

THE NAVIGATOR

IPMS REGION 6 | ALAMO SQUADRON | SAN ANTONIO, TX

MARCH 2025 ISSUE

Welcome to the NAVIGATOR Newsletter!



This is the monthly newsletter of **Alamo Squadron**, the San Antonio chapter to the International Plastic Modelers' Society (IPMS). Discover the many models, activities and events the club is happy to build, support, organize and promote.

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Thank you for stopping by!



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Keith Rule



Keith Rule
President

Selling my golf cart last summer allowed me to set up a table in my garage to spray primer (Tamiya Gray and White) with rattle cans and 2K Urethane Clear Coat with my .5mm Grex. I have since decided to airbrush primer in my model room with my .5mm Grex into my homemade wood spray booth ventilated outside through a window. The only drawback to airbrushing in my garage is winter weather.

I find myself watching the forecast when I have a clear coat session coming up. We had a cold spell back in January and are experiencing another as I write this. I needed to airbrush some clear coat between these cold spells and there was a 60 degree day with 90% humidity and drizzle. The clear coat instructions said 55 degrees minimum and said avoid high humidity. Considering that 2K clear coat cures by chemical reaction, not evaporation, I proceeded. Airbrushing the first light

coat I noticed that the clear coat had excessive orange peel, so I added 1 ½ times the reducer to the 2nd and 3rd coats and twice the reducer to the 4th coat. This produced an acceptable gloss, although I found I will need two more coats to “bury” the decals. I see some nice weather coming.

The election of the 2025-2026 club officer positions will take place in April, with nominations made at the upcoming March 6 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 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.

5. The individual must be an active model builder.

6. Members shall serve no more than three consecutive terms as an officer, being eligible for additional service after at least a one year hiatus.

Our next meeting is on Thursday, March 6 at the Jordan Ford's facility on 2411 Pat Booker Road, Universal City, TX 78148.

Chris McLain will be presenting a demonstration on “Easy Airbrush Black Basing”.

Gold, Silver and Bronze for our monthly contest will continue to be selected by our team of judges and we will have Work In Progress.

Cheers, Keith

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FEBRUARY 2025 MEETING MODEL CONTEST WINNERS

All the scale model entries in this month's contest were truly outstanding! Each participant showcased remarkable craftsmanship, creativity, and attention to detail. Judging was conducted using our new **Gold-Silver-Bronze** standard, ensuring that every entry received the recognition it deserved.



CHRIS MCCLAIN
1/48 U.S. Army Tank Crew



ROB BOOTH
1/48 P-47 Thunderbolt



WE HAD A TIE FOR THE BRONZE MEDAL!



Both Rob Booth and Peter Ortensie submitted exceptional entries that captured the judges' attention with their outstanding craftsmanship and creativity. Their impressive work made it impossible to choose just one bronze medalist. We're thrilled to recognize both of them for their remarkable achievements.



JONATHAN GRIFFITH
1/25 Bat Mobile



PETER ORTENSIE
LOTUS 72 Race Car



HAPPY MODELING Y'ALL!

Julio

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THE HISTORY OF ALAMO SQUADRON, PART 2

by Dick Montgomery



A.K.A. "The Grinch"

In the first installment of this series of articles titled, "History of Alamo Squadron", the focus was on the San Antonio Modelers' Society (SAMS) club, the demise of SAMS, and the creation of Alamo Squadron. Information regarding the Founding Members of Alamo Squadron was included, as was a brief mention of the origins of ModelFiesta (MF). This article will focus on the launch of ModelFiesta as the annual model contest hosted by Alamo Squadron, featuring ModelFiestas 1 and 2.

Members of the newly created Alamo Squadron, after considerable discussion, decided to host a contest that, hopefully, would become an annual event. An event staff was established with the duties of each person defined as indicated in the following list.

POSITION	PERSON IN CHARGE
Event Director:	Dick "Monty" Montgomery
Chief Judge:	Bob Angel
Category Structure and Registration:	Bob Angel, Ros Creed and Tom Ward
Door Prize-Raffle:	Ros Creed
Registration:	Ray Rangel
Technology-Computer Scoring System:	Ray Rangel

FIRST STEPS

The club membership had experience with hosting local contests for SAMS members and by participating in contests in neighboring cities but had no experience as the host of a contest which was open to the general public. During the winter of 1981, four club members met to discuss the possibility of establishing an annual model competition.

Bob Angel, Ros Creed, "Monty" Montgomery, and Tom Ward organized categories, rules, and registration procedures. By agreement of the group, Monty was given the job of coordinating the first contest. Early discussions centered around the usual topics such as location of the event, date, categories, judging guidelines and awards. Ray Rangel joined the team as the computer guru, writing a program that would be used to record the winning entries.



LOCATION

Due to the lack of a treasury of significant size it was important to find a venue which would be cheap or free of charge. Monty, a teacher at a local high school, had a student in one of his classes whose mother was the manager of a nearby shopping mall. Through this connection, Wonderland Mall was chosen as the site of ModelFiesta 1. Today, this site is known as Wonderland of the Americas. Wonderland agreed to allow the club to set up the contest on the lower level and was very helpful providing the site free of charge and contributing to the effort with a small amount of money. A Radio Shack outlet in the mall agreed to loan some TRS-80 computers that would be used to tabulate the judging results.

The contest had no official name in the early stages of planning and was unofficially referred to as the "SuperCon". In fact, when the first contest flyers were printed, the event was simply titled, "Model Contest". What was wanted was a name that would stand the test of time and have a distinctive San Antonio flavor. It was Christie Montgomery, the Event Director's wife that suggested the name, "ModelFiesta". The name was created after printing the initial set of contest flyers, but the name was used verbally by the time the show took place. The name stuck and has been used ever since.

THE CONTEST FLYER

The contest flyer was a single sheet of paper printed on one side. The bottom 3rd of the flyer featured a black and white image of an F-4 Phantom. A map to the contest site was rendered in a very basic line sketch. A total of 20 categories were offered to adult entrants with a matching set of 20 categories for junior entrants. Rule #4 stated that if a category had fewer than 5 entries, the category would be dissolved with the entries being placed in other categories. The rule is mentioned because the philosophy guiding the judging at ModelFiesta 1 evolved quickly to do

away with the dissolution of any category. Rule #7 invited the entrant to jot down some notes about their build on a 3x5 card to inform the judges of any special work that was done to the model. Today, it is not unusual to find a 3-ring binder with multiple pages of text and images next to some entries. The schedule for the day indicates that the judging would run from 2pm until 7pm.

AWARDS

ModelFiesta 1 is considered a rather primitive contest by today's standards. Costs had to be kept down so trophies



Notice that the name of the event "ModelFiesta", was not included in the trophy.

were built by club members. The trophy consisted of a small base of pine wood which was grooved to hold a piece of acrylic. The acrylic was adorned with a silkscreened image of the Alamo and an outline of Texas with a trio of aircraft overflying the Alamo. The artwork originated with Bob Angel and reflected the orientation as an aircraft club. This basic design would continue in use for several years. These early trophies, presented to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place entries, have

held up well over the years and still occupy shelf space in many hobby rooms.

A rather unusual fact has appeared, or rather failed to appear, in the written records of the competition. No references can be found to indicate that there was an award for "Best of ..." in the usual categories such as Aircraft, Armor, Automotive Subject, etc. Further, it appears that no "Best of Show" award was presented. Although doubtful, it is possible that the models which won "Best of" awards were not documented. A more plausible explanation is that no "Best Of" awards were presented. Hardly any modern competition does not offer a category for Miscellaneous or Collections. ModelFiesta 1 had no such categories.

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ModelFiesta 1 did have a unique approach to categories for the young modelers in that every senior category had a duplicated junior category.

JUDGING

A point system was devised for this inaugural event. The system centered around a scorecard which was completed by the judges for each model in each category. The point totals, from a low score of 1 to a maximum of 40 were entered in a computer. The computer, using software developed specifically for the purpose, calculated the point totals for each entry from the judges' scores. The entry with the highest point totals was designated as the 1st place winner, with the 2nd highest point total designated as the 2nd place winner, with the same procedure for 3rd place. This system was used for ModelFiestas 1 through 5. It was abandoned thereafter as being too slow, ineffective, and too costly in terms of manpower. In fact, in later ModelFiestas the computer program froze and the computer team fell back on good ol' paper and pencil to add and record the judging scores. One must remember that Excel was still in the future, that the computers used 5 1/4 inch floppies, and had no or very little internal memory. As a side note, the judging system recently used for the first time at ModelFiesta 43 is similar to the system used for ModelFiestas 1 through 5. The major difference is that the criteria and procedures employed by the judges at ModelFiesta 43 are far more detailed than what was used at ModelFiesta 1. Also, those who served as judges at ModelFiesta 43 were given the opportunity to practice the techniques and study the system that was expected of them. As memory serves, there was no significant training that went on for the judges at ModelFiesta 1 through 5.

VENDORS

No plans were given to create a vendor area or to appoint a Vendor Coordinator. If I recall, some attendees setup an area where they offered kits, tools, or accessories for sale.

ENTRY NUMBERS AND WINNER'S LIST

Considered a good first effort by participants, ModelFiesta 1 provided the critical amount of experience that was essential for the continued success of ModelFiesta competitions in the following years.

	# ENTRIES/ # CATEGORIES	# ENTRIES/ # CATEGORIES
CATEGORY	SENIOR	JUNIOR
AIRCRAFT	112/15	17/3
ARMOR	41/4	14/2
AUTOMOTIVES	91/1	3/1
DIORAMA	16/1	2/1
FANTASY	10/1	1/1
FIGURES	13/2	2/1
SPACECRAFT	4/1	1/1
SHIPS	17/1	0
TOTAL	304/26	40/10

ALAMO SQUADRON, IPMS/USA REGION 6 MODELFIESTA I CONTEST WINNERS

January 20, 1982

CONTEST CATEGORIES			
Aircraft	Armor	Automotive	Dioramas
Figures	Fantasy	Ships	Spacecraft

AIRCRAFT Category Placements

Category 721 | 1/72nd | Origins to 1938 | Seniors | 16 Entries

1st Place: Fokker D.XXI by Mike Derderian

2nd Place: deHavilland DH.2 by Tom Ward

3rd Place: Curtiss P-36 by Bob Angel

Category 722 | 1/72nd | 1939 to 1945, Single Engine | Seniors | 15 Entries

1st Place: Cutiss P-40N by Bob Angel

2nd Place: Spitfire Mk. I by Tom Ward

3rd Place: Grumman F8F-1 by Mike Derderian

Category 723 | 1/72nd | 1935 to 1945, Multi-Engine | Seniors | 11 Entries

First Place: Messerschmitt Me-262 by Bill Culpa

2nd Place: Messerschmitt Me-321 by Bob Montgomery

3rd Place: Kawasaki Ki-48 Lily by Bob Angel

Category 724 | 1/72nd | 1946 to Present, Single Engine | Seniors | 10 Entries

1st Place: Grumman F-111F by Bob Angel

2nd Place: Mirage F1C by Austin Leatherman

3rd Place: General Dynamics F-16 by Bill Culpa

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AIRCRAFT Category Placements

Category 725 | 1/72nd | 1946 TO Present, Multi-Engine | Seniors | 11 Entries

1st Place: MRCA Tornado by Austin Leatherman

2nd Place: Grumman F7F by Tom Eisenhour

3rd Place: Gloster Meteor by Austin Leatherman

Category 481 | 1/48th | Origins to 1938 | Seniors | 5 Entries

1st Place: Travel Air Mystery Ship by Ros Creed

2nd Place: Model 18 Staggerwing by Ros Creed

3rd Place: Travel Air by Milton Bell

Category 482 | 1/48th | 1939 to 1945, Single Engine | Seniors | 12 Entries

1st Place: Supermarine Walrus by Ros Creed

2nd Place: Mitsubishi A6M2N by Ed Greathouse

3rd Place: Supermarine Mk VIII Spitfire by Paul Frederick

Category 483 | 1/48 | 1939 to 1945, Multi-Engine | Seniors | 5 Entries

1st Place: Douglas C-47 by Dick Montgomery

2nd Place: Henschel Hs-129 by Paul Frederick

3rd Place: Messerschmitt Me-262 by Tom Ward

Category 484 | 1/48 | 1946 to Present, Single Engine | Seniors | 4 Entries

1st Place: Israeli Defense Force F-16 by Alan Larrumbide

2nd Place: USMC AV-8a Harrier by Alan Larrumbide

3rd Place: Douglas A-1D Skyraider by Ed Greathouse

Category 485 | 1/48 | 1946 to Present, Multi-Engine | Seniors | 1 Entry

1st Place: McDonnell Douglas F-4E by Bob Williams

2nd Place: No Awards Present

3rd Place: No Awards Present

Category 321 | 1/32 | Origins to 1938 | Seniors | *(No Entries)*

Category 322 | 1/32 | 1939 to 1945 | Seniors | 5 Entries

1st Place: Mitsubishi A6M Zero by Paul Frederick

2nd Place: Messerschmitt Me-109 by Ed Greathouse

3rd Place: Supermarine Mk I Spitfire by Tom Ward

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Model Kit Survivors from MODELFIESTA I



By Bob Angel



by Ros Creed



by Ros Creed



by Dick Montgomery



2nd Place, Category 481
STAGGERWIND
By Ros Creed



3rd Place, Category 723
LILY
By Bob Angel



3rd Place, Category 501
F8F
By Ros Creed



3rd Place, Category 721
P-36
By Bob Angel



MODELFIESTA 2 HISTORY, January 29, 1983

MODELFIESTA 2	EVENT STAFF
Event Director:	Dick Montgomery
Chief Judge, Categories, Registration:	Bob Angel (not confirmed, but likely)
Categories, Registration:	Ross Creed (not confirmed, but likely) Tom Ward (not confirmed, but likely)

Buoyed by the success of the inaugural ModelFiesta in January of 1982, Alamo Squadron, presenting itself as “The **Alamo Squadron Chapter of IPMS**”, announced that ModelFiesta 2 would take place at the same site as the previous contest, that being Wonderland Mall, scheduled for January 29, 1983.

The flyer indicates that the event would begin at 10am (opening hours for the Mall) and registration would close at 2pm. Judging would take place from 2pm until 7pm with the Awards Presentation beginning at 7pm. The flyer indicated that IPMS rules would be followed, so even from an early age, Alamo Squadron was looking to the IPMS rules as a guideline for judging. Rule # 3 says that if a category had insufficient numbers, the entries would be condensed into other cat-

egories, or withdrawn from competition by the builder. This rule was not one which remained in the ModelFiesta Rule Book for any length of time. Today, we look at this rule and see that it is not in compliance with the idea that similar models should compete.

Rule # 10 provided that a Display Only table would be available for those who didn’t wish to compete, but still wanted to display their models. There is a comment about special awards being distributed during the Award Ceremony. Those Special Awards would be received for “Best Korean War Aircraft”, “Best Vietnam Aircraft”, and “Best of Show.”

There were 34 categories in all. Unlike the previous event in which every adult category was matched by a Junior Category, the number of

Junior Categories was limited to a single Junior Category per Class. (Class being Aircraft, or Armor, or Figures, or Ships, etc).

Documentation for ModelFiesta 2 is thin, and the only staffer who can be recognized with certainty is Dick Montgomery, who, as for ModelFiesta 1, was the Event Director. It is most likely that Bob Angel, Ross Creed, and Tom Ward held the same positions as they had for ModelFiesta 1.

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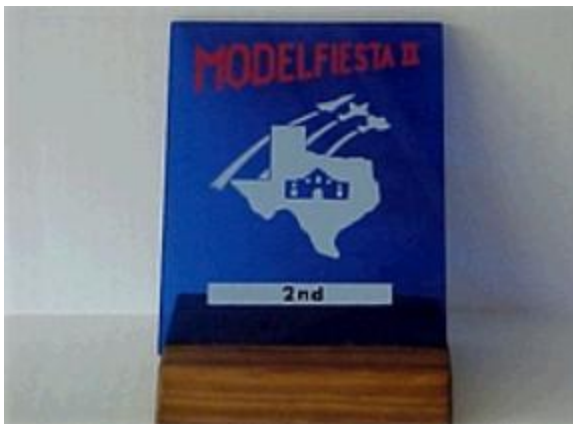
MODELFiesta 2 HISTORY

January 29, 1983

An image of a 2nd Place Trophy is archived as is an image of a Certificate of Merit, which served the purpose of "Honorable Mention".

Unfortunately, there is no Winner's List available. Also, no data is available regarding the number of entries in the contest, or the number of participants in the contest.

There are only three images of models entered in the event that are on record and one image of the first winner of the **ModelFiesta Best of Show** award, Alex DeLeon.





The Amazing U.D.T. Boats

And the Brave Men who Served on Them

by Julio A. Caro

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A couple years ago I built a **Revell 1/35 scale U.D.T. Boat with Frogmen** kit produced in 2012. As mainly an aircraft builder, I decided back then to take a break from building planes and try my hand at building my first ever boat or watercraft-type kit. It was definitely a different building experience, but one that I really enjoyed putting together. In fact, for my first ever watercraft kit build, I think it actually turned out pretty darn nice! **Here are a couple of photos:**



I decided to build a U.D.T. Boat, because of their history and that of the remarkable men who served on them.

UDT Boats were the primary boats used by **Underwater Demolition Teams (UDTs)** during World War II. These boats were specifically designed for "**cast and recovery operations**", which involved deploying and retrieving swimmers who were tasked with reconnaissance and dem-

olition duties ahead of amphibious landings. UDT frogmen, also known as "Frogmen," were often pulled into a UDT boat using a **looped rope**.

The U.S. Navy SEALs can trace its roots back to 1942 and the Underwater Demolition Team (UDT).

The UDT was formed during World War II to inspect, under cover of darkness, the strength of the enemy. The brave "Frogmen", so called because of their rubber suits and flippers, would get in close and inspect

the beach. Then using a disciplined recovery system, they were recovered by the swift **UDT boats**.



The so-called frogmen swam into enemy beaches unarmed, wearing only swim trunks, dive masks and fins. *The National Navy SEAL Museum*



Today, the Navy SEAL program has expanded to include many different vehicles and operations. But during WW II, the most important job was protecting the lives of the marines landing on the beach. By going in early, the UDT group not only discovered what the landing marines were facing, but they could also eliminate obstacles. They swam back out to be picked up by the UDT boat. UDT swimmers participated in almost every major amphibious assault of the Pacific Theater.

The frogmen braved fierce enemy fire and rough seas as they scouted the bullet-swept lagoon of Saipan, the black sands of Iwo Jima, the shark infested reefs of Okinawa and even the cold waters of Tokyo Bay. Here are a few notable ones:

Operation Overlord (D-Day):

UDTs were involved in the Normandy landings on June 6, 1944. They conducted reconnaissance of the beaches and cleared obstacles to ensure the success of the amphibious landings.

Battle of Kwajalein:

In January 1944, UDTs helped clear underwater obstacles and conducted reconnaissance for the amphibious assault on Kwajalein Atoll in the Pacific.

Battle of Saipan:

In June 1944, UDTs played a vital role in the invasion of Saipan by clearing underwater obstacles and providing intelligence on beach conditions.

Battle of Tinian:

In July 1944, UDTs were involved in the invasion of Tinian, where they cleared obstacles and conducted reconnaissance to ensure a successful landing.

Battle of Guam:

In July 1944, UDTs helped clear underwater obstacles and conducted reconnaissance for the amphibious assault on Guam.

Battle of Iwo Jima:

In February 1945, UDTs conducted reconnaissance and cleared obstacles for the amphibious assault on Iwo Jima.

These operations were critical in ensuring the success of amphibious landings and contributed significantly to the Allied victory in the Pacific.

G.I.s called them “*half fish, half nuts.*” Today, we call them:

U.S. NAVY SEALS



UDT men returning from a successful demolition mission off Saipan. The National Navy SEAL Museum

SOURCES:

Historynet.com

<https://www.historynet.com/udt-wwii-andrew-dubbins-interview/>

Naval History and Heritage Museum:

<https://www.history.navy.mil/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhnc-series/nh-series/80-G-253000/80-G-253886.html>

Press Release Point:

<https://www.pressreleasepoint.com/frogmen-were-first-iwo-jima>

SmithsonianMagazine.com

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-stealth-swimmers-whose-wwii-scouting-laid-the-groundwork-for-the-navy-seals-180980427/>

The Gateway Pundit:

<https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2017/08/u-s-navys-first-female-seal-officer-applicant-drops/>

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STRIPPING PAINT AND DECALS WITH GENERIC BRAKE FLUID

By Lee Forbes, IPMS 2297



If you're like me I'm sure you have a model or two in your collection that when finished just didn't meet your personal standards and was des-tined to be placed in the back row of your display area or maybe it wasn't displayed at all. Does that sound familiar?

There are ways to remove the paint and decals and to start over giving new life to your model by rebuilding it to your satisfaction. Products are available that can do this, but some are hazardous to your health and require special handling. My proven favorite is using brake fluid and while it's messy to use it isn't going to harm you. I don't recall where I learned

about this, whether it was from an Alamo Squadron Club member, or someone I met at an IPMS Region 6 model contest. Unlike other products, brake fluid isn't as hazardous and doesn't soften the plastic or damage seams and clear parts.

You will need several items to get started. If you are a 1/72 scale aircraft builder like me, you'll probably only need one gallon of brake fluid. You'll need more than a gallon for larger scale models or 1/72 scale multi-engine aircraft models. Next use a plastic container with a lid approximately the size of the model you want to remove the paint and decals from, used tooth brushes, Q-tips, pointed

wooden toothpicks, light weight rubber gloves, and plenty of soap and water to clean and rinse the model after the paint and decals are removed. You might also need to find some lead fishing weights or some other method to hold the model down while submerged in the brake fluid or the model will float because of trapped air in the fuselage or wings. I used a bathroom sink to wash and rinse the model several times. I'd suggest that you not ask or tell your spouse or partner about what you're doing or you might not get through this stage of the process. While you can let the model air dry I use a hair dryer on medium heat to hasten the drying process.

About 8-10 years ago (I can't recall exactly, but it was before the pandemic) I did a demonstration of removing the paint and decals using this method at one of our Club meetings. The model I chose was a 1/72 scale FROG Italian G-55 Centauro that I had built back in the 1970s.

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The model had a primer coat, two enamel color coats, and a coat of Future on it, and the decals were the ones that came with the FROG kit. I'll admit most of the other models that I had used this method to remove the paint and decals from were more recent builds. So I wasn't sure if my demonstration would be successful or not. I brought the model to the meeting still submerged in the brake fluid that had been soaking overnight. After making remarks about how to use this method of removing paint and decals from models, I removed the lid from my plastic container to remove the model and I promptly broke a propeller blade off and discovered that a landing gear had broken off in transit. As I proceeded to lift the model out of the brake fluid, and unaided by me, the paint started to slide off the wings in postage stamp size sheets of paint.

Using an old tooth brush and different sizes of paint brushes I carefully removed the rest of the paint in just a few minutes. At that time we were meeting at Northside Ford on Nakoma and Highway 281 N so I used their men's restroom sink to clean up the model with soap and water and then I demonstrated using the hair dryer to aid in drying it. I followed up with an additional clean up at home the next day.

I have several models in my collection that I have completely rebuilt using this method to remove the paint and decals. Take a look at photos on this page of kits that I've stripped using this method. I think you'll agree they came out pretty nice!

Yes, using this method to remove paint and decals is messy and you might break some model parts in the process (but they can be repaired) I'd suggest you give brake fluid a try the next time you want to rebuild a model that didn't meet your personal standards the first time around.

Happy Modeling!



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Building the 1/700 Scharnhorst by Flyhawk

By Gerardo "Jerry" Escobedo



Illustration of NAZI Germany's **Scharnhorst** Battleship, 1936

The Turning Point: How I Fell in Love with Battleships



Gerardo Escobedo

It was April 2024 when fate, and a lucky win at the Model Summit program, handed me a free model from the award table. My choice? The Trumpeter 1/350 Admiral Hipper. Why? Because the box was big—simple as that. At first, I had no intention of building it, but then

I took a closer look and thought, why not? That single decision marked a turning point in my scale modeling journey: I fell in love with battleships.

While I'll be writing about my Admiral Hipper build in a future article, this newfound obsession led me on a quest for more battleships. Soon, I added two more to my stash: Flyhawk's 1/700 Scharnhorst and Bismarck—both deluxe kits packed with Photo Etch (PE) parts, wooden decks, and metal barrels. As a former paper modeler, I had always admired those who tackled intricate battleship builds, especially the legendary Bismarck and Yamato. Their sheer complexity seemed daunting, and I used to think, *one day!*

Well, that day finally came—not in paper, but in plastic.

I decided to start with the Scharnhorst as a warm-up, a practice build of sorts. If I messed it up, I figured it wouldn't sting as much as botching the Bismarck. And that brings us to the heart of this article: my experience building the Scharnhorst.

The Scharnhorst was, according to Wikipedia, "the first capital ship of Nazi Germany's Kriegsmarine." Alongside its sister ship, the Gneisenau, it played an active role in the early years of World War II, conducting raids against British merchant shipping in the Atlantic. The Scharnhorst met its fate on December 26, 1943, when it was sunk by the Royal Navy in the icy waters of the North Atlantic. A formidable warship with a tragic end, its legacy continues to capture the imagination of naval history enthusiasts and modelers alike.

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A First Encounter with Flyhawk's Crazy Detail

Before this build, I barely knew anything about Flyhawk—just a few mentions on YouTube. But oh boy, did they surprise me! The level of detail they pack into their kits is simply insane. Each part of the Scharnhorst wasn't just a single piece—it was a meticulously crafted assembly of tiny, intricate components. At times, I was blown away; at others, I was borderline frustrated. This was a completely different beast compared to the "simpler" Admiral Hipper from Trumpeter.

Maybe you seasoned modelers are used to this kind of treatment, but for someone like me—who's more of a "shake-and-bake" builder (*cof cof BANDAI cof cof*)—this was an entirely new level. That said, I stuck with it, carefully working through each part without shying away. And the result? Stunning. The sheer amount of fine detail on such a small-scale model is nothing short of incredible.

The Deluxe Treatment: PE and Wooden Deck



I built the deluxe edition, which includes PE parts and a wooden deck—two fantastic additions that elevate the model significantly. Let's talk about the PE first. These parts are incredibly well-engineered, fitting precisely where they should with no sanding or modification needed. However, this precision comes with a caveat: Flyhawk does *not* leave much room for error. Once

you commit, you commit! Patience, fine tweezers, and a steady hand are essential.

The wooden deck, on the other hand, was a joy to work with. The self-adhesive application made the process smooth, and the natural wood grain brought an extra

level of realism to the finished build. It's amazing how much depth and contrast a well-applied wooden deck can add to a warship model.



Rigging Fun with INFINI

For this build, I also added rigging using INFINI rigging thread. Now, I know rigging can be a bit intimidating, but for me, it was the highlight of the entire build. There's something deeply satisfying about bringing the ship to life with those fine lines stretching between masts. The rigging process was straightforward with INFINI's elastic thread, which made it easier to work with compared to traditional stretched sprue or fishing line. Honestly, I think rigging might be my favorite part of building battleships—I'll definitely be covering more in future newsletters!

Final Thoughts

Flyhawk's Scharnhorst is an outstanding kit that allows for a range of skill levels. You can build it as a straightforward assembly for a clean and elegant finish, or you can go all-in with PE, wooden decks, and rigging for a show-stopping display piece. Either way, it's a rewarding build that showcases why Flyhawk is one of the top names in 1/700 scale ship modeling.

So, what's next? More battleships, of course! Stay tuned for future builds, and in the meantime, happy modeling!

UPCOMING EVENTS

EVENT DATE	NAME	LOCATION	ADDRESS
03/15/2025	RiverCon XIV	Shreveport, LA	Louisiana State University Shreveport One University Place Shreveport, LA 71115
03/22/2025	Showdown 2025	Plano, TX	Willowcreek Fellowship Church 1804 P Ave Plano, TX
04/05/2025	Route 66 Model Expo	Tulsa, OK	The Park Church of Christ 10600 East 96th Street South Tulsa, OK 74133
05/03/2025	ModelMania 2025	Stafford, TX	The Stafford Center 10505 Cash Rd. Stafford, TX 77477
05/17/2025	CALMEX 38	Sulphur, LA	West-Cal Arena & Events Center 401 Arena Road Sulphur, TX 70665
05/24/2025	2025 ScaleFest	Grapevine, TX	Grapevine Convention Center 1209 South Main Street Grapevine, TX 76051
07/12/2025	Space City Shootout	Stafford, TX	The Stafford Center 10505 Cash Rd. Stafford, TX 77477
11/08/2025	Austin Capitol Classic	Taylor, TX	Williamson County Expo Center 5350 Bill Pickett Trail Taylor, TX 76574

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EASY AIRBRUSH BLACK BASING

by Chris McClain

Introduction

I first learned about the concept of “black basing” from Doogs Models (Matt McDougall) <https://doogsmodels.com/2014/07/03/technique-black-basing/> but I’ve never done it because it seems like way too much work, and requires a lot of technical skill with an airbrush.

Last year, Rob did a demo on Luftram/72’s (Chris Seiber) “layered ink patina technique” <https://luftraum72.com/layered-ink-patina-technique/> using Liquitex Acrylic Inks and Tamiya X-20A thinner to achieve a similar effect with much less effort. But the disadvantage of that technique is that it only works on relatively flat surfaces, like aircraft wings.

I first encountered this technique on Pinterest a few years ago. It linked to a post on the Large Scale Planes forum by a user named KitmodellerNZ <https://forum.largescaleplanes.com/index.php?/topic/79421-rapid-black-basing-using-a-scotch-brite/>. He notes the challenge of traditional black basing and seems to have invented the fundamental technique I describe below as an alternative to purpose-made stencils. This presentation represents my attempt to refine and give a detailed explanation of KitmodellerNZ’s innovation.

In summary, the technique is a comparatively cheap, fast, and flexible method to achieve a similar sort of tonal variation in your finish. It’s most useful for military and weathered models because it simulates worn, faded, and touched-up paint.

Scotch-Brite Scour Pads

- This is the star of the show. My recommendation is to use the name brand because the Walmart version is different material.
- Scotch-Brite Heavy Duty 3 Scour Pads - \$2.62 at Walmart
 - This is the ordinary dark green scouring pad, without the sponge.
- Scotch-Brite Zero Scratch 3 Scour Pads - \$2.62 at Walmart
 - KitmodellerNZ’s photos are of blue scouring pads, presumably of this type.
- (Not Recommended) Great Value Heavy Duty 4 Scour Pads - \$2.44 at Walmart
 - The composition of these scouring pads is different than the name brand.
 - They are more fibrous, messier, and don’t work as well.
 - Their only advantage is they can be stretched apart.
- **DON’T BE A CHEAPSKATE! THE EXTRA 18 CENTS IS WORTH IT!**

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EASY AIRBRUSH BLACK BASING

by Chris McClain

Cost Comparison to Specialty Stencils

- AK Flexible Airbrush Stencil - \$10.19 on Amazon
- AMMO by MIG Airbrush Stencils - \$12.99 on SprayGunner
- Artool Texture FX Mini Series Set - \$19.30 on SprayGunner
- These options may be preferable for those who lack the dexterity or hand strength to tear Scotch-Brite.



Core Technique – Prepare the Scotch-Brite

- When purchasing, check the thickness of the individual pads. I prefer a uniform thickness between all three, and from one end of each pad to the other. The blue package I got was less uniform than the green.
- Peel away the thinnest layer possible starting from the corner of a pad to make a porous web-like paint mask.
 - Not all of these pads have a uniform thickness, but I was able to peel a single pad into three stencils with care and patience.
 - Once you separate a layer, thick spots can be picked off to refine the density of the mask. Small holes are not a problem!
- Peeling the pads generates some “dust.” Great Value green pads make the most dust, Scotch-Brite green pads make far less, and Scotch-Brite blue pads make very little dust.
 - Do your peeling over a clean part of your bench—move your model away!
 - Use a desktop vacuum cleaner to make clean-up a breeze.
 - I find you don’t really have to even “shake” or “blow” the dust off the ScotchBrite mask before painting because it doesn’t shed unless you’re tearing it. But as always, check for texture in your paint after spraying and buff/sand it out when cured if needed.
- This takes some patience, and it’s (literally) rough on your fingers
- Can also be adjusted with scissors, and the ragged edge of a torn one be used for some applications

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Painting

- Base Primer—Black-basing, white-basing, or gray-basing?
 - Primary concern should be choosing high-contrast colors, e.g. if your base primer is black, then use a light gray or white as the secondary color.
- When thinning the secondary/contrasting color(s), mix the paint for medium-to-high opacity.
- The closer/tighter you hold the Scotch-Brite stencil to your model, the sharper the mottling effect will be.
 - Keep this in mind when working over curved and uneven surfaces and work in smaller sections if you want a more uniform effect.
 - I have not found that gently holding and moving the pad around the model scratches the paint.
- Reposition the stencil and spray additional layers to make the effect more complex.
- When preparing to apply the model's base color, dilute the paint with extra thinner so that it is translucent on the model, allowing the mottling to show through.
 - Building up the color in several thin layers, and taking a break in-between ensures you don't lose all that contrast you worked so hard to create.
 - Remember that you will lose some of that tonal variation once you add markings, pinwashes, and weathering effects. When you think to yourself, "Maybe just one more layer..." that may be time to stop.

Possibilities for Taking this Technique to the Next Level

- Experiment with other materials—steel wool and other brands of scouring pads.
- Experiment with using tweezers, hobby knife, or other tools to assist in tearing.
- Experiment with secondary/contrasting colors. For example, prime in black, then spray white, yellow, and blue through the Scotch-Brite to enhance the variation in your olive drab base color.
- Combine with panel pre-shading to differentiate panels on aircraft.
- Combine with post-shading to enhance your highlights and shadows and achieve a zenithal effect or modulation.
- Rather than using a different secondary color, choose the primer color that contrasts most with your base color and use the base color as both the secondary paint to build contrast, then unify the finish with thin overcoats.

Pros & Cons:

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PROS:	CONS:
More random and faster than spraying mottles by hand Requires minimal airbrush skills for good results Cheaper than purpose-made stencils Works on curves surfaces, unlike ink technique Less messy and faster than the salt technique	Tedious to pull apart, could be rough on hands Dust and small pieces make a small mess Inconsistent effect on multi-colored camo if secondary colors are sprayed over base color Cannot easily differentiate finish on individual panels Spouse may complain that dishwashing supplies have disappeared



MONTHLY MEETING PHOTOS

Brought to you by Gerardo "Jerry" Escobedo



The photos taken during our March 6, 2025, Thursday Meeting at Alamo Squadron show the passion for model building that unites us. These moments not only highlight the incredible talent within our group but also the camaraderie and shared enthusiasm that make Alamo Squadron a truly special place for all who are part of it. We hope to you see at our next meeting!



Keith Rule give demo on work with graphics on cars and trucks.



A great time was had by all admiring the many models on display.



Beautifully crafted race cars on our WIP table.



Another example of great work! Take a look at these pair of tanks by Juan Noltenius.



It's great to see some very nicely built ships on our WIP table, and this one is awesome!



Sci-Fi and Fantasy models were also on display. Check out this robot by Rob Booth



Outstanding display set of various naval vessels by Jerry Escobedo



Devon McCullough's SR-71 Bubble Plane.



Abandoned car model realistically created!

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MONTHLY CLUB MEETING INFORMATION

Alamo Squadron monthly club meetings are the perfect place to connect with fellow modelers to exchange ideas and learn new techniques to enhance your craft. Come share your latest projects, gain valuable insights, and enjoy the company of like-minded individuals who share your love for scale modeling.

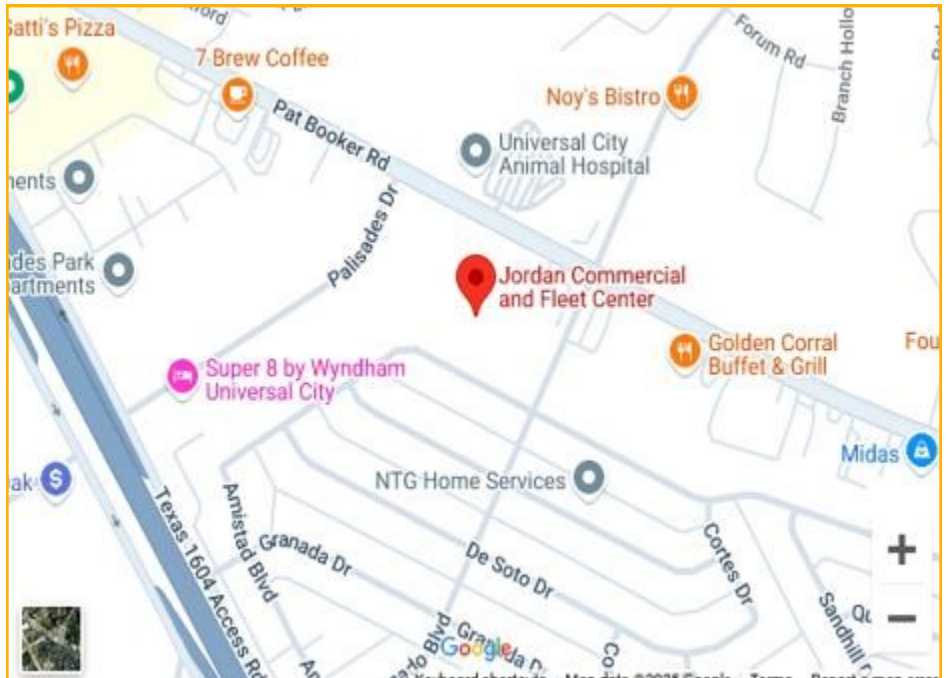


Our monthly meetings are held on the **first Thursday of the month** from **6:30 to 8:30 pm** at the following location:

JORDAN FORD

(Pat Booker Facility)

2411 Pat Book Road,
Universal City, Texas 78148



We look forward to seeing you!

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I am please to announce the upcoming 2nd Annual Alamo Squadron Family Picnic!

by John Kress

WHEN: Sunday, April 27th, 2025!

TIME: From 12:00 Noon to 5:00 pm

WHERE: O. P. Schnabel Park, Graff Pavilion
9606 Bandera Rd.,
San Antonio, TX 78250

WHAT SHOULD I BRING?

Your family, a covered dish (vegetable side dish, salad or dessert)



The Graff Pavilion is pretty large, so there's not going to be problem if it rains. Last year, we had about 60 people attend and all had a terrific time!

Activity planning is still in progress, but hopefully, we're hoping to get all that decided and finalized at our next meeting on March 6th.

There's going to be a sign-up sheet at our March 6, 2025 meeting asking for some information for those of you planning to attend, such as:



- **Member's name**
- **The number of adults and children that will be attending,**
- **What main dish each person would like (beef or chicken) and what side dish you're bringing.**



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IPMS MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Joining IPMS/USA is a great idea because it connects you with a dedicated community of scale modelers who share your passion. The society offers valuable resources, including detailed magazines, access to national and regional events, and opportunities for learning and improvement through workshops and contests. Membership also provides a platform to share your work, receive constructive feedback, and stay updated with the latest trends and techniques in scale modeling.



International Plastic Modelers' Society/USA
Membership Application / Renewal Form

New ☐ Renewal ☐ IPMS#: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Chapter Affiliation, if any: _____

Junior (17 years or younger)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$17.00	Date of Birth _____
Adult One year	<input type="checkbox"/> \$30.00	
Two years	<input type="checkbox"/> \$58.00	
Three years	<input type="checkbox"/> \$86.00	
Canada & Mexico	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35.00	
Foreign Surface	<input type="checkbox"/> \$38.00	
Family	<input type="checkbox"/> Adult fee + \$5.00	
	# of cards? ____	

Your Signature: _____

If recommended by an IPMS member, please provide his/her:
Name: _____ IPMS #: _____

PAYMENT OPTIONS:

Cash ☐ Amount: _____

Check ☐ Check #: _____ Amount: _____

Where did you hear about IPMS/USA? Please check all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/> Local model club	<input type="checkbox"/> Internet search
<input type="checkbox"/> Friend	<input type="checkbox"/> IPMS web site
<input type="checkbox"/> Ad in IPMS Journal	<input type="checkbox"/> I'm a former member rejoining
<input type="checkbox"/> Facebook	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Ad in other magazine	

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

Interested in joining IPMS?

Here is a copy of an IPMS Membership Application/Renewal Form. You can download the actual form from the IPMS/USA website at:

https://ipmsusa.org/sites/default/files/membership_application_0.pdf



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NEWS, USEFUL LINKS AND INFORMATION

Local Hobby Stores in San Antonio and Surrounding Areas



1029 Donaldson Ave.,
San Antonio, TX 78228
(210) 735-7721

<http://www.dibbleshobbies.com>



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

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

HILL COUNTRY HOBBY

9355 Bandera Rd., Ste. 118
San Antonio, TX 78250
(210) 681-2007

[Hill Country Facebook](#)



5500 FM 2770, Suite 103
Kyle, TX 78640
(512) 504-3404

<https://lionhearthobby.com>



7801 N Lamar Blvd., Unit E188
Austin, TX 78752
(512) 836-7388

<http://kingshobby.com>



Visit the Hobby Lobby website to
find the nearest store to you.

<http://www.hobbylobby.com>



Alamo Squadron Website

<https://www.alamosquadron.com>



Alamo Squadron FACEBOOK Page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/114044928625406>



IPMS Membership Information

<https://www.myipmsusa.org/join-us>

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