

# THE NAVIGATOR

The Official Newsletter of the Alamo Squadron Modeling Club

March 2024

## President's Corner - By Keith Rule



**M**odel Fiesta 42 is now in the books. We had 391 model entries, 114 contestants, 55 vendors, 145 tables sold, 398 visitors, 40 club members volunteering,

and a total of approximately 700 attendees. We had people travel from Arizona and Louisiana. I believe it was a well-run event and I am proud of our club's teamwork and efficiency. Well done, Alamo Squadron. My thanks to all of you for your help. Model Fiesta 43 is scheduled for January 4, 2025.

The election of the 2024-2025 club officer positions will take place in April, with nominations made at the March 7 meeting. We have three elected officer positions: President, Vice President, and Treasurer. The criteria for officers as described in our Constitution and By-Laws document is as follows:

1. The individual must be an active Life or Adult (dues current) member who has been a member of the club for at least one year.
2. The individual shall live within a 150-mile radius of the Alamo Mission.
3. The individual must display the ability and willingness to discharge

the duties of the respective Executive Board position.

4. The individual must be a current member of IPMS USA and remain so during the term of office on the
5. Alamo Squadron Executive Board or join IPMS USA prior to the date upon which the election for office of Alamo Squadron is conducted and remain a member of IPMS USA during the term of service on the Alamo Squadron Executive Board.
6. The individual must be an active model builder.
7. Members shall serve no more than three consecutive terms as an officer (either elected or appointed), being eligible for additional service after at least a one-year hiatus.

Our next meeting is on Thursday, March 7. I remind you that the meeting has been moved from Jordan Ford to a new location at 2411 Pat Booker Road, Universal City, TX 78148. This is Jordan Ford's ancillary facility. Please remember to bring your own chair. Rob Booth will be presenting a demonstration on "Pre-shading with Acrylic Ink". The monthly contest theme is "First Love (What got you started in modeling)". Don't ask me the criteria for this!

See Ya', *Keith*

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## Model Fiesta - By Chris Menold

**M**odel Fiesta #42 (MF 42) was held on Feb. 10th at the New Braunfels Convention Center. I would like to extend the MF 42 staff thanks to all volunteers who made this show a success. I would also point out that the staff included a lot of new faces, mine included, and we owe our success to our mentors and the lessons learned in MF 41. Their deliberate plans for leadership continuity maintained the high quality and reputation of our show.

The bottom-line numbers are only one measure of success, but it's worth celebrating a show with \$7,749 expenses made a profit of 5,574. Mark Verdi, our vendor coordinator, was lauded by vendors for his attention to their needs and he even sold extra tables on the day of the event to exceed our planned income. Lee Washburn's overflowing raffle table tempted many, making \$2,045 vs our planned target of \$1,500. General admission recorded 514 paying adults, and 114 contestants registered for the contest.

The other measure of success is all the overwhelmingly positive feedback I heard from every aspect of the show. Head judges Chris Lenahan and Joe Bianco smoothly hosted 391 contest entries in our cramped

**Chris Menold**

**Director, Model Fiesta 42,**



showroom. Next year Joe will rotate to be the head judge as part of the leadership continuity plan. Again, many thanks to the volunteers from our club, and around region 6, who helped with judging. Vendors were happy with the foot traffic and sales.

The convention center staff were extremely helpful before and during the event, and they repeatedly commented how much they enjoy hosting our show's collegial community of hobbyists. After the show, a nice group of us drifted down two blocks for beers, German food, and conversation at Krause's Café.

There's always room to improve; to that end our staff have already conducted a hotwash. MF43 will be back bigger and better. I am personally excited we will have the full facility for years to come. No more reduced categories, and I hope to break the contest room into five rooms for seminars, make & takes, and any other good ideas that come our way!

# A6M2 Pearl Harbor Zero

*Joe Bianco's Alamo Squadron 2023 Annual Award Winner*

## Building Eduard's 1/48 Scale A6M2 Pearl Harbor Zero

By Joe Bianco

[www.mercenarymodels.com](http://www.mercenarymodels.com)



### Building Eduard's 1/48 Scale A6M2 Pearl Harbor Zero

In the history of WWII aviation, few aircraft evoke the same level of fascination and admiration as the Mitsubishi A6M2 Zero. Symbolizing Japanese air power during World War II, the Zero's sleek design and formidable performance left an indelible mark on the course of aerial warfare. With the release of Eduard's 1/48 scale TORA, TORA, TORA! Dual Combo A6M2 Zero kit, modelers now have the opportunity to realistically recreate this iconic aircraft in stunning detail. This article will briefly explore the rich history of the A6M2 Zero, delve into the features of Eduard's kit, and cover my experience building and presenting this legendary aircraft.

**A Brief History of the A6M2 Zero:** The Mitsubishi A6M Zero was designed as a carrier-based fighter aircraft for the Imperial Japanese Navy in the late 1930s after the Japanese embarked on designing their own aircraft versus producing military aircraft built under foreign licenses. Designed by Japanese engineer, Jirō Horikoshi, the Zero was introduced in 1940, the A6M2 variant, known as the "Zero-Sen" or "Zeke" to the Allies, quickly gained a reputation for its exceptional maneuverability and long range. It played a prominent role in the early stages of the Pacific War, including the devastating attack on Pearl Harbor, where it demonstrated its superiority over opposing Allied aircraft.

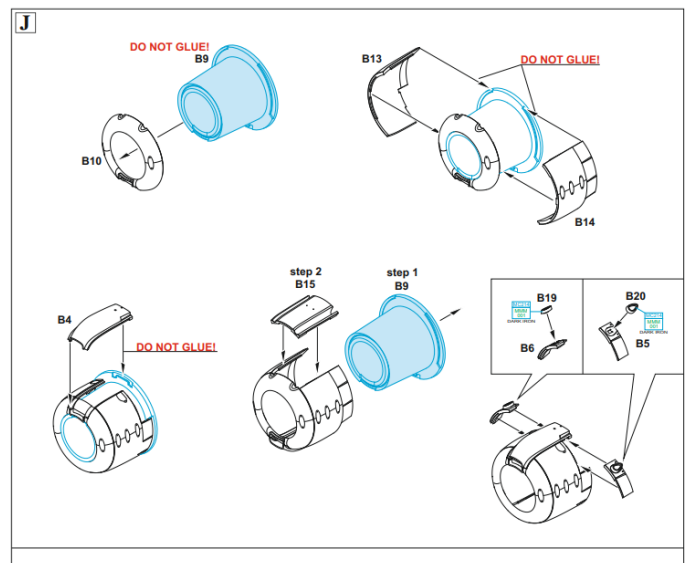


**Eduard's Zero Kit:** With its release in January 2022 Eduard's 1/48 scale A6M2 Zero is arguably the best representation of this legendary aircraft at this scale. The Dual Combo box comes with parts to complete two complete aircraft. The gray molded plastic is finely represented with excellent recessed panel lines and surface details. The kit comes with a highly detailed cockpit, engine, photo etch detail parts, pre-cut masks and decals representing 12 different aircraft that participated in the Pearl Harbor attack. The clear parts are crisp and allow the modeler to build different variants. This kit offers modelers the opportunity to create a faithful replica of the Zero with unparalleled accuracy and detail. Since this release, Eduard has released several variants and an array of resin and photo etch detail sets.

**Construction:** I built the model mostly straight from the box following the sequence in the instructions. Like most Eduard kits this kit requires some patience, attention to individual part numbers and model variants. There are many parts, some fiddly and small. As is typical of an Eduard kit, the instructions, while generally well ordered and laid out, can sometimes be a bit vague and require studying parts, instructions or simply what is in front of you. Test-fitting before gluing will be rewarded.

While I built some sub-assemblies like the main wings, horizontal stabilizers, engine, and landing gear in no particular order, the sequence of construction and assembly begins with the cockpit. The cockpit is highly detailed and a nice design when complete and slides into the assembled fuselage halves precisely. I used the PE supplied for the instrument panels and side panels, however I stripped the pre-painted brass and airbrushed them to match the appropriate color used in the rest of the cockpit. For the instruments themselves I used AirScale Japanese instrument dials with a dab of some high gloss for the bezels.

**Finish:** After the cockpit is in place the rest of the assembly is fairly straight forward requiring minimal filling and sanding. One innovative feature is the engine cowl assembly. Eduard provides a jig to assemble the seven pieces that make up the major components of the cowl.



The landing gear is made up of multiple pieces and is again highly detailed. However, a drawback is the weak attachment points for the main gear struts. The small pins make it difficult to maintain positive attachment and gear alignment. I substituted the kit wheels for Eduard's aftermarket 3-D printed wheels with excellent tread pattern, flattened bottom and detailed rims and wheel covers. I feel this small detail makes a noticeable difference as they are much more detailed than the kits wheels and highly visible on the model.

Recently I have been playing with rare earth magnets for various attachments of parts. On the Zero, I drilled holes on the flat bottom of each wheel and inserted small magnets where the wheel contacts the base. Later I painted the rising sun on a 4" x 7" sheet metal plate and mounted it to a spare (3<sup>rd</sup> place) plaque to serve as a display base. The magnets keep the model in place (though not permanently) and also help with keeping the perpetually loose landing gear properly aligned. Another weakness of the kit I found is the attachment of the horizontal stabilizers. Eduard provides a simple tab in a slot for attachment. Without support, the tips of the stabilizers will tend to droop down and require a jig when gluing in place and drying to maintain horizontal alignment.

One last area that requires attention is the seam along the top of the fuselage. While not overly problematic in itself, the requisite sanding, however minimal, will eliminate the fine rivet detail and will need to be replaced with a riveting tool. I used a rivet tool I made some twenty-five years ago from an old watch cog and brass rod, the spacing was close enough but I've since purchased a newer tool that would have been better suited for the job.

**Finish:** According to Eduard's profile, the plane I chose to represent was that flown by PO1c Yukuo Hanzawa from the carrier Shokaku. This aircraft did not participate directly in the attack on Pearl Harbor instead Hanzawa flew patrol over the Japanese Carrier group during the second attack wave. Apparently, Hanzawa later gained fame for landing his plane on a damaged, smoldering Shokaku during the Battle of the Coral Sea without the use of arresting wires. He was later killed in action during the Battle of Santa Cruz on October 26, 1942 by an F4F Wildcat flown by Lt. Ken Bliss, section leader of VF-72 off the USS Hornet. While learning the history of the pilot was interesting, I freely admit that I chose this aircraft simply because I planned to create custom masks and paint as many of the markings as possible and even for a Zero this aircraft had relatively simple marking.

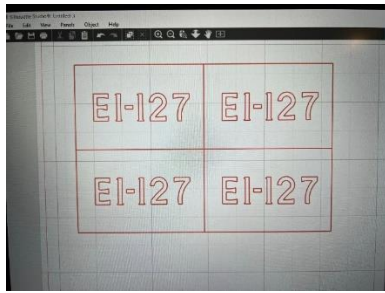
I painted the Zero using mostly Mr. Color lacquer paints. The natural metal finish of the propeller was done using Alclad aluminum. It's important to note that I didn't follow the mixing ratios provided by Eduard for the overall paint scheme but rather used Mr. Color 128 Gray Green straight from the bottle (thinned appropriately for airbrushing of course). I found this color to be a better match (at least to my eye) than what was suggested in the instructions.

Like many modelers today, I prefer to paint marking when I can rather than use decals. And since I have never been a fan of Eduard's decals (despite how beautifully they are printed) this was not a hard decision to make. Therefore, most of the markings were drafted in CAD software, saved as .dxf files, imported and cut with my Silhouette Cameo 4 cutter. I chose to cut my masks using Oracal 810 vinyl stencil film. This included all national insignias, tail codes, fuselage stripe and other markings. I like to use Frisket artist film instead of traditional, sticky transfer tape for delicate masks like tail logos as the light tac makes it easier to keep the cut masks together for placement and is easier to remove maintaining the masks proportions. Once laid in place it's just a matter of removing the areas that need to be painted. I also used my cutter to create a rising sun mask for the base.

The only kit decals I used were the small stencils located at various locations on the model. One tip I learned when using Eduard decals is instead of trying to peel back the thick carrier film with tweezers (which inevitably results in a torn decal) I will apply mineral white spirits to the decal and with a soft brush gently rub until the carrier film forms a gooey ball and can be removed. This results in a nice "painted on" look with no visible carrier film with low risk of damaging the decal. I usually wait to do this until after decal has set at least 24hrs before doing this.

Weathering was simple and kept at a minimum. Tamiya black and brown enamel panel line washes were applied to bring out the suburb recessed details on the kit. After application the panel liner was wiped off with a rag slightly dampened with paint thinner to remove the wash on the surface yet preserve what is deposited in the recessed areas. Additionally, various shades of oil paint washes were applied to give some depth to the overall finish particularly for engine exhaust and other areas that tended to collect dirt.





The Eduard's 1/48 scale A6M2 Zero is a fun kit to build and offers' modelers a great opportunity to replicate one of the most iconic aircraft of World War II with a high degree of detail and accuracy at this scale. The kit on its own builds up into a rewarding model and provides a nice platform to launch into a super detailed build if desired. I have purchased several Eduard aftermarket accessories for the engine, cockpit, flaps, and other upgrades that I intend to use on future models.

After being away from the hobby for close to two decades I was surprised, honored and a bit humbled to have won the 2023 Alamo Squadron Model of the Year. Upon returning to the bench and re-joining the club this past year, one thing struck me immediately. That one thing is the depth of talent within the hobby across all genres. To be blunt, there are a lot of damn good modelers out there and IPMS Alamo Squadron has more than its share. When looking over this year's competition for the 2023 MoY, I observed several models on the table that I felt were worthy of the trophy. Therefore, while I accept the award and am proud to have my name on it, I also would like to extend my congratulations to everyone who participated and continue to raise the bar to the high standard making this award deserves.

Thank you!

The Eduard's 1/48 scale A6M2 Pearl Harbor Zero offers modelers a great opportunity to replicate one of the most iconic aircraft of World War II in high detail and scale.



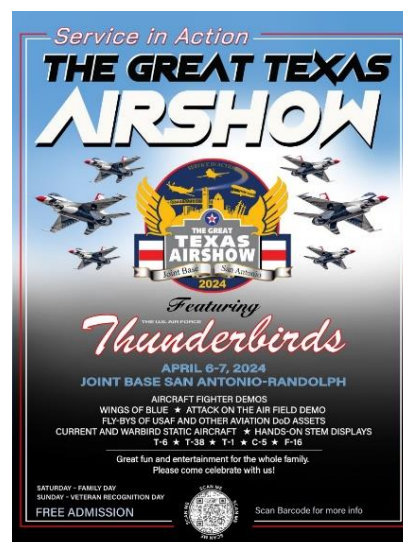


# On The Horizon

## Upcoming 2024 Events

By Alan Larrumbide

The Great Texas Air Show is coming back to JBSA Randolph again this year! This is a FREE event scheduled for April 6-7, 2024. If you are interested in premium reserved seating, you can visit [The Great Texas Air Show](#) | [Joint Base San Antonio](#) | [JBSAToday](#) | [502 FSS](#) for information. The Thunderbirds will be headlining the show with other demos to include the F-22, F35A, F35B, A-10C, HH-60G, along with shows like Tora, Tora, Tora re-enactment, Shetterly Demo Squadron, Aftershock Jet Truck and many others. There will be lots of WWII static displays as well such as a B-24, B-25, P40E, C-47 and others.



Date	Event	Location
March 9	<a href="#">RiverCon</a> 2024	Shreveport La
March 23	<a href="#">Metroplex</a> Car Modelers Association Showdown 2024	Plano, Tx
April 13	<a href="#">Tigerfest</a> 29	Metairie, La
April 20	<a href="#">Route 66 Model Expo</a>	Tulsa Ok
May 4	<a href="#">Houston Model Mania 2024</a>	Safford Tx
May 18	<a href="#">CALMEX 37</a>	Sulphur, La
May 25	<a href="#">2024 Scalefest</a>	Grapevine, TX
June 15	<a href="#">OkieDokieCon 2024</a>	Bethany, Ok
June 22	<a href="#">SummerCon</a>	Convington, La
July 27	<a href="#">2024 Space City Shootout Model Car Contest and Scale Automotive Expo</a>	Seabrook, Tx
November 9	<a href="#">Austin Scale Modelers Society 2024 "Capitol Classic"</a>	Williamson County Expo Center 5350 Bill Pickett Trail, Taylor TX



San Antonio  
Museum  
of Art

***The Age of Armor: Treasures from the  
Higgins Armory Collection at the  
Worcester Art Museum***

February 16, 2024–May 12, 2024 Cowden Gallery





# Navigator Newsletter

The Alamo Squadron Navigator Newsletter is the regular monthly source of information for our club members. Published on the Sunday before the meeting (First Thursday of the month) it will include the club proceedings and the president's vision which will allow the member to be informed and prepared. To expand the enjoyment of the hobby will include articles on related topics, tools, techniques, builds, human interest, synopsis of the monthly demo, and future events.

## April Issue Schedule

Issue	Content Deadline	Publish Date	Meeting
April	24 March	31 March	4 April

## Local Hobby Shops



HobbyTown is back in SA! Soft opening was 10 Feb 2024 and their grand opening will be 23 - 24 March 2024. Check their website for more information.

1309 N Loop 1604 W  
Vineyard Shopping Center, Suite 101  
San Antonio, TX 78258-4769  
(210) 236-5527

<https://www.hobbytown.com/sanantonio-tx/l196>

<b><u>Dibbles Hobbies</u></b> 1029 Donaldson Ave, San Antonio, TX 78228 (210) 735-7721	<b><u>Hill Country Hobby</u></b> 9355 Bandera Rd Ste-118 San Antonio, TX 78250 (210) 681-2007
<b><u>Anime Tokyo</u></b> 3333 Wurzbach Rd Ste 105, San Antonio, TX 78238 · (210) 519-5752	<b><u>Toy Hunters</u></b> 14910 Nacogdoches Rd Ste 106, San Antonio, TX, United States, Texas (210) 598-0034

## February Meeting



*1st Place - Keith Rule*



*2nd Place - Joe Chapa*



*3rd Place - Brandon Porter*

