

MARCH 1993
IPMS SEATTLE NEWSLETTER

MARCH MEETING: Saturday, March 13th, 10:00 am
Venue: James G. Murphy Co (see map below)

We start this month's newsletter with a discussion of the upcoming Recon VII Show and Contest, and the Organizers' reasons for holding such a Show. This is prompted by a rather negative piece of correspondence recently received from a group of modelers further inland from Seattle. IPMS Seattle sends this group, a non-IPMS modeling group, our newsletter each month in the interests of furthering the hobby of modeling.

The March 93 issue of this modeling group's newsletter contains the following piece: "In the January (93) IPMS Seattle (newsletter) it was pointed out rather clearly that they (IPMS Seattle) don't want to see anything less than perfect in the contest. Seams and alignment must be perfect, as must also be paint jobs, decals and everything else. Besides the contest, there will be a display area for models....built by those who are not quite up to the perfect standard, but still have nerve enough to display their sub-standard work."

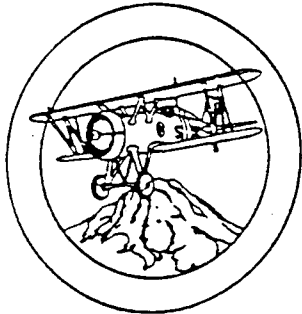
Firstly, my personal thanks to this modeling group, for their keen efforts to promote our Show (READ: BIG JOKE), and to further the general wish to see great numbers of models displayed in one place, at one time. For, despite what some people might say, IPMS Seattle is after at the upcoming Show, please note that the Organizers want only two things to happen on April 10th: 1/ Everyone in attendance to have a great time with the hobby we all supposedly love; 2/ Everyone getting to see lots, and lots, of models from all areas of interest within the hobby, and all levels of skill. The INTENT is NOT, REPEAT NOT, to see only "perfect" models, for this would defeat the purposes listed above for having the Show in the first place.

The intent of the January "Contest Judging Standards" was to set out, clearly for all to see, the basis on which entries to the Contest part of the Show would be judged. Anyone who looks at such parameters solely from the basis of "it ain't perfect, so I'm not entering" is hurting everyone, but most especially themselves.

For you see, if the organizers could think up a way to draw maximum display models without the nasty word "contest", then believe me, they would implement such a scheme. However, the goal of the Organizers is to draw maximum models for display, and time and time again it has been shown that the word "Contest", and the lure of potential prizes, consistently brings out the most models. And since a Contest will take place, surely the best models in any category should win, whatever standard they may be too. And believe ME, there will not be a PERFECT model amongst the winners. Trust me, First Place in ALL categories will be flawed, some more than others. Those with the LEAST flaws will hopefully win. And surely we all want to build models with as few flaws as possible, even if many of us seem to continually end up each time with some real clangers. However, every once in a while things seem to fall into place just right, and the flaws are less than normal. I think we would all agree that a contest that encouraged seam lines, misaligned wings, bowed tracks and misaligned auto chassis would be a contest few of us would wish to visit.

So PLEASE, bring your models in large numbers, enter the contest or exhibit on the "Display Only" tables, whatever suits your fancy. Every one of us has something to offer our fellow modeler when we display our work, and hopefully every one of us is proud of the work they do in the interests of the hobby we chose to spend our most precious hours: relaxation time.

IPMS Seattle



IPMS SEATTLE - MARCH MEETING

Due to the unavailability of the Bellevue Library for our March meeting and a lack of available meeting space (at a reasonable price) in the Bellevue area our March meeting will be held at the James G. Murphy Company, 18226 68th Avenue NE in Kenmore. Why There?

- 1) It's free
- 2) I have the keys
- 3) Plenty of free parking
- 4) LOTS A ROOM FOR VENDORS!!!

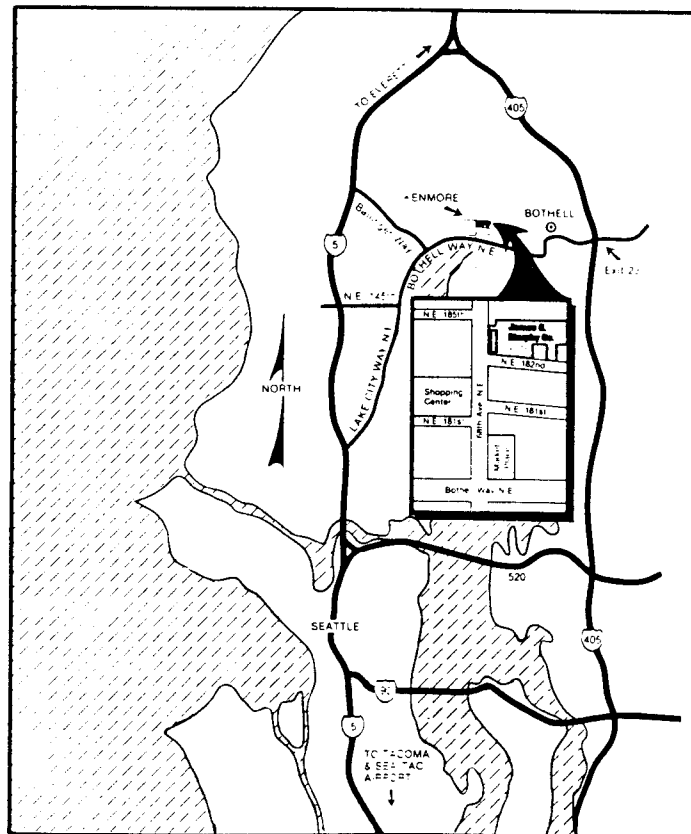
Meeting time: 10 am until whenever, Saturday, March 13th

Have your Luftwaffe project ready and whatever else you may have in the works for Recon 7.

We'll see you there

Terry

Terry
"Prez"



Building Tamiya's M8 Self-Propelled Howitzer in 1:35 Scale By Rocky Rockwell

After seeing the results of a mechanized army in action during the Blitzkrieg in Europe, the U.S. Army wanted its own forces to have mobility comparable to that of the Wehrmacht. As part of this master plan, the Army sought ways to make artillery mobile by adapting various types of towed artillery to vehicle mounts, and numerous experiments were conducted. One of these involved mounting the popular, if somewhat limited, 75mm field howitzer in a revolving turret on the chassis of the M5A1 light tank. After a few miscues, an open turret was found that was workable, and the new vehicle was designated as the Howitzer Motor Carriage M8, entering service in 1942. The stubby little howitzer had a range of 6000-8000 yards, and 46 rounds of 75mm ammunition were carried. The M8's twin Cadillac engines gave it a top speed of just under 40 mph, very good for the day, and a .50-caliber machine gun in a ring mount on the rear of the turret provided air defense capability. A total of nearly 1800 were built before production ceased in 1944.

Tamiya's offering of the M8 has been around for some time, but judging by the number seen at shows and contests, it has never been among their most popular kits. Yet it is a very good kit for those who like armor but tire of the usual parade of M1's, T-72's, etc. It is cleanly molded in dark O.D. plastic with almost no flash. Aside from a few ejector pin marks on the inside of the turret halves, there is little cleaning up needed except for removing the fine seam lines from some parts prior to assembly.

The turret goes together easily enough, and my only complaint here is that there's not much detail inside the turret. However, there aren't many photo references available for the interior of this vehicle, and there may not have been much there anyway! What detail there is consists of a couple of ammo boxes for the .50 MG on the left side turret wall, some ammo in vertical racks on the rear of the fighting compartment floor, and a couple of ready rounds in a rack in the turret bustle. There are three fold-down seats provided for the gunnery crew, and a sight assembly that goes in the right side of the turret next to the gun trunnion. The gun itself goes together easily, providing an acceptable rendition of the 75mm howitzer breech and recuperator housings. There are also upper and lower safety bars that surround the breech to keep body parts out of the way during recoil.

The turret-mounted .50 cal MG is one of the good ones (remember for awhile there when Tamiya's M2 .50's had molded-in grips? Yecch!), and needs little save drilling out the muzzle, but the ring-mount yoke seems a bit crude. Again, due to the lack of detailed pictorial references, it's hard to say exactly what the real one was like, but the blocky slab-cut thing you get with the kit certainly doesn't look very good.

External detail is typical of Tamiya kits of the period, which is to say quite good. There are separate tools, which are nice enough on their own, though some may opt for Cal-Scale pioneer tools, and several sections of track grousers that attach to the turret sides. The hull top plate and glacis plate are separate parts, and the engine grilles and rear deck are nicely done. There are separate pieces for all the headlamps, etc., and these are nicely molded as well, although the headlamp guard brackets are a bit too thick and could stand being thinned down a bit.

The upper and lower hull sections go together well enough, and aside from covering the holes in the bottom of the hull (put there, no doubt, so that Tamiya could motorize the thing to amuse children and vex household pets), there's not much to putting it together, though you will

need to fill some small gaps just above the drive sprockets. The kit provides side skirts, or mud guards, that cover the top of the tracks and the return rollers, but in most cases these were removed by the crews in combat, since they were easily damaged and made the tracks and sprockets more apt to clog up with mud or debris. If you leave these side skirts off as I did, you will also need to cover some large gaps under the sides of the upper hull over the tracks, but this is easily done with some sheet styrene and should pose no problem.

The rear deck overhangs the rear engine access doors, and unlike the earlier Stuart kits, this one provides a piece to fill the gap when viewed from below. There is a piece that goes onto the rear upper hull and provides the top rear panel where the tools are mounted. The front glacis plate allows you the option of leaving the driver's visor raised, which is nice, but there's nothing behind it, so you'll want to add a seat and perhaps some controls if you exercise this option. You should add seats in the front anyway, since the top is open and you can see at least far enough forward to see where the seat backs should be.

The suspension and wheels are nicely done, down to the weld beads on the road wheels, and go together with minimal fussing. The tracks are relatively plain, but then the tracks on the real thing weren't much either, being little more than simple rubber blocks with steel links and external guide teeth, just like the tracks on the M3/M5 Stuart light tanks.

Aside from the tools that mount on the rear deck and a few segments of track grousers on the outside of the turret, you get virtually no external equipment, which is typical of many armor kits, and a constant source of aggravation to those of us who like to model such vehicles with a typical load of bags, bundles and boxes. If you want to build this one with any added stowage, you'll have to scrounge from other kits or your spare parts box, or spring for Verlinden stuff - very nice, but also very pricey. Like most AFV's, in action M8's carried a wide variety of equipment and personal items, both G.I. issue and otherwise, and were often seen towing a small ammo trailer, much like the one that comes with Tamiya jeep kit. This might be a worthwhile investment if you want to add authenticity to your display....

Decals are the usual from Tamiya - usable, but a bit thick. They will conform to contours okay after a liberal soaking with Solvaset, but sometimes the edges show when you weather the vehicle. If you have suitable decals for national insignia, etc., from Superscale or Scale Master, they would be a better bet, though they rarely have armor unit markings or tactical ID codes.

In short, this offering from Tamiya is well detailed and goes together with a minimum of bother. If you're in the market for open-top AFV's for a contest, this is a good candidate that will provide you with a nice example of the type, and with mail-order prices in the \$10-11 range, it won't set you back a week's pay, either.

The Case of The Helicopter That Hovered Too Long.....

by John DeRosia

347-2197

I had the opportunity at our last IPMS meeting (Sept 12th) to meet John "Slats" Slattery from the Helicopter Foundation International (HFI) located in Oxon Hill, Maryland. He was also at our Nationals in July and at that time he left his business card at 3 of my helicopter models as well as others that were at the show. John Slattery is the curator of the foundation known around the world for its involvement and promotion of helicopters from all corners of the globe. Since the foundation does not have any real helicopters on display, it instead has amassed what is said to be the world's largest helicopter model collection. It's roots started with John's private collection as well as many kinds of articles, pictures etc. Sources say the HFI is the best source for any helicopter interests, history, pictures and articles. John travels all over just to try to keep collecting items for the HFI.

Well he was in the Seattle area for some other HFI interests and stopped at our meeting to hopefully meet some of us. I would also like to point out that John is also a modeler builder so he does speak our language. He talked to a few of us, and I agreed to loan John my model of my 1/48th scale Revell CH-53 Marine helicopter. John said that if I (or anyone) would actually donate a helicopter model to the foundation, a tax deduction would be issued to the builder for "x" amount.

It's hard to put into words why I am not ready to give away or donate some of my models-but many of you modelers know that feeling. Any amount of money can not break me away from some of my models. John understood this very much, and he was very supportive of me just loaning the helicopter. So-I agreed to drop it off at the SeaTac Marriott where John was staying about 7:00pm that night. He was at a convention and he left explicit instructions with the hotel.

I arrived right on time, and at first nobody knew of anybody named John Slattery. Finally after a few minutes, one of the people behind the desk remembered talking to that "guy" several hours earlier. I was getting weird feelings by now. I brought the case around behind the reception desk and asked if I should sign something since this was a valuable museum model. I was reassured no...everything will be okay. John agreed to get it for his return flight about 12:00 midnight back to Washington D.C. area. I left the helicopter in an "earthquake" proof case as well as a letter saying please call me late to let me know you did indeed get the helicopter.

I was up real late Saturday night and I did not get a call from John. Did I feel real bad vibes at this time?? You bet. I did feel that just maybe John was rushed and he just didn't have time to call.

Sunday afternoon answered that question when John called my house to say he was hopping I really would have left the model.....WHAT?! You mean you didn't get it?! Oh no?!!! He said they turned the Marriott upside down that night and there was no helicopter waiting for John. Help.....

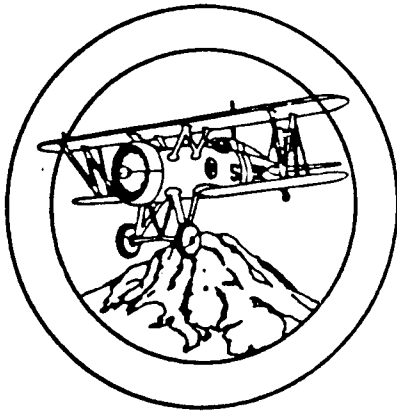
After about 2 hours on the phone with the Marriott-my model turned

up in one of their store rooms in the basement. During a change in shifts, some "kind" employee was not left the message that John would be by later that night to pick it up. John and I got back in touch and many many phones calls later that he placed to the Marriott-my model was delivered personally to him by a Marriott employee 2 days later. Lucky employee if you ask me.....

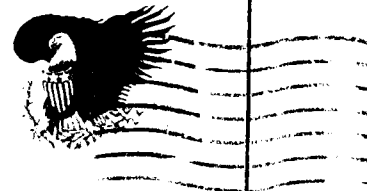
Ideally the Marriott was held responsible, and I will admit that John was above and beyond outstanding in the value he placed on my personal model, the time he put into it's recovery, and the energy he kept until it was put on display at the foundation.

John will try to come back about late November or December and hopefully get some more helicopter models to display. Please contact me or John for more information to try to get your helicpoter model to be displayed for all the world to see. I can honestly say that in such a short period of time, I feel as though I have known John for a very long time. That is how nice and interesting an individual he is. I look forward to his next visit. His address is as follows:

John M. Slattery
Helicopter Archive
P.O. Box 18029
Oxon Hill, MD 20745
703/683-4646



**IPMS
Seattle**



**From: Andrew Birkbeck
3209 N.E. 98th Street
Seattle, WA 98115**

To: William Polowinski
19627 - 1. St. Dr. SE
Burhamon WA 98200