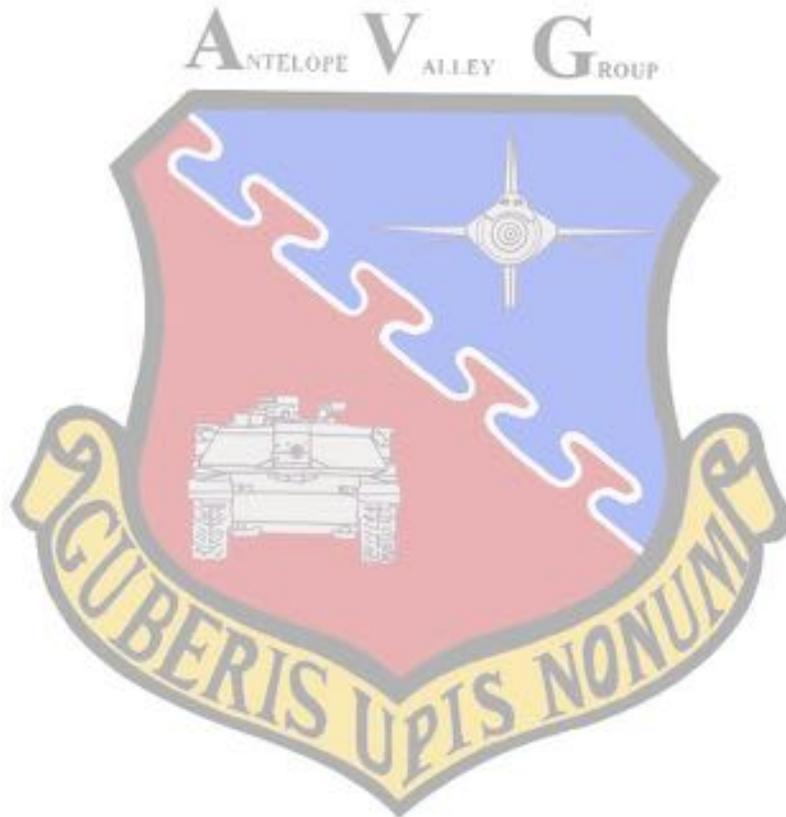


# The Smoking Hole

A Publication of the Antelope Valley Group IPMS

**Volume 26, Number 11**



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## 2021 Club Officers

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## **Club News and Business**

SEPTEMBER PHYSICAL MEETING 10:00 -12:00 am NOVEMBER 20,  
RAWLEY DUNTLEY PARK, 3334 W. AVE. K, LANCASTER. POSSIBLE  
VIRTUAL (ZOOM) MEETING, TBA LATER

### October Meeting General Meeting Notes:

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

### Latest Club Status

Still looking for an indoor venue. A couple of members have reported a couple of leads, but nothing firm yet. COVID resurgence is making this difficult – I note that the Keller Kit Collector's show has cancelled their November show because they couldn't secure a venue.

### 2022 Club Officer Nominations

November brings about the time for nominating the slate of club officers for the following year.

The last 22 months have been difficult ones for the club. The lack of ability to meet in person to any regular degree has put a strain on the cohesiveness of the club and on the club officers.

It's vitally important that the club have members willing to serve if we hope for the club to continue as a viable entity. Prez Dwight and Veep Jay have done a fantastic job, but both have expressed a desire to step down. Here's where I make my yearly appeal for the members to consider volunteering to be an officer. We always seem to have the same small group in the club that volunteer and it would be beneficial to the club to get some new viewpoints. Yes, it's challenging right now and there is work involved, but here's is your chance to shape the direction of the club and see your ideas put into action. I ended up serving my terms as President because I was dissatisfied with the direction the club was going at the time, and the successive President's and VP's have all introduced fresh and innovative ideas that have improved the club. So once again, please consider serving the club we all love so much as an officer.

### In Memoria – Henry Blecha

Received the sad news a couple of weeks ago that long-time AVG member Henry Blecha passed away at age 86. Henry had been involved with the club since its inception and was always an enthusiastic supporter. He had a long career in aircraft weapons testing at the Naval Air Weapons Test Center at China Lake, mostly with aircraft missile systems, and was involved with the China Lake museum. Henry was always willing to share his vast knowledge of aircraft weapons, and gave several detailed presentations on aircraft missiles to the club (I now have no excuse to paint a missile the wrong color and will NEVER paint the forward section of a Sidewinder black again...). Henry was very active in IPMS, and had at one time been the Region 8 Coordinator. I know we will all miss Henry.

### December Gift Exchange

The executive board has been discussing the usual December club gift exchange. The plan is to continue again this year, but whether it will be like last years "Secret Santa" or an in-person exchange is still up in the

air. An in-person exchange would certainly be preferable, but a lot will depend on the search for a venue. The park has been suggested, but it's always a crapshoot what the AV weather's going to be like in December. Stay tuned.

### October Physical Meeting

We had another outdoor meeting at Rawley Duntley park. With the temperatures moderating in the AV in the fall, we had the meeting a little later in the morning than previously. Typical turnout of around 10 members



John's Kitty Hawk Gripen from last month's newsletter



Couple of member's OrangeCon winners:



Jim B.'s gorgeous Revell '41 Chevy truck rod again.  
Well-deserved win

Mike O.'s Land Rover and gas truck

Nillo continued his Jurassic streak. He brought his superannuated Revell 1/570<sup>th</sup> *Titanic* (how's that for an odd-ball scale? From the "fit-the-box" era).



It took Niilo over 100 hours during a span of 9 months to finish this kit (he's lightning-fast compared to me). He painted it with Testors enamels and Tamiya acrylic. He used black and white Sharpie pens for touchup and stiffened the rigging with Elmer's white glue.

Here's Niilo's comments: "On April 10, 1912, the *Titanic* set sail on its maiden voyage with 2200 passengers from Southampton to New York. Considered unsinkable at the time, on the evening of April 14, 1912, the *Titanic* collided with an iceberg and sank in 3 hours, taking 1500 passengers down with it.

The kit presented numerous problems from fit and function, assembly and rigging, as well as instructions to communicate clearly. Trying to match instruction assembly with pictorial presentations required and assembly approach modification to accommodate all rigging requirements.

During assembly, numerous clamps were required to eliminate, or at least minimize, gaps and the need for using filler. A variety of new decking and stack holes were required to somewhat match the pictured rigging tiedowns.

All in all, a challenging build for an assembler. Try it if you want a time-consumer!"

Excellent job on such an ancient kit, Niilo! Now, ready for that Trumpeter 1/200<sup>th</sup> *Titanic*?

## 2021 Meeting Schedule (Tentative)

Primary	Activities	Refreshments	Demo	Review
16 Jan	<b>CANCELLED, Virtual Meeting</b>			
20 Feb	<b>CANCELLED, Virtual Meeting</b>			
20 Mar	<b>CANCELLED</b>			

17 Apr	<b>CANCELLED</b>			
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 <b>CANCELLED</b>			
20 Nov	Physical Meeting, 10 to 12 am, Rawley Duntley Park, Lancaster 2022 Club Officer Nominations			
18 Dec	Gift Exchange			

**The Tool Crib**

No new items this month

## Kit Reviews

### ICM 1/48<sup>th</sup> OV-10A Bronco



The concept for a simple, low-cost close air support aircraft was originally conceived at the Naval Air Weapons Center at China Lake in the early 1960's by 2 Marine Corps officers.

Their concept was for a small turboprop aircraft with a 20-foot wingspan (to enable it to operate from roadways). Armament was proposed as centerline-mounted recoilless rifles. Christening their concept the Light Light Marine Attack Aircraft (L2VMA), the officers even tried to build a fiberglass prototype in one of their garages.

The 2 Marines were ultimately unsuccessful in constructing their prototype, but their lobbying for the concept created enough enthusiasm to lead to the creation of a Tri-Service (Army, Navy, Air Force) specification for a Light Armed Reconnaissance Aircraft (LARA). The LARA was to be a short takeoff and landing (STOL) purpose-built close air support and forward air control (FAC) with greater capabilities than the modified light aircraft (Cessna O-1 and O-2) currently in use for the forward air control mission.

Eleven manufacturers submitted proposals. The competition was eventually won by the North American Aviation NA-300. Convair, who constructed a prototype of their design, the Model 48 Charger, with company funds, protested the award. Their protest was unsuccessful, and the NA-300 was put into production as the OV-10 Bronco.

Eleven pre-production airframes were produced for evaluation. At the end of the evaluation, a number of changes to the design were recommended and implemented, the most significant being the increase in wingspan to 40 ft (from the pre-production 30 ft, which rendered the aircraft no longer capable of operating from roads).

North American produced 360 OV-10's, primarily for the Air Force, Navy and Marines (the Army didn't procure any, already having the OV-1 and lacking a suitable mission). The OV-10 proved quite successful in Vietnam. The Air Force and Marines used the aircraft primarily as an armed FAC, while the Navy employed it as a light attack aircraft with VAL-4, the "Black Ponies".

The Marines pursued and upgraded aircraft for use as a night attack and interdiction aircraft. The Night Observation Gun Ship (NOGS) had an extended nose with a FLIR / laser designator turret and an XM-197 20mm 3-barrel cannon turret under the mid fuselage. It also had upgraded engines, as the OV-10 had been proven to be somewhat underpowered. Designated YOVS-10D, 2 test aircraft were produced. While proven quite effective in tests in Vietnam, no funding was forthcoming and the NOGS was not put in production. The Marines eventually procured a de-contented version that eliminated the M-197 gun as the OV-10D

Two export customers purchased the Bronco. Germany bought the OV-10B for use as a target tug. Some of these aircraft had a turbojet booster engine in a pod above the fuselage. The Philippines bought the OV-10F as a light attack aircraft.

The OV-10 has had quite a long service life. The aircraft remained in US military service until the mid 1990's, participating in Desert Storm. Surplus US Broncos ended up being used by a number of foreign operators, such as Columbia, Morocco, Indonesia and Venezuela.

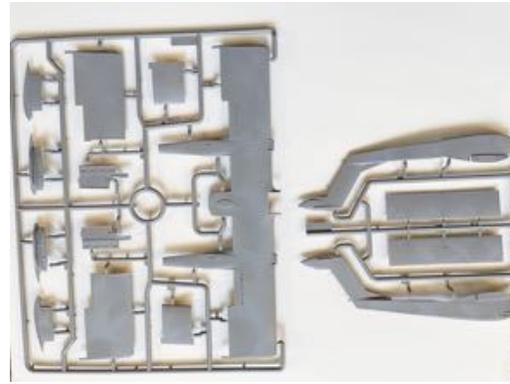
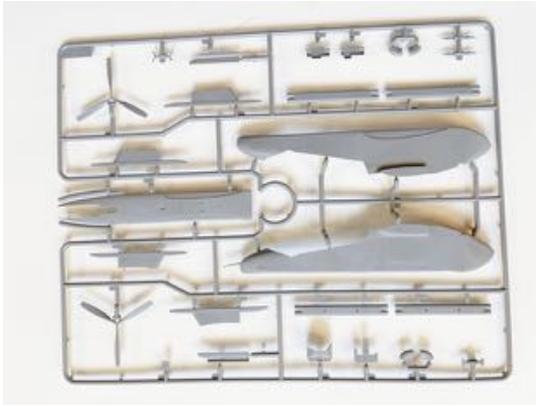
Broncos have been used in civilian service, with both the U.S. Forest Service and the California Department of Forestry (now Cal Fire) using OV-10's as aerial fire coordination and air tanker lead planes. NASA has operated several OV-10's and the U.S. Department of State had a small para-military fleet equipped for crop spraying to eradicate coca plantations in South America.

And just to show that everything old is new again, a modernized version of the OV-10 was considered and evaluated as a counter-insurgency aircraft for use in Iraq and Syria. Three NASA airframes were upgraded with new propellers and avionics as the OV-10G Combat Dragon II and evaluated by the Navy Special Operations Command. An updated OV-10, the OV-10X was proposed by Boeing as a possible Air Force and export light attack aircraft. And it is interesting to note that Icarus Aerospace has proposed a clean-sheet design that looks suspiciously like 21<sup>st</sup> century OV-10...

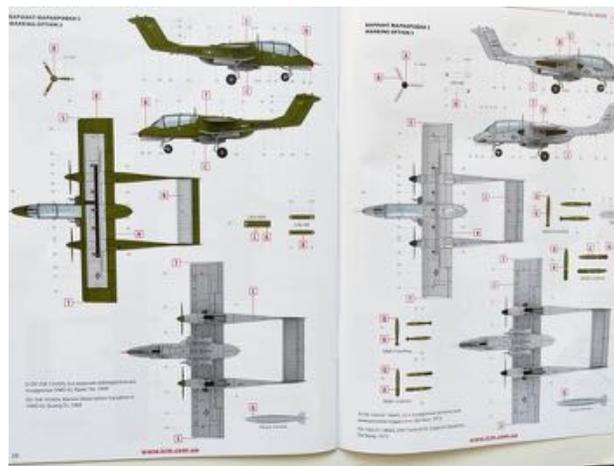
ICM has produced yet another kit on many 1/48<sup>th</sup> modeler's wish lists, the OV-10 Bronco. The only previous 1/48<sup>th</sup> OV-10 was the rather elderly Testors offering, which actually started life as a Hawk kit in 1965. A product of the John Andrews era at Hawk, it was a fairly decent kit for its time, featuring a combination of recessed and raised detail. Typical of its era, cockpit detail was sparse and gear well detail was non-existent. The original release depicted the short-span prototypes, but Hawk later re-tooled the kit to represent the 40-foot span production aircraft. Unfortunately, they added all the additional span outboard of the booms, while the actual aircraft had span added between the fuselage and the booms as well as outboard. However the kit could be made into a presentable, if inaccurate, model. Those desiring an accurate 1/48<sup>th</sup> OV-10 had to resort to aftermarket conversion sets, including a well done set from Paragon and a more recent, rather crude set from Wilde Sau.

You can put away the Jurassic kit and the resin now, as ICM has released a state-of-the-art OV-10

The boxing is typical of ICM with strong top-opening box covered with a color oversleeve. The box art depicts an Marine OV-10 flying low over the jungle with exploding napalm below. ICM has been doing some wonderful box art lately. The box contains around 240 light gray parts and one clear sprue.



Surface detail consist of recessed panel lines and fine raised rivets (correct for an OV-10) The cockpit had multi-piece ejections seats and separate sidewalls. There's no etch included in the kit, so you'll have to source seat harnesses. Two styles of rear instrument panel are included and the gear wells are fully detailed. All control surfaces and flaps are separate and you can show the roll spoilers deployed. Boom parts breakdown is interesting - they're in 4 pieces, 2 halves and a top and bottom piece - basically a box. You get a nice set of appropriate weapons (gun and rocket pods, Mk.82's).



Markings are for 4 aircraft and are pretty standard, 2 gray Air Force aircraft and 2 green Marine examples. There are aftermarket sheets available from AOA and Caracal that offer other options, and Draw Decal has markings for the Cal Fire aircraft. The only real

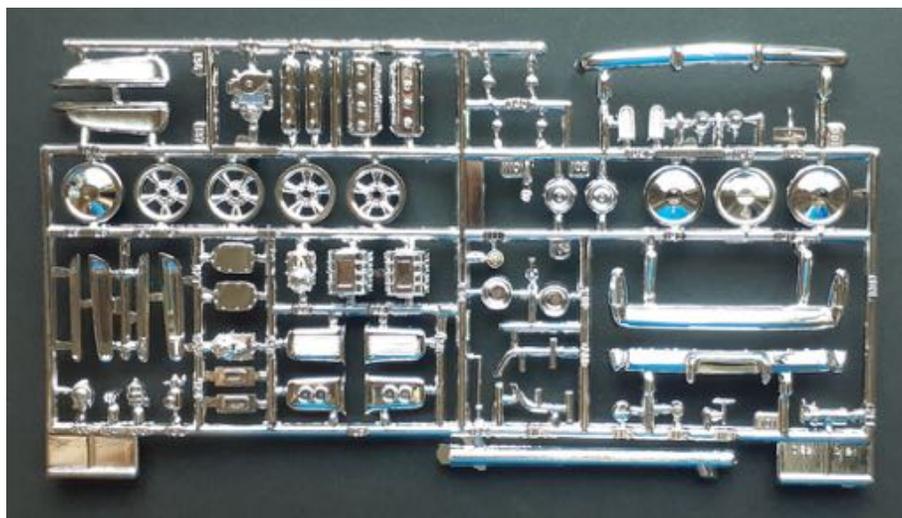
criticisms I have is they molded the canopy sides one piece, so if you want to open the canopy, you'll have to do surgery, and some smaller parts, like the exhaust stacks and wheels are molded in halves. I suspect the Quickboost exhausts for the Hawk/Testors kits will work and there are a couple wheel sets out there.

ICM has been on a roll lately, and they've produced another winner. They've announced they'll be releasing an OV-10D kit also.

The kit is relatively reasonably priced, with retail in the low \$40 range. I got mine for \$31 from my favorite Ukrainian vendor, The Plastic Model Store (and they even send you candy with your order!)

### Round 2 (AMT) 1/25<sup>th</sup> 1953 Studebaker Starliner

John submitted a review of the Round 2 Studebaker Starliner. This probably classifies as "Jurassic" as it is a re-issue of the old AMT kit that dates back to around 1965. The Starliner was one of the most beautiful American car of the '50's. This kit has been re-released numerous times, and I still think it's one of the nicest kits AMT produced in that era.



**Studebaker 1953 Starliner**

Manufacturer: AMT/Round 2 Models  
 Scale: 1/25  
 Kit #: A 1251-200  
 Price: \$25.00  
 Decals: One option  
 Reviewer: John Summerford  
 Notes: Option to build one of three versions

**History**

Courtesy of Classic Driver

Studebakers boasted spectacular styling for 1953 courtesy of designer Bob Bourke of the Raymond Loewy studio based in Studebaker's hometown of South Bend, Indiana. The dramatically sleek car, inspired by the Lockheed Constellation, was astoundingly low by 1953 standards at just 56.3 inches high while accentuated by a long 120.5 wheelbase. The drive train was a 232-cid, 120-hp V-8 and automatic transmission. What should have been a magnificent sales year for Studebaker, turned out to be a rather ho-hum one at-best. Studebaker focused more on sedans rather than coupes, and production ills developed as front-end sheet metal failed to fit the coupe body at first. Demand for the new coupes outpaced sedans four-to-one catching Studebaker product planners off-guard while a strike at the Borg Warner plant curtailed availability of automatic transmissions. The car received numerous design awards and today serves as a landmark of modern design. 19,236 Commander Starliner Coupes were produced for the model year of a total 151,576 Studebakers; fewer than the 1952 model year, dropping the company to tenth in industry sales.

**The Kit**

Frequent readers may suspect that I'm not much of a car guy, so it took some packaging to get my attention. While cruising the website of my (nearly) LHS, the photo of the lid to this tin box and the headline caught my attention. Readers may also suspect that I gravitate to more unusual subjects, so when the package appeared on my doorstep, I quickly tore into the box.

My first observation was that the parts are nicely packed into 12 bags. The second observation was that this is very much a late-60s-early-70s mold. No flash is present on my example, but there are heavy seamlines to clean up. Round 2 proudly notes in the preamble to the instructions that the sprue gates on the chromed pieces are on the back side of the parts. It looks to me that many of the seams are also strategically located.

The total parts count is 113, but which parts are used depends of which version one chooses to build--stock, custom, or racer. The custom version will require some surgery to lower the roof. It, and the racer, use the tinted window parts.

The first step calls for building the engine, either standard or racer. Spark plug wires are not supplied. The next two steps concern the chassis-wheels, then the interior. The instructions are clear as to which parts to use for which version. A metal axle is provided for the rear wheels and a complete suspension is built up for the front wheels and should be able to posed in a turn.

There are no decals for the dashboard. Color notes are generic, indicating paints such as "steel", "black", or "interior color". What interior, or exterior, color to use is left up to the imagination. Step four is the body assembly and the final step is about external details that depend on the chosen version.

### **Conclusion**

The box lid depicts the stock version, while on one long-side shows a custom car and the other side the racer. I spent about half-an-hour on the internet looking at different painting options. The only factory paint scheme that I could verify is that depicted on the lid--red body and white roof. Possibly, another factory scheme is teal body and pale green roof. My example's body could use some polishing before priming. I suspect that files and patience will be needed to get parts to fit well. I'm sure that car modelers will find that this is a typical kit. The end result should be a sleek looking car.

## Club Demos

### *Working with 3-D decals*

One of the more exciting (perhaps revolutionary) developments in scale modeling in the past couple of years is the introduction of color 3-D decals.

Long time dry transfer producer Archer Fine Transfers introduced 3-D decals a number of years ago with a series of rivets, access panels and weld beads, but these were simply monochromatic resin deposited on decal film.

The new color 3-D decals are in a whole new league, however, and are really quite stunning, able to reproduce textures, full-color cockpit components down to the individual switches and simulated clear “glass” covering of individual instruments.

The pioneer of this product is Quinta Studios in Russia. Quinta produces an ever expanding line of cockpit detailing sets, and is expanding into other applications, such as color wing rib tapes. A number of other manufacturers have since introduced their own lines, such as Eduard, with their “Space” line (which also includes supplemental photo-etched parts along with the 3-D decals), Red Fox Studio from Hungary (an offshoot of Hungarian Aero Decals) and Kits World from the UK.

If you're curious as to the technology used to produce these decals, they are made using a 3-D inkjet printer. The basic concept is similar to the inkjet computer printers you're all used to, but the 'ink' is colored, UV-curing acrylic resin. The printer builds up the part in layers, each layer cured by a UV light source in the printer before the next layer is deposited. These printers are produced by Mimaki in Japan. They are quite expensive – the standard model is \$30K and a newer, more capable version is \$50K. The standard model prints at 1200dpi, with a 28 micron layer thickness. The printers are quite capable – the larger ones can produce parts weighing up to 70 lbs. There's a picture on Mimaki's site of a full-scale human head produced by one of these printers. Here's a link to the basic printer on Mimaki's site: <https://mimaki.com/product/3d/3d-inkjet/3duj-2207/>

I thought I'd give a demo on how to work with this new product. The subject is an Edward Fw190A-3 (the second-generation kit), and I'll be using the Quinta set for this kit.

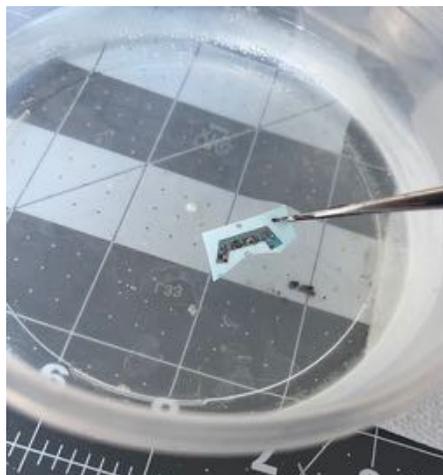


This is one of Quinta's earlier sets. The set includes instrument and side console details, a seat cushion, plus some additional smaller details, such as the throttle, gun charging handles, and rudder pedal straps.

There is a second small sheet with a seat harness set. Quinta provides a placement guide with color photos, and a generic set of instructions on how to use the decals.



Let's get started, shall we? First step is to prep the parts. As with photo-etch, any raised detail on a part the decal will be placed on needs to be removed (Quinta notes which parts on the instructions). The Eduard kit includes flat instrument panel parts for use with their photo-etch, and Quinta specifies these part numbers in the instructions).



The decal to be installed is trimmed from the sheet and separated from the backing paper by the usual method of dipping in warm water. But the next step in the application process is where these decals differ from standard decals. While the decals can be applied like standard decals, Quinta recommends they be applied with adhesive, as due to the decals size and weight, the standard decal adhesive will be insufficient to hold the decals in place.

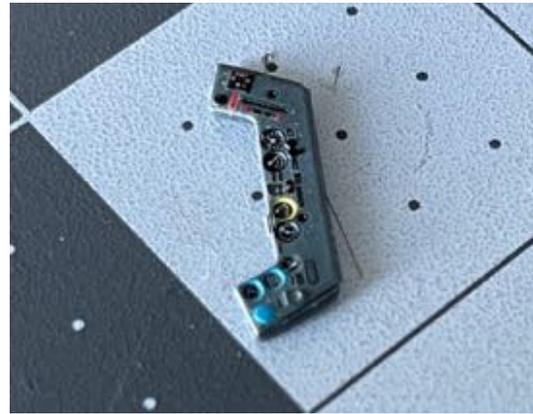
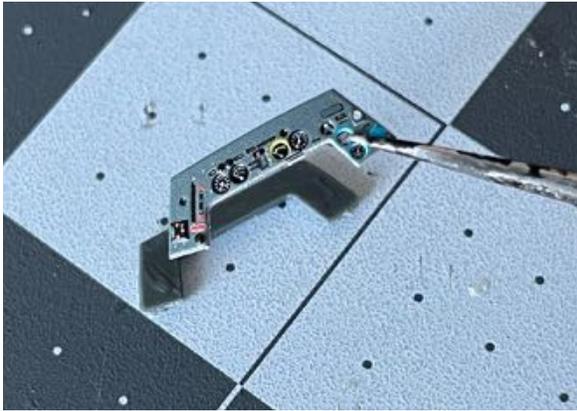


So after removing the decal from the backing, it is placed on a paper towel for a few seconds to blot away the water.

Quinta recommends a PVA glue to affix the decals, but suggests a clear acrylic (such as Future or Tamiya clear) can also be used. Super glue could also be used, but you will only get once chance to position them.



I used my long-time favorite photo-etch adhesive, Gator Grip Thick PVA.



Apply a thin film of glue to the plastic part and attach the blotted decal. Done! Easy, peasey, lemon squeezy!

Quinta advises against using setting solutions, as some solutions may damage the acrylic the decals are made from. They do say that the decals can be weathered using most weathering products. I can confirm they are indeed impervious to Mig Ammo enamel-based washes.

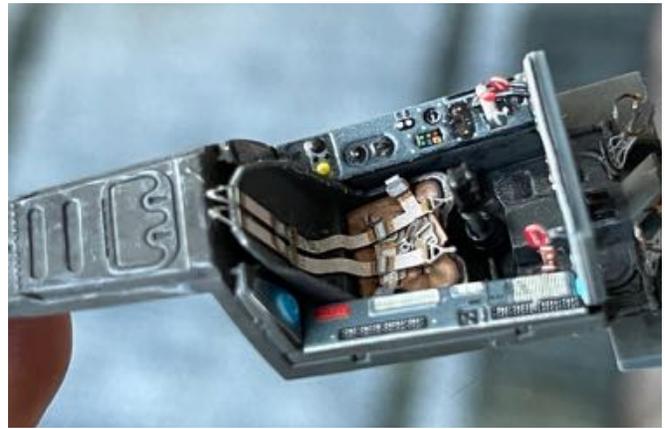
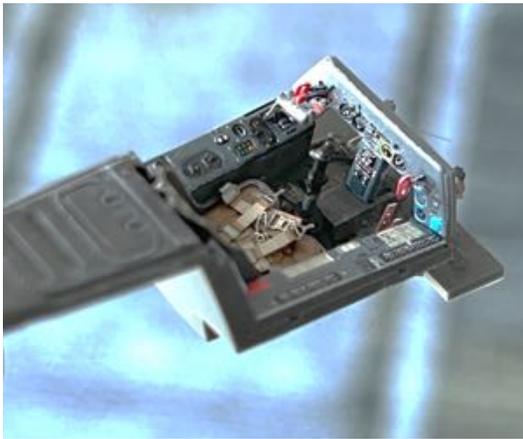
The decals have a rubbery texture and are somewhat flexible, which is advantageous for application to curved surfaces and for the seat harnesses. The flexibility has its limits, though. The rudder pedal straps broke when I attempted to bend them to the tight radius needed to install them, so I used the Eduard etch straps.

I didn't use the Quinta harnesses, as I didn't like the look of them. I used some Eduard steel etch harnesses. Some of harnesses in later sets look quite nice, however. I think one of the things I don't like about the Quinta harnesses is that the metallic silver on the buckles has a mottled appearance (like a dot screen-likely an artifact of the printing process). I may try dry brushing the buckles with silver paint and see if it improves the appearance.

One of the criticisms of Eduard's color etch is color accuracy. Quinta's colors look pretty good, although their rendition of RLM66 seems a bit light (the Eduard etch is darker), and is lighter than the Gunze RLM66 I used. One of the interesting aspect is that the color goes all the way through the parts, so items like handles and levers are colored on both sides.

What's the verdict? There have been several methods to try and produce a realistic-looking cockpit for those without the skills or inclination to try painting tiny details. There have been decals to apply over the raised detail, pre-colored photo etch, colored cast resin (Eduard's "Look" line) and now 3-D printed decals. I think these are a real advance and are superior to previous technologies. Their flexibility makes them easier to apply than etch, they don't tend to chip like color etch and the detail relief is superior and doesn't require layering. Small details like control levers are thicker with the printed decals, which makes them easier to handle, but in some instances, the thinness of etch might be more in scale.

Cost is similar to etch sets or slightly less, and make producing a crisp detailed cockpit with minimum effort. A real advance for the hobby.

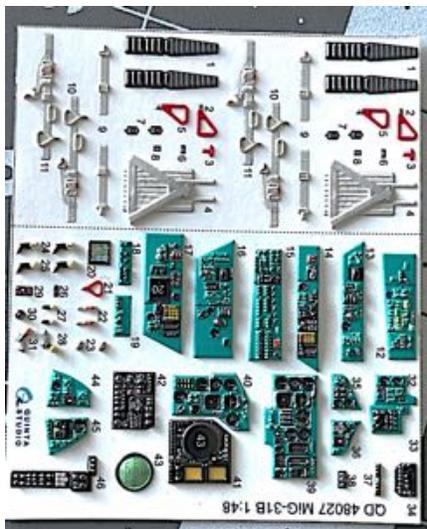


Here's the result. What do you think?

*Bonus: Who makes the best 3-D printed decals?*

As I mentioned above, there are currently 4 companies offering 3-D printed decal sets

Quinta Studios in Russia is the pioneer, and they offer the greatest selection. They tend to release 2 or 3 new sets every couple of weeks, and are now offering sets for armored vehicles (mostly Russian). Quinta sets typically include instrument panels and side switch consoles, along with seat harnesses. Some of their sets include other extras, such as cockpit sidewalls and textured seat pads, ejection handles, etc. The printing on the Quinta sets is crisp and the colors vibrant. The detail on some of the items is quite remarkable.



Quinta set for the AMK Mig-31. This shows the vibrant colors and some of the extras, like seat pads



Set for the 1/32 "Mengnuts" Dr.1. Has extras like stitching and wire grommets. "Wood" is really cool.

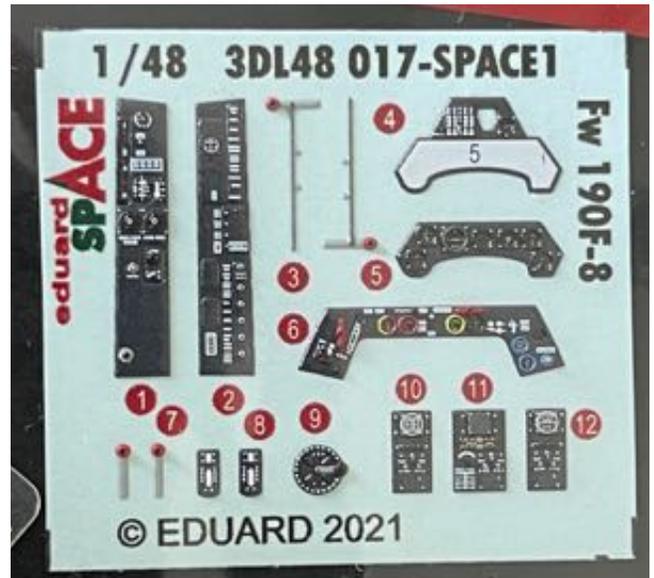


The level of some of the detail is quite remarkable. This is the aft cockpit bulkhead for a 1/48 V-22 Osprey

Eduard was the next manufacture to release 3-D printed decals with their “Space” line. Eduard now offers 3 different technology options for cockpit detailing – color photoetch, colored cast resin (“Look”) and 3-D decals (“Space”). Eduard’s philosophy with “Space” is rather different, as they include a small photo-etch sheet along with the 3-D decals. The etch sheet includes Eduard’s well-known pre-painted harnesses and sometimes other details that look more in-scale in etch. Compared to Quinta, the contrast of the Eduard decals appears ‘flatter’, with the colors less vibrant. It’s interesting to compare Quinta and Eduard sets for the same intended kit, as each manufacture includes different items on their sheet.

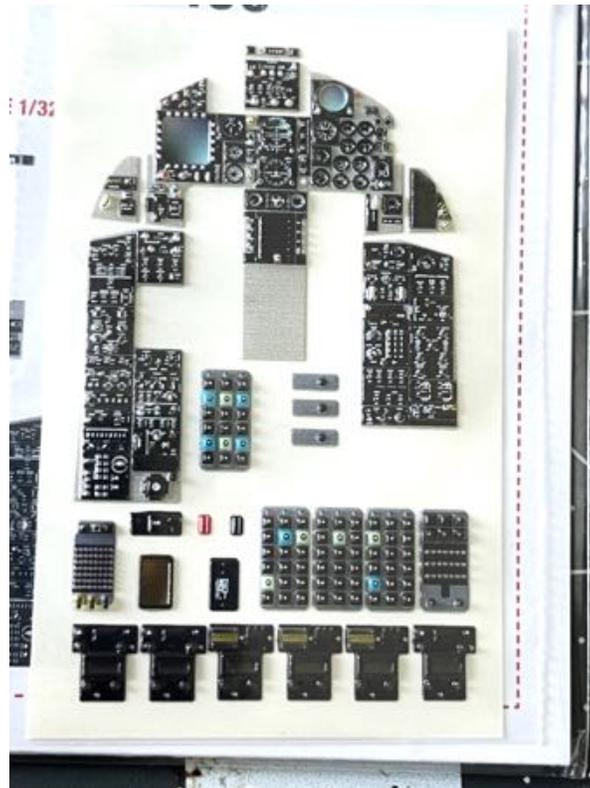


Typical Eduard “Space” set. This is for an FW 190



Compare this to the Quinta set in my demo

A newer entrant is Red Fox Studio from Hungary. This appears to be an offshoot of Hungarian Aero Decals. Red Fox sets are a bit different in that they tend to only contain the instrument and switch panels – they usually don't include harnesses or other details. They have what they call a "Black" series, which depict the cockpit displays of glass-cockpit aircraft in the 'off' state, appropriate for a parked aircraft (most kit decals and Eduard sets show the displays 'on'). Another neat thing is that while Quinta and Eduard tend to only produce sets for more recent kits, Red Fox makes some sets for older kits, including some older Revell and Monogram kits. They also have a larger number of helicopter sets than the others. The quality of the Red Fox sets is pretty much equivalent to Quinta.



*Red Fox set for the 1/32 Tamiya F-15C. Also includes the faces for the avionics boxes behind the cockpit. Unfortunately, they don't have a "Black Line" version of this set*

The newest producer is Kits World decals from the UK. They offer cockpit panel sets similar to Red Fox, and have generic harness sets (UK, US, German) available separately. One item they offer the others don't are ammunition belts for various calibers and countries. The printing on the Kits World cockpit set I have is not as sharp as the others and some of the colors seem a little off.



*Kits World set for the 1/48<sup>th</sup> Tamiya Mosquito. You be the judge*

How do I rate them?

First place is Quinta. They offer the largest selection; the quality is first rate and some of the sets have some interesting extras.

A close second is Red Fox. I'd rate them equal to Quinta if they included more items in their set.

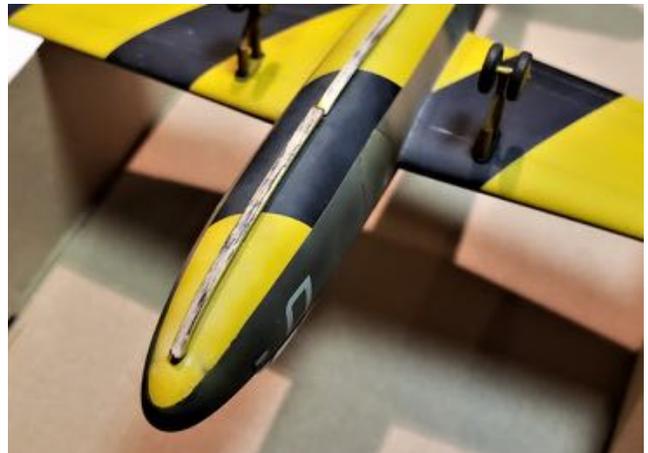
Eduard is third. Their decals just don't look as sharp as the first two, but the inclusion of the etch is interesting.

Kits World is last. Their decals just aren't as good quality. But they do offer some subjects the others don't, and the ammo belts are really cool (much better than flat etch ammo)

## Member Show and Tell, 22<sup>st</sup> COVID Edition

Not many threads in this month's e-mail chain

Bill K. had done an incredible job on a truly Jurassic piece, the 1/72 Frog Hotspur glider. Bill's is the Russian Novo re-release. Novo has an interesting history. They bought all the assets of the pioneering British model company Frog, but had no way to produce the kits in the Soviet Union, so the kits continued to be molded in the UK for a number of years.





Here's what Bill has to say about the build: I finally finished my Hotspur. I find off beat aircraft like this more fascinating as time moves on. Here is my spiel, including some history...

The General Aircraft Hotspur was an early British assault glider, first flown in 1940. Its carriage was limited to six soldiers and two pilots. One source described it as barely a stepping stone between pre-war sailplanes and more substantial troop gliders like the Airspeed Horsa. In any event, Hotspurs were never used in combat, but they were extensively used as glider pilot trainers, a role not originally intended. Former Hotspur Instructor Pilot John Sproule said that Hotspurs suffered from a weak horizontal tail structure, inadequate braking upon landing, canopies that would depart the aircraft after takeoff due to hinge screws not set deep enough, and a tail skid that would rip away when the glider was turned by ground tugs. Under these circumstances operational availability was sometimes as low as 30%, yet Mr. Sproule concluded, **"In spite of its great shortcomings...the Hotspur...was a most successful and fortuitous adaptation which did an excellent job and made the great glider armadas of World War II possible"**. It was a time of using what was available, or use nothing. Hotspur production ended in 1943, with more than 1000 built.

FROG created the 1/72 scale Hotspur kit in the early 1960's, but this build is a NOVO "re-pop" from the 1970's. Internal and external detail is limited among roughly two dozen parts. The cockpit interior consists of only a floor and two seats. The nose area lacks any impression of the glider's pitot-static sensors, and landing gear accuracy is a bit questionable. The ailerons, elevators, and rudder are molded separately, as are the left and right troop compartment access doors, yet no internal furnishings are included. Overall fit is acceptable, but putty is needed around the wing roots, the tail area, and to fill sink marks. The small porthole windows must be sanded and polished to match the fuselage contours, and the canopy fits with difficulty. I added pilot joysticks and some internal canopy bracing detail.

The paint scheme is standard British camouflage topside, with black and yellow training markings beneath. I usually free-hand camouflage schemes, unless hard lines are required. All primary colors are enamels, while clear coats are Testors lacquer. I weathered the model using artists oils, pastels, colored pencils, and manual chipping. I scavenged decals from several different sheets because the original forty year old decals were unusable. As such, the final appearance is representative of a service Hotspur, but does not depict a specific aircraft. A surprising amount of Hotspur reference material is available on the internet, such as the complete set of Pilot's Notes and lots of nice color photos with the crews.

During my research, I learned many facts about British glider pilot training. The Glider Pilot Regiment (GPR) was operated under the authority of the British Army, not the RAF. Applicant selection and training were rigorous, and since glider pilots had to also fight as soldiers they were forced to endure "Battle School" before learning to fly. Initial GPR flight training was done in powered aircraft, like the de Havilland Tiger Moth. Power-off/spot landings were emphasized, but trainees were also taught formation flying and aerobatics. Once they had mastered these skills and soloed the Tiger Moth, they were sent to glider school where they met the Hotspur, then on to the Horsa or maybe the Hamilcar...and so forth

## 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 <sup>st</sup> Invitational Contest	Reno Elk's Lodge #597 597 Kumle Ln Reno, NV

## **From the Oval Office – Notes From the Prez**

Not received at press time...