

One of these independently-written chapter considers the ‘small’ modern war between Great Britain and Argentina. I already have two books about this on the Hurricane bookshelf: *The Battle for the Falklands*, by Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins, and *Air War: South Atlantic*, by Jeffrey Ethell and Alfred Price.

There’ll be more in a future column about all these, particularly next year, the 30th anniversary of the war, when the Northwest Scale Modelers do a special exhibit for the Museum of Flight. But for now, let me just say that *Why Air Forces Fail* taught me things those other books didn’t. Because of a formal agreement among the top dog military leaders of the Argentine ‘junta’, which has ruled the country for decades, the Air Force was actually forbidden to ‘encroach’ on the Navy’s prestige by practicing or preparing for war at sea, at all!

For all the courage and ability of the sailors and soldiers of the British task force, and the incredibly effective use of the Harrier as an interceptor, the mind boggles at what might have happened if the Argentine Air Force had been properly trained and prepared for long-distance overwater flights and the very specialized maneuvers of maritime strike. After reading the chapter in this book, it’s not at all far-fetched to imagine the British task force subjected to twice as many effective attacks, losing twice as many ships and personnel. There would have been a quite different *Why Air Forces Fail*, and **all** the books on the Falklands/Malvinas war would have had to be re-written!

## ***Panzer IV vs. Char B1 Bis France 1940*, by Steven J. Zaloga**

**reviewed by Andrew Birkbeck**

Despite the use of “tanks” in the First World War, and their use in the opening stages of the Second World War in Poland, September 1939, it was in the Battle of France in May 1940 that these weapons were used for the first time on any large scale. The battles around the French towns of Stonne, Hannant, and Gembloux for the first time in history saw massive clashes, involving hundreds of tanks on both the French and German sides. And it was during these battles that actual “armored divisions” from both sides were involved. This book covers the two major armored vehicles of the Battle of France, the Wehrmacht’s Panzer IV, and the French Army’s massive Char B1 Bis. The author, Steven Zaloga, is a well known military historian of the Second World War, and also a keen modeler. He is also a very good writer, and the prose of this book flows very well.

The book is divided into seven major chapters, and flows in an intelligent chronological order. The text is augmented by black and white period photos, some color photos from museums, and color artwork, together with charts and battle maps. A brief history of tank warfare is given from the First World War through the post war period, and up to the start of World War Two. This includes the military thinking on both the French and German sides as to the utility of tanks, and how they should best be employed on the battle field. The book then moves on to show how these ideas (different on each side) went on to influence the type of tanks the German and French armaments industries produced. A quick look at pictures of the Panzer IV and the Char B1 Bis show them to be very different vehicles, and the author expertly briefs the reader as to why they turned out the way they did: the Char B1 Bis heavily armored,

yet relatively slow, while the Panzer IV was more lightly armored, and as a result lighter, and thus faster.



Under the heading “The Combatants”, the author describes the crews of the two tanks, their training (or lack of it), the various mechanical devices installed in the tanks (episcopes etc), and how these helped or hindered the effectiveness of the two tanks. Also covered is the makeup of the two tank organizations, on the French side the DCR (Division Cuirasee) and on the German, the Panzer Division. The author then concludes with a vivid description of the major engagement of the two armored formations in the Battle of France: The Duel at Stonne.

At the opening stages of the Battle of France, the Germans had more “tanks” than the French by a small margin, but many of these German tanks were lightly armed Panzer I and Panzer II vehicles. In terms of more capable tanks, such as the Char B1 Bis, Hotchkiss H35/39, Renault R-35 and Somua S-35, vs. the Panzer III and Panzer IV of the German units, the French had numerical superiority. Yet why were the Germans able to destroy the French Armies in such a short period of time? From the tank vs. tank perspective, this

book reveals all. I found it easy to read, easy to understand, and very enlightening. I recommend it highly to anyone interested in this aspect of military history.

I also recommend it as a spur to building models: "back in the day", Airfix produced "Dog Fight Doubles", wherein the firm packaged two aircraft models in the same box, aircraft that had opposed one another in military combat. I read the brief "history" in the kit instructions, and this spurred me to go out and do more reading on the aircraft, their pilots, and the battles in which they fought. This Osprey book does the same, but in reverse: I read this book covering the men and machines in the Battle of France, and now I have gone out and purchased and started building models of the two tanks covered within its pages: Tamiya's superb Char B1 Bis kit, and one of Dragon Models excellent Panzer IV Ausf. B/C/D kits!

My sincere thanks to Osprey Publishing and IPMS/USA for supplying the review sample.

**Eduard MiG-21MF**

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respect, came to the same conclusion regarding accuracy. The only nit was that small tabs (approx 12" x 2") located on the wings just forward of the ailerons, for the purpose of airflow disruption over the control surface, were missing. These are simple to add from plastic card, though.

Without a doubt, the markings and painting guides are some of the best I have ever seen. They include six unique and completely different schemes. The first is for a tan and medium green desert-colored Egyptian Air Force MiG-21MF circa 1988. Second is a dark green, dark tan, and red brown Czechoslovakian Army MF that operated from 1989-1993. The third scheme is striking Slovak Air Force MiG-21MF as it appeared in 1999, done in white, medium gray, and olive green. Next is a two-tone gray Polish Air Force MF circa 2001-2003. Following that is a Soviet Union MiG-21SM from the Kharkov Higher Military Academy circa 1991 done in medium tan and olive green. Last is German Democratic

Republic MF circa 1990 done carrying a dark tan and olive drab color scheme. Each of these fully illustrated four-view (top, bottom, left and right side) color scheme guides fills an individual page in the instruction booklet along with an interesting bit of history about the individual aircraft depicted.

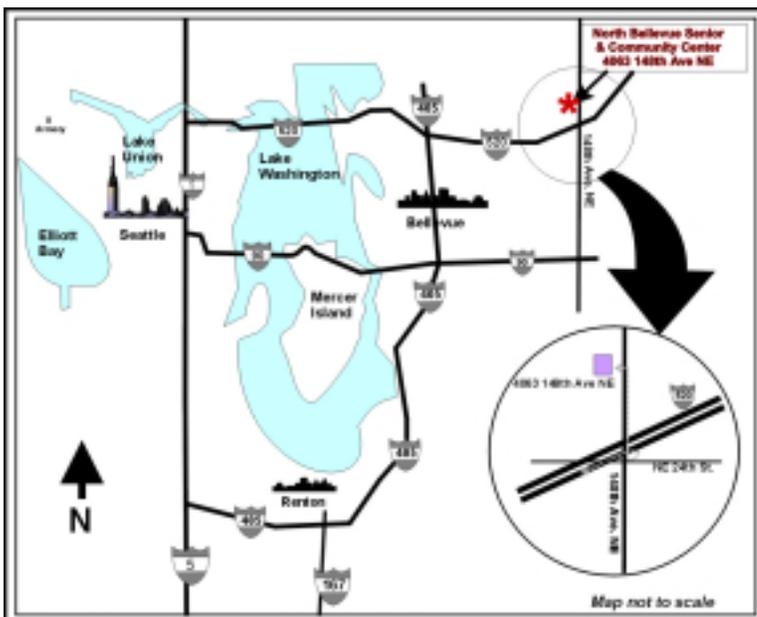
The other marking guides, consisting of three complete color pages, are dedicated to common aircraft stenciling, weapons stenciling and coloring and pylon and weapons railing coloring and stenciling.

This is a highly detailed, beautifully done, kit of a subject that is indeed an icon when it comes to a modern era air superiority fighters. Add to that a half dozen outstanding color schemes to choose from along with an excellent selection of weapons, and the only conclusion is that this is a winner. This is a "must have kit" if you are into 1/48th modern military aircraft.

My thanks to Eduard for the review sample.

**Meeting Reminder**

**June 11**



**North Bellevue Community/Senior Center  
4063-148th Ave NE, Bellevue**

**Directions:** From Seattle or from I-405, take 520 East to the 148th Ave NE exit. Take the 148th Ave North exit (the second of the two 148th Ave. exits) and continue north on 148th until you reach the Senior Center. The Senior Center will be on your left. The Center itself is not easily visible from the road, but there is a signpost in the median.