs, spars and longerons molded in place without an outer mold line plastic skin like we know today. The idea was to cover the “skeletal parts” with the included tissue and then assemble the model in conventional form. Shortly after the “Fabulous Flying Machines” came the 1/72 “WW I Aces” series. There were about a dozen of these kits and they now boasted color printed fabric skin that had elaborate camouflage patterns on them, thereby “*eliminating the need for complex painting*”. There were even a very few (5 or 6?) Aero-Skin kits issued in 1/48 scale.

THE BUILD: The kit was extremely well molded and flash free. All the parts were smooth, glossy and fit well. Looking back on my attempt at building these kits as a kid, I didn’t realize how good the kit that I was about to butcher in 1968 really was! The only seam to deal with was on the fuselage halves. Even at that, a simple cleanup with a knife blade was enough to do the trick since the seam area would be covered with fabric and not paint. The wings and tail planes were one piece each, so no assembly or seam treatment was needed there.

Once the sprue attachment points were cleaned up the covering process started. Anyone who has ever built a stick and tissue model airplane using dope as an adhesive will be familiar with what comes next. Each piece of Aero Skin covering was cut out of the sheet with a little extra edge margin to spare. The liquid cement included in the kit had long become “the angels cut” so I brushed Tamiya Extra Thin on just the edges of the plastic parts to be covered. When dry, a second wet coat was applied, and the covering material was set in place. Working slowly around the periphery of the part, the Aero Skin was pulled tightly into place. Liquid cement was then brushed onto the covering material around the periphery of the part again to re-activate the glue underneath. The glue soaked into the covering and bound it fast to the plastic part. I don’t know how it was when the Aero Skin fabric was fresh 50 years ago, but I was unable to shrink the fabric with water and a heat gun like a traditional tissue covered model airplane. But I made my best effort to get everything tight and wrinkle-free the first time. After all the fabric covering was in place and dry it was trimmed to the edge of the parts with a fresh scalpel blade. My upper wing fabric was printed a bit off center, but I did nothing to fix it and just drove on attaching it in the best spot I could.

After everything was covered with the Aero Skin the model was assembled in traditional fashion. The few remaining major parts went on quickly and without much drama. One of the gear struts was missing in my kit so I had to scratch build one from styrene stock. My windshield was also missing so I made one from clear stock using the Lindberg Goshawk part as a guide.

PAINT AND FINISHING: The few areas needing paint were the engine, struts, cowl ring, landing gear and wheels. I used Testors Model Master grays, black, aluminum and red for these areas. Since all the markings were printed on the fabric covering there were no decals to apply. Edges of the airframe that needed touching up from trimming were painted “out of the bottle” with model Master paints I had on hand. No attempt at mixing to match was made, I just wanted to get close.

CONCLUSION: This model was never meant to be a contender in any contests. I built it more as a trip down memory lane and as an “artifact” in the “*Jurassic Quest Through the History of Model Making*”. As such, I added nothing that didn’t come in the box and I decided not to rig the model. I wanted it to look as it would have if someone in 1966 made it. Warts and inaccuracies notwithstanding I think Renwal made an excellent effort towards getting kids not only to build, but to actually finish models. Eliminating the need to paint a complicated scheme was revolutionary. Most of my friends back in the 60s who built models considered painting, filling seams and in many cases even removing flash from the parts as just something that delayed finishing the kit! Ignorance, truly, can be bliss.

Aero Skin kits were a unique idea, but they were a short-lived flavor in the world of modeling. I built one or two of these little gems back in the late 1960s and it was as much fun now as I remember it back then. You can find examples on eBay and at kit shows (that is, whenever we get to attend a show again!) with prices commensurate to the condition of the kits. Some even still have the little bottle of cement, even though it has long evaporated after 50 years. Given some patience and a little “unusual” application of skill they can turn out to be an enjoyable project. I recommend trying one of these kits as a side project to take the edge off the ‘serious’ builds we get involved with. Throwing somber, tedious detail work to abandon can be a rare and therapeutic endeavor.

For a much better and more complete explanation and history of Renewal’s Aero-Skin kits (as well as many others) I highly recommend a visit to this website:

<https://www.oldmodelkits.com/blog/plastic-model-kit-history/a-history-of-renwal-aeroskin-kits/>

Curtiss F11C-2



General characteristics

- **Crew:** 1
- **Length:** 22 ft 7 in
- **Wingspan:** 31 ft 6 in
- **Height:** 9 ft 8.625 in
- **Wing area:** 262 sq. ft
- **Empty weight:** 3,037 lb.
- **Gross weight:** 4,132 lb.
- **Powerplant:** × [Wright R-1820-78 Cyclone](#) 9-cylinder air-cooled radial piston engine, 600 hp (450 kW)
- **Propellers:** 3-bladed metal propeller

Performance

- **Maximum speed:** 202 mph
- **Cruise speed:** 150 mph
- **Range:** 522 mi
- **Service ceiling:** 25,100 ft
- **Rate of climb:** 2,300 ft/min

Armament

- 2 fixed, [synchronized](#) .30 in (7.62 mm) [M1919 Browning machine guns](#) in the forward fuselage
- 1 215 kg (474 lb.) bomb on an under-fuselage [hardpoint](#) or 2 53 kg (117 lb.) bombs carried one under each lower wing

Kit Box Art courtesy of Oldmodelkits.com



An ad I actually remember seeing in a comic book as a kid in the late 60s. Back then it was common to know people (like “Gramps”) who were First World War veterans.



Even as a kid, I can remember thinking “*why the hell is Gramps still in uniform; the war ended over 50 years ago!*” What you got in a typical Renwal “Aero-Skin” kit. It even came with a bottle of Testors liquid cement to apply the fabric covering. Most Aero-Skin kits were in 1/72 scale but Renwal produced a few in 1/48 scale, too. Look closely and you can see the airfoil ribs.



Thoughtfully, Renwal rolled the Aero Skin around cardboard to (mostly) avoid creases & wrinkles and tucked into the end of the box.

Renwal's 1/48 Curtiss F11C-2 Goshawk of Lt. Morton Seligman









Wow! I think we can agree those are all awesome builds. I, too, wondered what the hell was up with Gramps, but with modern mental health diagnostic methods, we now sadly know he was suffering from senile dementia and thought he was still fighting the last war.... No wonder he was always telling the kids to get off his lawn.

Wonders never cease. I finished something!:

Builder: Matt Graham

Kit: 1/144th Hobbycraft GRB-36 "Ficon" with Anigrand NB-36H conversion

Construction Time: Way longer than I hoped. Probably about 20 hours

Finish: Mostly Alclad with a bit of AK Real Metal. Gunze synthetic lacquers for the non-metallic colors

Aftermarket: Anigrand Craftworks conversion.

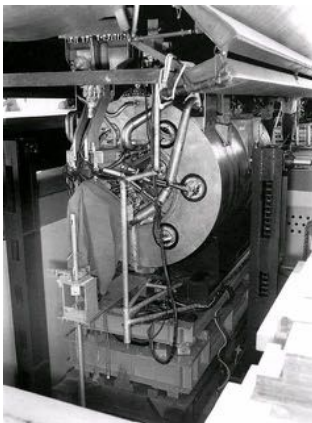
A bit of History:

In the early 1950's, the Air Force began to explore the possibilities of nuclear-powered aircraft. The concept was to use a nuclear reactor to produce the heat normally produced by chemical fuels. Instead of the conventional combustion chambers of a turbojet engine, energy would be introduced by a nuclear reactor, either through the Direct Air Cycle (ducting the airflow through the reactor core or Indirect Air Cycle (which used a liquid heat exchanger). A nuclear-powered bomber would, theoretically, have unlimited range and endurance. General Electric was selected to develop the Direct Air Cycle, while Pratt and Whitney was to develop the Indirect Air Cycle

The Convair NB-35H (also XB-36H) was a testbed airframe for an airborne nuclear reactor under project MX-1598. The purpose of the project was to study shielding requirements for an airborne reactor and general feasibility of airborne nuclear propulsion. Ultimately, the NB-36H was to be developed into the X-6, which would have a functioning nuclear turbojet propulsion system.

The B-36 was chosen primarily because it was large enough to carry the 1-megawatt Air-Cooled System Test Reactor (ASTR), which weighed 35,000lb, and the extensive shielding needed to protect the crew (which weighed another 11 tons).

A B-36H that had sustained \$1M in damage to the forward fuselage was selected for the conversion. Modifications began in 1952. A new forward fuselage was constructed to accept the lead and rubber lined crew capsule, and mounting provisions for the reactor installation in the bomb bay, with the extensive air cooling ducting in the aft fuselage.



ASTR reactor



Shielded crew compartment

The crew compartment was very cramped, due to the thick walls necessitated by the shielding. Even the cockpit windows were 1 foot thick. An interesting story is that the thick windows had a somewhat yellow

cast, which led to the normal gray cockpit paint to appear an rather vile color, so the entire cockpit was re-painted lavender, which looked gray in the yellow light!

The NB-36 had some interesting specialized ground support equipment, including an armored and shielded tractor that looked like something from the *Thunderbirds* that would push the reactor into a special pit and bury it if the aircraft crashed on takeoff. The NB-36H was always accompanied in flight by a B-50 chase aircraft that carried radiation detection equipment, and could also drop specialized equipment and personell to secure the site if the NB-36 should crash on a test flight.



NB-36H in flight with B-50 chase aircraft

The NB-36H first flew in late 1955 and flew a total of 47 test flights between then and late 1957. At the end of the program, the reactor was removed and scrapped, and the aircraft put in storage.

By 1960, it was becoming clear that research into nuclear aircraft propulsion was progressing very slowly. Pratt and Whitney had made a few successful test cell runs of their system, but 10 years and over \$1B (almost \$9B in today's dollars) had been spent, and it was estimated it would take another 10 years to produce a viable aircraft. The development of ballistic missiles and supersonic bombers had mostly negated the need for a nuclear powered bomber, so in 1961, President John Kennedy terminated the nuclear aircraft propulsion program. The NB-36, still in storage in anticipation of conversion to the first X-6, was scrapped.

The Model:

The basis for my model is the Hobbycraft B-36. There were 3 versions of the kit produced, an early B-36B without jet pods, a B-36D with the pods and the GRB-36 FICON, which includes the RF-84 the FICON carried and also a neat little XF-85 Goblin. Hobbycraft produced some very nice 1/144th bombers (the B-47 and the B-58), but this is not quite to that standard. It's not a BAD kit, but it does have some shortcomings. The biggest is that Hobbycraft essentially molded the wing upside down. The B-36 has slight dihedral, the top of the wing is flat across the span and the lower section tapers upward to the tip. Hobbycraft made their wing with the bottom surface flat and the upper surface tapers down. The next issue is the surface. It looks like the molds were produced by electro-discharge machining (EDM) and not polished. This gives the plastic a pebbly texture. As B-36's were all natural metal, it makes for a lot of sanding and polishing to get a good finish. Last is the props. The spinners are 2-piece, and they don't fit well, leaving a difficult seam to clean up. None of this is insurmountable (we're modelers, right?) but is a little disappointing. I'm not quite sure what the provenance of the molds are. The B-47 and B-58 were tooled by Academy, and have been re-released by them, but this kit doesn't seem to have the same finesse and has never been re-released, so it may have been done by someone else (Kitech, perhaps. they did a lot of Hobbycraft stuff). It's currently the only 1/144th B-36, but I see Zvezda has recently announced one. If it's anything like their airliners, it's going to be fantastic.

There are 2 NB-35H conversions available. One is by Click2Detail, and is 3D printed through Shapeways (they also do one in 1/72). It's kind of expensive, and you have to deal with the 3D print texture. The other is from Anigrand Craftworks and is a 'bonus' in their 1/144th Penetration Fighter set (XF-88, XF-90, XF-93). They call it the X-6 – it isn't – it doesn't include the nuclear turbojets and the decals are for the NB-36. Anigrand stuff can be a little pricey, but I got my set for a very good price on closeout from Hannants, just for the NB-36.



Anigrand gives you 2 new forward fuselage halves, the reactor cooling air scoops, the forward fuselage scoop, a new nose gear and gear doors, a cockpit interior, a clear resin windshield / cockpit roof section and a set of decals. The cockpit interior isn't accurate – it's just a one-piece resin copy of the Hobbycraft cockpit, but you really can't see much through the tiny windows. The clear resin piece is not terribly clear and could stand some polishing, but is probably accurately scaled to the 1 foot thick windshield on the real aircraft, lol! The NB-36 had the tail turret removed – you're on your own for that one.

Anigrand has a real hit-and-miss reputation when it comes to accuracy. I've dealt with their president (Alfred Wong – I provided research for a couple of kits). They are apparently a consortium of modelers in Hong Kong, which could explain the varying quality of their kits. This one doesn't look too bad, although I'm not convinced that the contours around the cockpit overhead escape hatch are quite right.



A lot of modelers leave the Hobbycraft B-36 wing alone, but it doesn't look right and it bothers me. It's not too difficult a fix. The upper wing is 1 piece, including part of the upper fuselage. The plastic is pretty thick. If you score the inside of the wing at the roots, you can carefully bend it up until it's flat from tip-to-tip. This leaves a couple of pie-shaped cuts at the leading edge, but they are easy to fill.

Anigrand gives instructions where to cut the fuselage to attach the nose. The nose fit reasonably well, but was slightly smaller in diameter (probably due to resin shrinkage) but was easy to blend in. As mentioned, the cockpit windows needed a bit of polishing, but look acceptable in the end. Anigrand leaves it up to you how to delete the tail guns. There are big honkin' slots in the tail turret for the guns that need to be filled. I filled with super glue and sanded to shape.

One thing I especially like about the NB-36 is that it's quite colorful. I didn't realize until I started studying photographs that the flaps, ailerons and leading edges of the horizontal stabs were painted blue to match the fuselage stripe. I painted the model with Tamiya Fine White primer, then used Gunze Sangyo Blue for the trim, as it matched the blue of the decals. I then painted the anti-glare panel, the nose and the tip of the vertical stab. I then masked those parts to spray the metal finish. B-36's had a varied metal finish. One of my B-36 books had a diagram that showed what parts were made from what metal, which helped immensely in painting. Much of the airframe was magnesium, which has a dull finish. Alclad Dull Aluminum replicated this well. I used Dark Aluminum for the in-spar area and White Aluminum for the non-skid. The new nose and aft fuselage sections of the NB-36 look quite shiny in pictures, so I used Alclad Airframe Aluminum, which gives a bright finish over smooth primer.



The NB-36 had a few variations in markings over its career. It initially had "Convair Crusader" in white inside the blue airliner-style cheatline, with "XB-36H" underneath. The "Crusader" titles quickly disappeared (within a few flights), leaving the "XB-36H". This was later changed to "NB-36H". Anigrand gives you second variation. The decals are thick and glossy, but go on well. They give you 2 complete sets of cheatlines, which is nice. They provide the scallops for the jet and reactor scoop intakes, but leave you to paint lips. Unfortunately the red ink on the decals is slightly translucent, so didn't match the red paint exactly when applied. They leave you to use the Hobbycraft decals for the national insignia, USAF titles and the dreaded wing walks.

B-36 wing walk decals are a curse on my existence. When we built the Monogram B-36 club build, my job was decals. I got the Warbird B-36 sheet, and when I put the walkway stripes in the water, they shattered into hundreds of pieces (Scalemaster-printed decals tend to do the), leaving me with many *happy* hours

piecing them together. The Hobbycraft decals were better, but many of the stripes broke into numerous pieces. Fortunately, I found a 0.005mm Sakura black permanent marker is great for touching up walkways. The landing gear steps in Hobbycraft instructions are extremely vague especially for the mains. There are of no help at all when it comes to positioning the main gear doors. The B-36 main gear doors are very complex (I eventually figured out there are 6 of them, and it took a lot of digging in my references to figure out how they work. Incidentally, Hobbycraft has the main gear backwards for a B-36H (the bogey shock strut is on the wrong side). I eventually figured out that very early B-36's had it oriented the way the kit does. I didn't bother to fix it. Anigrand gives you a new nose gear strut. Couldn't quite figure out why -it looks like a resin copy of the kit strut. I shortened the strut slightly to give the model the classic B-36 "stink bug" tail-high stance.

I used some Mig 'Fresh Engine Oil' and black pastels to duplicate the exhaust staining and general filth always present on the bottom of B-36 engine nacelles.

Finally, I attached the props and the jet pods.

There you have it. An interesting model of an unusual plane. It took a lot longer than I expected, mostly due to the @\$* decals, and I enjoyed building it (except for the @\$* decals...)

Calendar

Postponed. Date to be announced	50 Years of Modeling Excellence	Fresno EAA Chapter, Hangar 379 4344 W. Spaatz Ave. Fresno, CA
Postponed. until 2021	San Diego Model Expo & Swap Meet	San Diego Air and Space Museum Annex 335 Kenny St. El Cajon, CA
Cancelled	IPMS/USA National Convention	Embassy Suites and San Marcos Conference Center 1011 E McCarty Ln. San Marcos, TX
Cancelled	Best of the West	East Side Cannery Resort & Casino 5255 Boulder Hwy. Las Vegas, NV
9/26/2020	Silicon Valley Classic VII	Napredak Hall 770 Montague Expressway San Jose, CA
Cancelled	IPMS Reno "High Rollers" 21 st Invitational Contest & Swap Meet	BPOE Lodge 597 597 Kumle Ln. Reno, NV
Cancelled	OrangeCon 2020	Hotel Fullerton Anaheim 1500 South Raymond Ave. Fullerton, CA
Cancelled	Desert Classic XXIV	Antelope Valley College Cafeteria 3041 W Ave. K, Lancaster, CA

From the Oval Office – Notes From the Prez

Learning Advanced Skills--Where?

I find a lot of joy in learning about the history or literature behind a model subject. To me, whether it is a specific aircraft flown on a particular day by a particular pilot, or a character or monster from fantasy, science fiction, or a complex game, there is an intricate backstory waiting to be shared.

So, as a modeler, I have a strong desire for accurate portrayal of my subject. I want the model I make to be able to accurately share that story to others. I want others to feel, however briefly, the fascination I had for my subject.

This feeling, of course, grows stronger upon seeing others accurately portray details. I get to the point where I have an instrument panel with gauges, dials, and switches accurately placed. I then see an example in the same scale where there are dials that have needles and markings that can be read, and under a realistic depiction of a “glass cover.” Or I am able to see the differences between types of seatbelts used, the way the ordnance is attached and armed, or that what should be an impossibly small figure has discernable eyes and facial expression, and five-o’clock shadow.

Criminy! I will catch myself thinking. I could never accomplish that! All my attempts look fecal compared to that.

Welcome to Advanced Modeler Syndrome, that pit of existential despair we find ourselves in from time to time. So many projects started, never to be completed because my efforts could never “measure up” to the examples I admire. Time to tell myself that’s a rotten attitude, and that having seen what is, indeed, possible, then if I desire those results, I will need to learn and practice those techniques and skills.

I feel very fortunate having returned to the hobby in what is a monumental renaissance. There is always somewhere to look nowadays to learn.

- Hobby publications: there are many magazines and books available to the modeler, offering greater specialization than seemed possible when I was a teen. Although they are not always available at a local bookseller hobby supplier, or craft store, especially during our current time of limited opportunity to go outside the home, almost all have some online presence, even if it’s just a place to see a sample article and purchase an issue or a subscription.
- Pinterest: ever since Mike Otis shared Pinterest as a resource at our meeting some years ago, I have been an avid “Pinner,” finding and sharing articles about details, paint schemes, markings, and so on. Pinterest is a fantastic place to get a feel for the breadth and depth of information available on a subject. For me, it can lead to a trip down a virtual rabbit hole, with each article or picture found suggesting numerous other links to more information and techniques.
- Of course, there is the Google search
 - Specific websites: these can be an absolute goldmine of starting information, like the wonderful www.aircraftmodeling.com that demystified so many techniques for hobbyists wanting to depict the delicate, kite-like aircraft from the dawn of flight through the first conflicts using these new machines. Other websites can be found that specifically address narrow subjects in modeling, including air

racing, funny cars, and the gibbering monsters populating tabletop games and fantasy stories.

- YouTube tutorials: I've mentioned before how much I enjoy learning from YouTube tutorials. Not only do they share fantastic techniques and information, they never get cranky or worn out when I make them back up, pause, and repeat themselves.
- Online forums: Find some online forums, and start off by "lurking," or reading the posts without replying. This is a good way to 1.) determine the culture of the forum and 2.) decide if its culture and content are useful and to your liking. Cybermodeler, Hyperscale, and LargeScalePlanes are some that I enjoy, along with Finescale Modeler magazine's forums at finescale.com.
- Blogs: There are so many out there, that a Google search for a specific topic is almost necessary to guide you to material most useful to you. These are written like a running diary about modeling, whether by one modeler or a small group, and as such provide a valuable look into the process others use to solve problems with a specific kit or how to depict details or an accurately weathered finish. My favorite is Doogs Models, which along with his YouTube channel is an absolute goldmine of scale modeling information: <https://doogsmodels.com/>

So now you have some idea of how the experts bring out that accuracy in those details, it is time to practice. If you're not sure you're ready to start right in on a pricey new kit, go ahead and take apart one you've previously completed and are considering consigning to the trash can to make room for new models. Try out what you've read about depicting spark plug wires, or leads coming out of the back of the instrument panel; see how new brush-handling techniques make those previously-muddy details pop out clearly. Can you depict flooring with something you printed out from your computer? Now's your chance to find out. If it doesn't work the first time, keep at it. Refine your attempts to improve your technique. You are learning what works well for you, and what does not. Interact with others and troubleshoot.

Now that you have mastered the technique, don't keep it hidden. This is your time to shine. Do not worry that "everyone already knows how to do this." There is always someone who hasn't yet learned it, and they will be glad to see that someone they know can show them how. Take pictures. Post them to our Facebook page or submit them for publication on our website or in our newsletter. Contribute them to an online forum, a Reddit thread, or your own blog or YouTube channel. Be a part of our growing knowledge base!

Oops. Glued my knife to the workbench again.