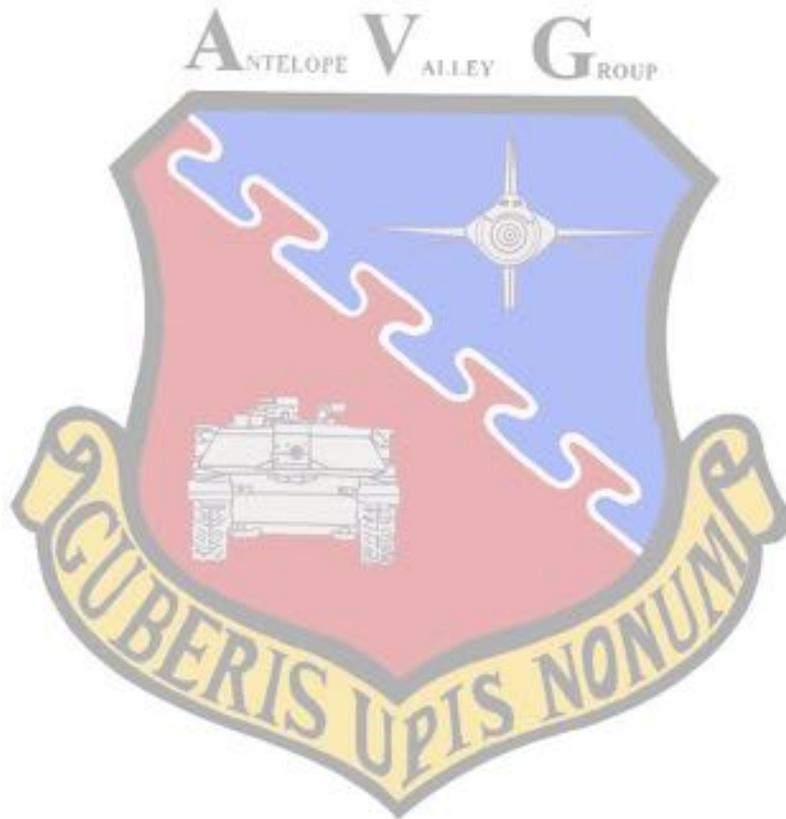


The Smoking Hole

A Publication of the Antelope Valley Group IPMS

Volume 26, Number 10



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Club News and Business

SEPTEMBER PHYSICAL MEETING 10:00 -12:00 am OCTOBER 16,
RAWLEY DUNTLEY PARK, 3334 W. AVE. K, LANCASTER. VIRTUAL
(ZOOM) MEETING, SATURDAY EVENING, 7 pm

September Meeting General Meeting Notes:

We had our physical meeting at Rawley Duntley Park. A virtual Zoom meeting followed in the evening.

Latest Club Status

Nothing new to report, unfortunately. Kern Library is experiencing budget and staff shortages, so is still only open 2 days a week and isn't hosting meetings, and we haven't yet go a positive response from another indoor venue. Will likely continue with the outdoor meetings and Zoom for at least the near future.

September Physical Meeting

We had another outdoor meeting at Rawley Duntley park. Once again, we had a morning meeting to beat the heat and wind. We had about members



A lot of nice models

Jim B. had some really neat stuff



Jim's done another awesome dino hauler! This is the old AMT Ford C600 stake bed



Jim's Revell '41 Chevy rod. I like the unconventional choice of a 6 cylinder engine



1/16th Vega funny car. This is the Atlantis re-release of the Green Elephant, although Jim has other plans for it

Mike O. had some nice armor, including a Churchill, a Panzer III AufS J and a Sherman "Easy 8"



Jim P. also brought some armor, a Tamiya Gamma Goat and a Sheridan



Rowdy brought his Atlantis USS Nautilus. More about this in Show and Tell



Niilo brought a large-scale helicopter. This is a Testors 1/32nd Kaman HH-43B. This is really an old Hawk kit that dates back to the early 1960's, but has had numerous re-releases in Testors and Italeri boxings



Niilo built it in 60 hours over the space of 1 month. He added some gray thread for the recovery hoist cable and painted it with Testors enamels and Tamiya acrylic. Here's what he has to say about the build: "A helicopter with intermeshing rotors which eliminated the requirement for a tail stabilizing rotor. Used by the Air Force, Navy and Marines from 1950 into the 1970's, primarily for aircraft firefighting and rescue in the close vicinity of air bases. In 1964, the Air Force deployed 6 HH43B's which had be upgraded with added titanium armor and designated as an HH-43F for overland air rescue in Vietnam. Call sign was "Pedro". The build of this model was challenging because the instructions wee questionable. You had to revise the order of subassembly builds to complete the final assembly. Decals had to be applied earlier in the bbuild to have room to attach where needed. The decals were old and split before they separated from the backing using normal attaching methods. Interesting build with some questionable fit. I you don't have patience, don't' try to build it."

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82059547791?pwd=VDFFUzVYSVZhUHFQR0YyMW83Q3hodz09>

Meeting ID: 820 5954 7791

Passcode: 547435

One tap mobile

+16699006833,,82059547791#,,,,*547435# US (San Jose)

+14086380968,,82059547791#,,,,*547435# US (San Jose)

Dial by your location

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 408 638 0968 US (San Jose)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 820 5954 7791

Passcode: 547435

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kdmhp4aay0>

2021 Meeting Schedule (Tentative)

Primary	Activities	Refreshments	Demo	Review
16 Jan	CANCELLED, Virtual Meeting			
20 Feb	CANCELLED, Virtual Meeting			
20 Mar	CANCELLED			
17 Apr	CANCELLED			
15 May	Physical Meeting, 1 pm, Rawley Duntley Park, Lancaster. Virtual Meeting 6:30 to 8:30 pm			
19 June	Physical Meeting, 8 to 10 am, Rawley Duntley Park, Lancaster. Virtual Meeting 6:30 to 8:30 pm			
17 July	Physical Meeting, 9:30 to 11:30 am, Rawley Duntley Park, Lancaster.			
14 Aug	Physical Meeting, 8 to 10 am, Rawley Duntley Park, Lancaster. Virtual Meeting 7 pm			
18 Sept	Physical Meeting, 10 to 12 am, Rawley Duntley Park, Lancaster. Virtual Meeting 7 pm			
16 Oct	Physical Meeting, 10 to 12 am, Rawley Duntley Park, Lancaster. Virtual Meeting 7 pm			
30 Oct	2021 Desert Classic CANCELLED			
20 Nov	2022 Club Officer Nominations			
18 Dec	Gift Exchange			

The Tool Crib

John found some great liquid masking medium

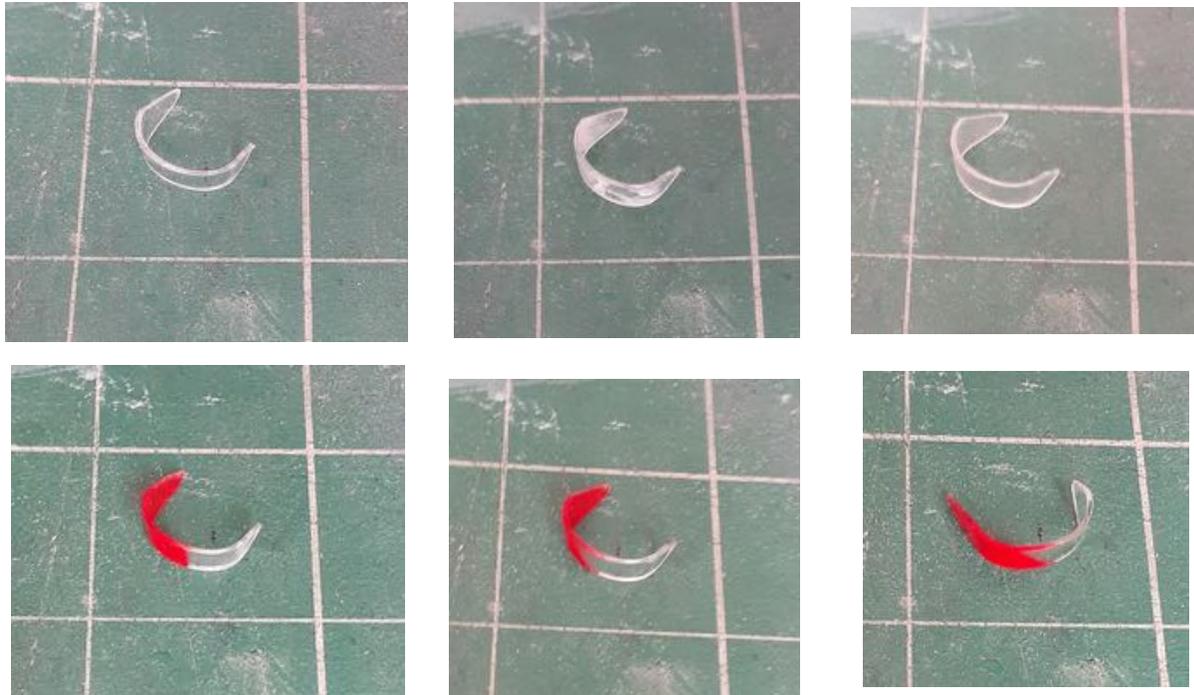
Coast Airbrush Sign Strip Mask



I stumbled upon this liquid masking material available at Coast Airbrush of Anaheim.

<https://www.coastairbrush.com/products.asp?cat=865>

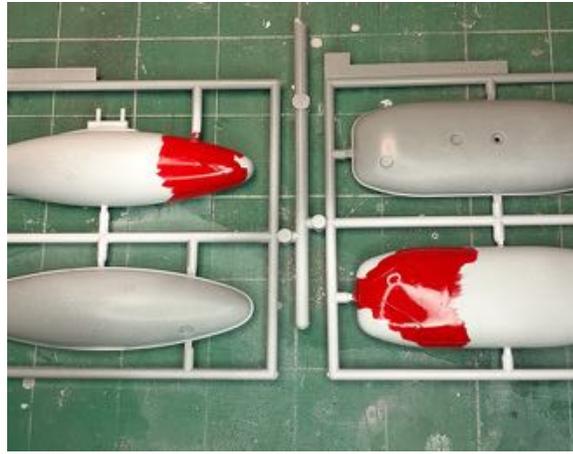
It's sprayable and brush-able, and dries clear with a blue tint. I gave it the following test on a piece of clear piece of styrene from the parts bin:



#1. The piece removed from the sprue. # 2. The part brushed with the material and still wet. #3 Dry and diagonal cut across the front with the film removed from the far side. #5. The paint brushed onto the exposed plastic. # 6 and 7. The masking film removed using a thumbnail and toothpick. Note that the red color seen on the top edge is a reflection from the paint on the front.

My conclusion: I think this is much easier to use than tape or vinyl masks. You can cut away any film that is resting where it shouldn't be, so any mistake made during application can be easily fixed.

This 6 oz jar (the small size) cost \$11.99 plus tax and shipping. I'm guessing that the shelf life will expire before I get to the bottom of the jar.



I did another trial of the Sign Strip liquid mask. This time experimented creating scallops on compound curved surfaces. The test pieces are P-47 drop tanks Primed with Mr. White Surfacer 1000. I'm not skilled enough to free-hand symmetrical scallop curves, so I cut masking tape using an oval template. The tape was applied over the areas to be painted and the goop brushed on. You can see a dollop still wet on the upper left piece. When dried, I used a razor blade to cut along the edge of the tape and peeled the tape off. In a couple of places, the film started to come up with the tape, so another pass with the blade was done. The film was pressed back down. The paint was brushed on. When removing the film, I was too aggressive with my thumb and removed some of the primer, so I used a toothpick and tweezers. I got a pretty good edge and with practice, I should be able to nail it. More time was spent waiting for the primer, mask, and paint to dry than doing the steps.

Kit Reviews

ICM 1/48th B-26K Counter Invader



Most aircraft enthusiasts are familiar with the Douglas A-26 (later B-26) Invader. Conceived as a low-level ground attack aircraft to replace the A-20. Fast and able to carry a relatively heavy bomb load, the A-26 not only excelled as an attack aircraft but also as a medium bomber. The A-26 remained in front-line service long after the end of WW2 (being re-designated B-26 following the retirement of the Martin Marauder). The Invader saw extensive use as a medium bomber in the Korean War and was only relegated to second-line reserve duty with the introduction of the B-57 and B-66 jet medium bombers.

The Air Force 1st Air Commando Division, at Eglin AFB, however, found the B-26 useful for counter-insurgency or “bush war” tactics and continued use of the B-26. Several were clandestinely deployed to South East Asia, supposedly operated by the South Vietnamese Air Force. The B-26 unfortunately had issues with wing spar corrosion and several of these aircraft were lost due to in-flight wing failure.

The Air Commandos still saw value in the B-26 and looked for a way to upgrade and modernize the aircraft.

The On-Mark Engineering Corporation, based at Van Nuys Airport, was converting a number of surplus B-26's to high-speed executive transports (the Lear Jets of their day). On-Mark had over 30 STC'd or patented modifications to the B-26, including a strengthened wing, higher-rated commercial R2800 engines with water injection from the DC-6, improved disc brakes, an updated cockpit and wing tip fuel tanks for increased range.

The Air Commandos approached On-Mark to request if they could produce a military version of their executive modification. On-Mark agreed and selected RB-26C 44-35634 to convert to the prototype. The aircraft received the strengthened wing, engine, brake, cockpit and fuel system mods. In addition 4 external stores pylons under each wing. Painted gloss dark green over gloss light gray, the aircraft emerged in 1963 and was designated YB-26K and given the official name of “Counter Invader”. In service, however the aircraft gained the name “Nimrod”, which was the callsign of the 609th Air Commando Squadron.

The Air Force was impressed with the modified aircraft and ordered 40 similar production aircraft, which On-Mark produced during 1963 and 1964. The B-26K's were normally fitted with the 8 .50 caliber gun nose from the B-26B, but this nose could be interchanged with the glass bomber nose of the B-26C. Carrying a KA-38 reconnaissance camera in the nose and additional cameras in the bomb bay, B-26K's with the glass nose were referred to as RB-26K's. 11 of the aircraft are known to be fitted with the glass nose at one point or another.

The Air Commandos had replaced their early B-26's in South East Asia with Skyraiders, which were doing a satisfactory job, so the B-26K's were initially deployed to Howard AFB in Panama. In 1964, 5 of the aircraft were loaned to the CIA for clandestine operations during the civil war in the Belgian Congo. Operated by mercenary Latin American crews familiar with the B-26, the B-26K's were supposedly part of the Congolese Air Force, but carried no markings.

In 1966, it was decided to deploy the B-26K's to South East Asia to support the US Governments "secret war" in Laos. Their primary mission was to interdict truck traffic on the Ho Chi Mihn Trail. Too slow and vulnerable for daytime operations, B-26K missions were conducted at night. The aircraft were repainted in a dark version of SEA camouflage with black undersurfaces.

The B-26's were based in Thailand. Under an agreement at the time with the Thai government, US bomber aircraft could not be based in Thailand, so the aircraft was once again designated as the A-26A, coming full-circle back to its roots.

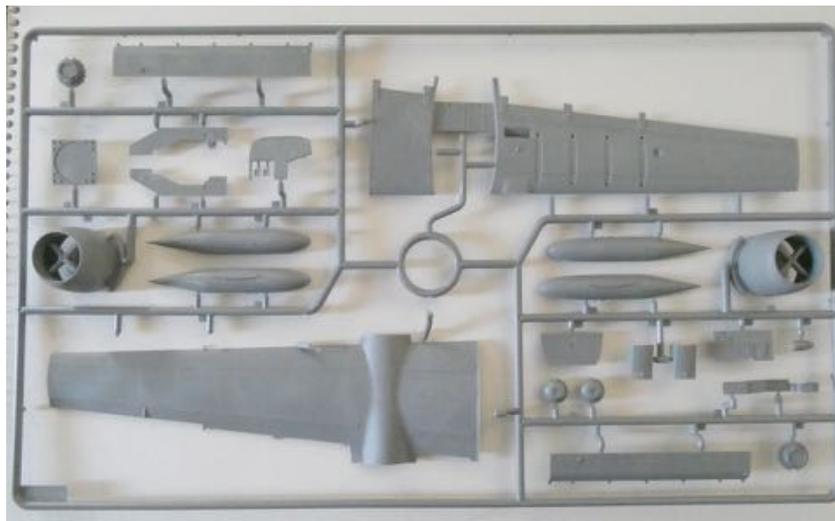
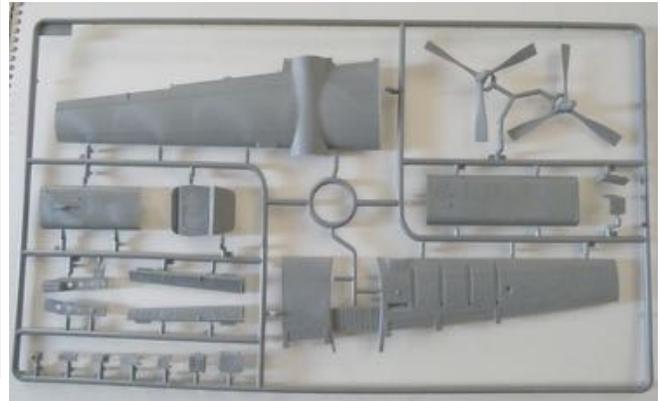
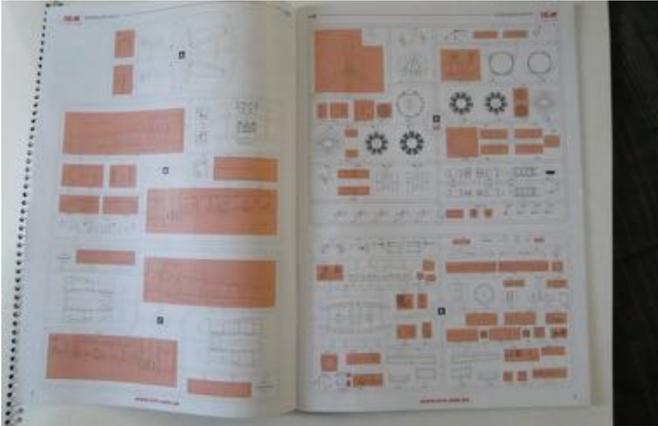
The Air Commandos conducted the truck interdiction mission for 2 years until the A-26's were replaced in the interdiction role by the new AC-130 gunships. The A-26 was the most effective aircraft in the interdiction mission, claiming over 4200 trucks destroyed, but not without cost, with 13 aircraft lost in action.

The A-26's were withdrawn. Five were given to the South Vietnamese Air Force, with the aircraft returning to the US put in storage at Davis Monthan AFB in a ready reserve status in case they were needed again. The remaining aircraft were finally declared surplus in 1976. Most were scrapped, but several were sold to the civilian market. Five examples still exist in museums with a single aircraft still operational on the air show circuit.

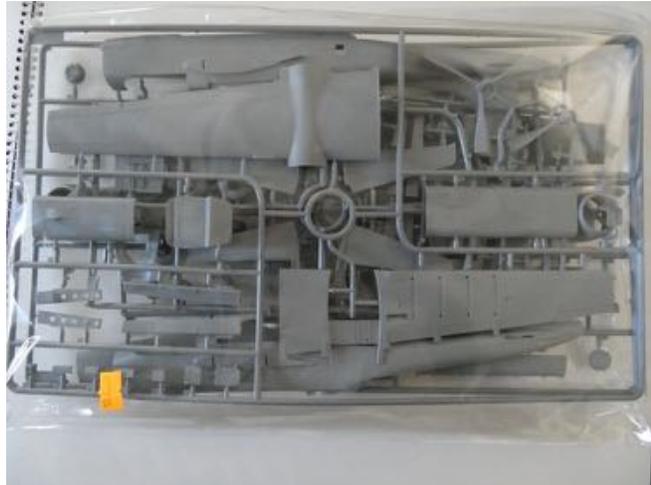
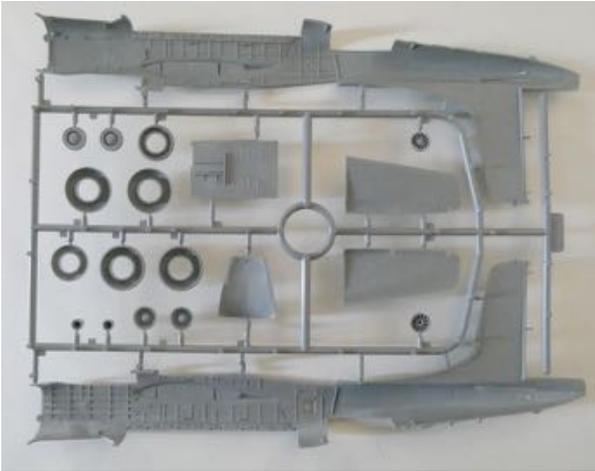
A 1/48th B-26K has been high on many modeler's wish lists for a long time. There have been a couple of false starts, with kits being announced by Dragon and Bobcat, but none have come to fruition. The only way to get a B-26K model in 1/48th was through a conversion kit from one of several aftermarket manufacturers (Aeromaster, OzMods and Cutting Edge produced conversions, with the Cutting Edge being the most complete and accurate) applied to the venerable Monogram A-26, which has a number of issues, the most significant being the fuselage is 7 scale inches too wide, which spoils the sleek lines of the aircraft, making it look bloated

ICM has been getting a lot of mileage out of their lauded new B-26 molds, with 5 different versions released to date (with more on the way) and have answered many a modeler's prayers with the release of the B-26K!

The kit comes in the typical ICM stout white top-opening box with a color oversleeve depicting a B-26K flying low over a misty jungle. The box contains over 300 light gray parts and one clear sprue. Additionally, an entire US Weapons set is included, too.



ICM seems to really have done their homework and captured all the major changes to the B-26K. Glancing at the sprue layout on the instructions, there are a significant number of parts marked "not for use". To their credit, ICM has tooled up a completely new set of wings, with the spar reinforcement caps on upper and lower surfaces. They include the "Congo Cowls" with the revised, shortened carburetor intakes, the enlarged rudder, broad-chord DC-6 props, wing tip tanks, underwing pylons and the revised cockpit with dual controls and new instrument panel. They've included the proper wheels and brakes (the B-26K used wheels and brakes from the KC-135) and even have new proper bolted-style gear cases for the CB16 R2800 engines. Well done, ICM!

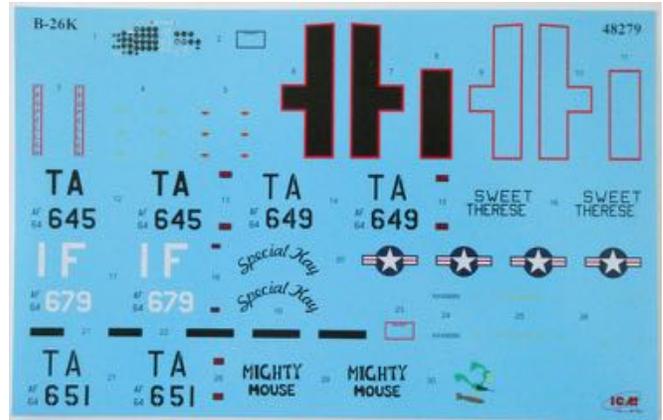
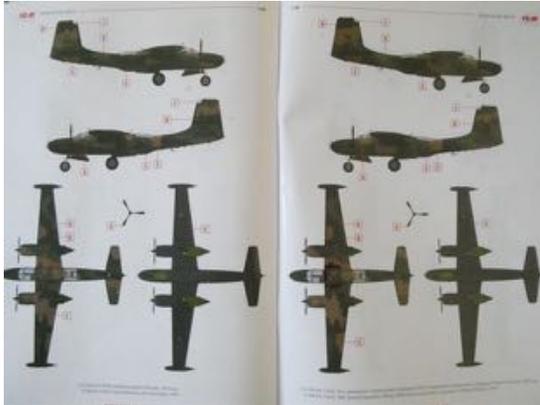


There are minor revisions to the fuselage molding, and many common parts are re-used, such as most of the engines, the landing gear struts, nacelles and horizontal stabs and elevators and the 8-gun nose. The canopy sprue is from the WW2 issue, with both the blown and flat top canopy (which won't be used). Most of the original parts are still in the kit, including the original wings and engine cowls, which is a plus, as it allows you to build an early B-26K which used the standard B-26 cowls.

The kit does share some of the shortfalls of the other ICM B-26's, including some inaccurate panel lines on the nose (easily filled), some sparse detailing in the cockpit and the shape of the windshield to fuselage joint. There has been some controversy about the length of the nose, but it looks right to me



The weapons set contains Vietnam-era weapons, many which are appropriate to the B-26K, including napalm, cluster mine dispensers, rocket pods and Mk.82 Snake-eye retarded bombs. Separate instructions and a decal sheet are included for the weapons.



Decals are included for 4 Vietnam-era aircraft in SEA cammo with black undersurfaces. One option is “Special Kay”, which is the only currently flying B-26K. Inclusion of marking for an early gloss green-over-gray example would have been nice, however.

I’m a bit disappointed that ICM didn’t include the glass nose from their B-26C so a RB-26K could be built. Perhaps they’re going to milk another release from this tool.

Overall, I think ICM has hit it out of the park with this kit. They’ve chosen a sought-after subject and seem to have gone to extra effort to try to produce an accurate B-26K. It would also be a perfect starting point to make one of the colorful On-Mark executive transports.

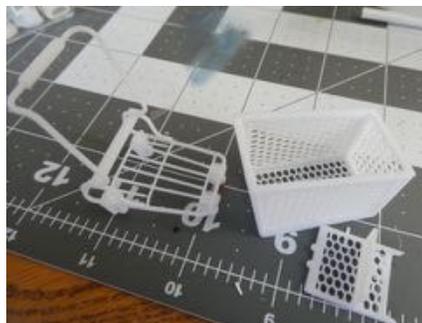
It’s not a cheap kit – retail is around \$100, but there’s a lot of plastic in the box, and it can be had for less. I got mine for \$66 direct from the Ukraine from The Plastic Model Store

DanModels Diorama Accessories

DanModel is a Romanian producer of modeling accessories. They produce pre-cut masking sets, diorama accessories and some very nice display bases

It’s never too early to start preparing your entries for the next Nats, I always say, and I’ve got my contenders!

DanModels 1/24th Shopping Cart



This is really cool. It’s only 3 parts (the frame with wheels, the basket and the divider). It appears to have been 3-D printed. The prototype seems to be the new molded plastic carts you see in all the markets now.

It's only missing the screaming brat in the kiddie seat knocking things off the shelves. Or a homeless person's worldly belongings. They also make this cart in 1/35th

DanModels 1/35th Toilet



Actually 4 toilets! What a deal! This appears to be of the of the commercial low-water-use variety (the kind you have to flush 3 times to get the “contents” to go down), and also appear to be 3-D printed.

Think of the diorama possibilities. You could do a “desert rat” “treasure” collection of yard ornaments (would need a few dead water heaters and washers, though). With 4 toilets in the set, you could do a men’s room, with James Bond beating the crap (literally) out of the bad guy. And does anyone know where I can get a 1/35th Elvis?

These are quite reasonably priced; the toilets were about \$4 (just a buck a toilet!) and the shopping cart was around \$10. I got these from The Plastic Model Store in the Ukraine

Club Demos

None this month

Member Show and Tell, 20th COVID Edition

Here's the roundup from the club e-mail thread

John S. has done a figure. It's a 1/32nd Austrian Pilot from Copper State Models. He's done a great job painting it and it lends a nice sense of scale to his Floh.



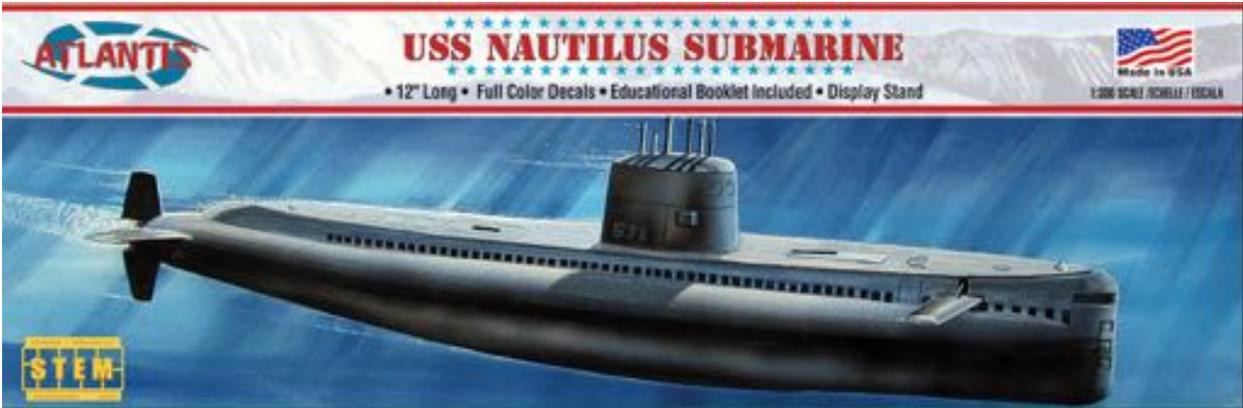
From John: After completing the Floh model, I found this figure from Copper State Models. I spent about four on it and it I think it adds context to the size of the aircraft.

John's also done a nice jet. This is the Kitty Hawk 1/48th SAAB JAS-39 Gripen. This kit has a reputation as being somewhat ill-fitting, which John confirms.



John writes: What a great day! I got to binge on playoff baseball and finish this Kitty Hawk 48th scale SAAB Gripen This is a Czeck Air Force airframe. The kit has some fit issues and at times the instructions are vague It also comes with a ton ordinance for those who like to "bomb up" their airplanes.

Rowdy had a really cool sub at our last outdoor club meeting. This is the Atlantis Models re-issue of the truly Jurassic Lindberg 1/300th USS Nautilus.





Here's Rowdy's write-up:

My build of the 1954 vintage 1:300 Lindberg USS Nautilus
(as re-issued by Atlantis Models)

USS Nautilus (SSN-571), Commissioned on September 30th, 1954. Nautilus was the first Nuclear Submarine, and also the world's first Nuclear Powered Vessel, the brainchild of Captain- later Admiral - Hyman G. Rickover. (Father of today's Nuclear Navy.) In 1958 Nautilus would become the first vessel to transit the Arctic completely under the ice.

I set out with the goal of building one of the 'cleanest' builds of this particular kit, just in time for the 67th Anniversary of the commissioning of the Nautilus. Lindberg originally released this kit as 'The Nautilus Atomic Submarine', kit #704 in 1954. Many today gripe that the kit is not scale, but with the exception of the Deckgun & Missile, the kit was closely based off of the drawings that appeared in the December 20th, 1952 issue of Colliers magazine, which were based off official USN & General Dynamics concept art.

I based the colors off the 'as commissioned' scheme, later Nautilus would be painted in a darker sea gray & black, and ultimately standard black during the 1960's. Torpedos in the 'flooded' tubes, were painted red to represent Mk.16's, which were still in use during the 1950's. The Periscopes, Snorkels, Antennas & Radar Arrays were slightly modified, to present a more 'scale'/plausible appearance. I wet sanded the hull - especially the seams -

and filled in every gap where I could, along with the slot for the missile on top of what would actually be the torpedo loading hatch, and the holes for mounting the rear deckgun. I also sanded off the oversized 'portholes' on the sail. (These are 'accurate' when using the concept art for reference - along with the clear piece representing the plexiglass enclosure on the fairweather - but just look off. The full-size boat had 2 sets of rectangular 'deadlights' on the sail.) I filed the screws a bit to give the impression that they counter-rotate, as on the full scale boat. The deck was hand painted, with no masking. With the exception of the wooden stand, the kit was built ENTIRELY Out Of The Box - including two pieces OF the actual box itself, which were used to make the - bright orange - Rescue Bouy Covers! I debated whether or not I should weather it, and chose not to, built it as a desk model - somewhat in honor of a story involving Admiral Rickover...

Overall, the quality of the Atlantis kit is great! They also include a nice little booklet on the history of Submarines - a nice addition for younger modelers. The decals are a vast improvement over Lindberg's questionable red & white decals! (Both are shown side by side. The original Lindberg kit featured the spurious hull/sail number '181'.) One thing I do wish they would have added - or would offer as an after market item - is a set of decals representing the 'deadlights' (windows) on the real sub, and the orange bouy covers, which were quite noticeable on the full size boat early on. (I would have made my own, but did not have any spare decal film at the moment.)

I hope you enjoy seeing this 'blast from the past' as much as I enjoyed building it!

Calendar

10/23/2021	Third Annual USS Hornet Model Expo and Open Cockpit Day	USS Hornet Sea, Air and Space Museum 707 W. Hornet Ave. Pier 3 Alameda, CA
11/6/2021	ModelZona 2021	Red Mountain Community Church 6061 E. Virginia St. Mesa, AZ
1/29/2022	Spruefest	Brookhurst Hobbies 12188 Brookhurst St. Garden Grove, CA
3/26/2022	Silicon Valley Classic VII	Napredak Hall Inc. 770 Montague Expy San Jose, CA
10/8/2022	IPMS Reno "High Rollers" 21 st Invitational Contest	Reno Elk's Lodge #597 597 Kumle Ln Reno, NV

From the Oval Office – Notes From the Prez

Facing Life's Roadblocks

One of the hardest about “maturity” is having to accept disappointment, or at least put on a brave show about it when all you really want to do is maybe scream invective and throw things. I find myself lately having plans changed every time I check my email...someone needs to have a meeting set up for a student, or the meeting that has been in place for two weeks suddenly must be rescheduled due to the absence of a critical team member or two, and just like that, I need to call home and notify my wife that I'll be missing yet another dinner. Or a planned long-anticipated event must be postponed or cancelled due to changing conditions.

At times like these, I take comfort in having a pastime, a hobby, that brings comfort and satisfaction. Whether I have time to deeply research some critical detail and gather pictures (hopefully color,) or just enough time to clean up a seam or put together a small sub-assembly, I find myself comforted by the feel of the parts and tools in my hand, the sight of a connection becoming smoother. I open a bottle of Testors paint and that familiar smell brings me back to when I first learned to brush some color onto a somewhat pristine surface. Getting the ratios of paint to thinner to retarder just right, then shooting it at the proper pressure, bringing back the delight I first had applying that impossibly-smooth airbrushed finish. The feeling that I have come closer on this project to accurately depicting a moment in time and space in miniature than I did on the last is, to me, the closest I'll get to catharsis--no, satori--in this mortal coil.

May we always have these experiences. Here's to continued good health, inside and out, as we pursue our hobby goals.

Oops. Glued my knife to the workbench again.