

HELLER PZL P-23A/B Karas

Mar 15 Meeting

This next meeting will be a contest month. We wish to remind members to prepare cards for their models giving the subject, kit manufacturer, decals, modifications, etc. with your name on the back. This not only makes it easier for the judges but helps the rest of the audience as well.

ANNUAL DUES - FINAL NOTICE

Our thanks go to those members who have renewed so far. (About half the membership) The \$2.00 may seem insignificant to some individuals (you can hardly buy a single magazine for that) yet that support from all of you means a great deal to the club. Those of you who have not renewed can expect this to be your last newsletter unless we receive your dues at the March meeting or before the next mailing on April 12. We intend to mail out a 1980 roster and make up new classier name-tags for April, so make sure you're on the list! If you can't make the next meeting, please mail your dues to: Bill Hawkins, Membership Secretary, 1602 NE 73rd, Seattle, WA 98115. (Those of you who have not renewed will find a 1 or 2 on your mailing label indicating that your dues are \$1.00 or \$2.00 for 1980.)

DISPLAY

It's time to change our model display at American Eagles. The club gets a lot of exposure which results in new members from this display so we should try to keep it fresh. (It's also a way to keep the dust off your models for a few months.) If you would consider putting some of your models to use, bring them to the March meeting and we'll all head out to Eagles afterwards.

SURVEY

I want to thank all of you who took the time to fill out the membership survey at the last meeting. This feedback is extremely useful in helping us run the show.

Most of you indicated an interest in the modeling demonstrations and many good suggestions were made for future topics. Several were in the basics area, although one was for the uses of fiber optics in modeling. (Will the person who made that suggestion please call me?) Also suggested were topics we have already touched on, so we may return to silver finishes and vacuform kit building for more depth. We will try to get to all of these topics providing we can get someone to admit they know something about them. (Modelers are such a modest (cowardly) bunch.)

The most frequent suggestion to make the meetings more interesting was to have more models there. This falls in line with the most common reason to attend the meetings: to BS about models with modelers. However it was also revealed that over half the membership finishes models that aren't brought to meetings. Please remember that no matter how you feel about your efforts, chances are that someone else will benefit from your experience. So, bring them all in, finished or unfinished (frequently more informative), good or "bad". We all like to look at models!

I am pleased to learn that the newsletter is being well received. There were some good suggestions for improvements which will be implemented as time and space allow. However I would like to point out that if the newsletter is to carry news and reviews of armor (or other non-aircraft) someone else will have to write them. The last tank I build sprouted wings! If anyone wants to submit any sort of announcement, review or article to the newsletter (PLEASE) see me at the meetings, call or drop me a letter. (That's: Greg Reynolds, 12819 98th PL NE, Kirkland, WA 98033) We can only print what we get.

New in Town

AMERICAN EAGLES: Airfix 1/72 Hurricane (new), Hs-123 (reissue), 1/48 Spit Vb; Revell 1/48 F-16A; Microscale F-101A/C w/conversion parts, C-47, F-14 stenciling; Squadron/Signal F-5, A-26 in Action B-29, German Fighters of WWII; Monogram Close-up Kikka, Bf-108, Me-109K; Hasegawa 1/72 F-18

CAMPUS HOBBIES: Airfix 1/72 S-3A, Mirage F.1C, 1/48 Me-109F, Spit Vb; Monogram 1/48 A-1H, F-100; JL (vac) 1/72 XP-50, Hasegawa 1/72 F-18; Bald Eagle (vac) 1/48 Yak-9U, Me-163, I-16, P-40K, J2F-6, B-25J nose; Microscale F-101A/C w/conversion parts, C-47; Squadron/Signal B-29, German Fighters of WWII, Pzkpfw 38(t) in Action; B-24 Liberator (a hardback)

Did You Know?

Frog was formed in 1931 by the Lines brothers. Their first products were flying models which gave the firm its name, an acronym for: Flys Right Off (the) Ground.

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The Heller Karas is now on the shelves after several years in the rumor-mill and months in limbo from a distributors trade dispute. It has been worth the wait, as indicated by the Karas outselling the Ar-196 2 to 1. Previously the only available P-23 was the abysmal Ruch offering, described by one reviewer as "The Iron Curtain's Revenge". Heller is to be commended for their selection of this, and other, long overlooked subjects.

The kit is extremely well molded and faultless in matters of dimension and outline. The surface detail is restrained and generally correct. Alternate parts (leading edge slats and horizontal stabilizers) are provided for the A and B models. Decals are for the 55th Bomber Brigade and a Rumanian P-23A. (Large numbers of Polish aircraft were evacuated to German controlled Rumania following the Soviet attack on Poland September 17, 1939.)

The decals are the weakest point of the kit. The emblem of the 55th, a Bengal tiger, should be orange, not yellow. The Rumanian crosses are marred by an overdone "stencil effect" of the white outline while the fin flash is omitted altogether. This is particularly disappointing as markings for the Karas are well documented, yet alternate decals nearly unavailable.

The kit contains a number of faults, all of a detail nature. The bomb racks under the wing center section and the gondola have been omitted. The flexible leather joint between the spats and the oleo fairings should have regular pleats rather than the random folds given. The rudder and elevators should indicate that they were made from finely corrugated sheet, about 8 per inch. (If that's too fine, why do they keep trying to show woven silk in 1/72?) The propeller blade is a bit off, too wide near the tip and too narrow at the root. The kit gives three venturi tubes but only two are needed. Omit the top one on the port side and center the starboard one above the oil cooler. The gondola glazing has been over simplified. Several small windows have been omitted and the rotating wind screen of the ventral gun position has been molded integrally with the side panels. Heller has provided a rudimentary interior which does help fill up the hole but bears only a superficial resemblance to the real thing. (The interior is very complex and beyond the scope of this review, and most modeler's stamina.) There are lots of other refinements that can be suggested (hand holds, tail skid wires, gun sights, etc.) but that's getting really picky!

The instructions aren't too helpful on which parts go with which version. The designations A and B reflect an engine change. The slats were dropped during A production as unnecessary. Few aircraft had them. The A was considered underpowered and relegated to training squadrons after conversion to dual control. The updated B was used in front line service and introduced the aerodynamically balanced elevators.

On the whole, this is really a very good kit, quite accurate as it stands, yet lots of room for the detail freaks.

REFERENCES

The PZL P-23 Karas Profile no. 104, by J. B. Cynk, 1966. Several interior photos. Drawings good for markings information but worthless for scale. Excellent text

PZL-23 A & B Karas Aeromodeller plans #2945, by F. Pawlowicz, reprinted from Aeromodeller Oct 72. Excellent scale drawings some interior and detail photos and sketches.

Samolot PZL Karas Plany Modelarskie #82, by J. M. Maciejewski, Warsaw 1977. Six large sheets of large scale drawings of all Karas variants. Lots of detail and interior drawings. Highly recommended but hard to get.

KP MiG-15 UTI (trainer)

This is essentially the same kit as the single seat MiG-15 released by KP a few months ago. The kit was correctly modified to reflect the differences between the two versions and includes an enlarged cockpit with duplicate seats, consoles and instrument panels, a beautifully shaped one-piece canopy and new nose gun. All other parts have the same flaws and merits mentioned in the 9/79 news. At least with the UTI you won't need to work on the canopy! (Unless you want the cockpits open, then you've got a chore.) Decals included are for Polish, Czech and N. Vietnamese aircraft. Again, the red used is a bit too warm and my copy is a bit out of register, but otherwise quite useable. GA

MONOGRAM CLOSE-UP, #5 Bf-108 Taifun and #19 Kikka

The volume on the Kikka, the Japanese "copy" of the Me-262, will certainly be the definitive work on the subject for some time. It contains many previously unpublished photos (including cockpit details), a delightful 5-view by R. Migliardi scaled from the Silver Hill example, and scholarly text by R. Mikesch. The sole detraction is that the english dimensional data given in the Comparison Table does not match the metric values given in the Airframe Data Table. I suspect the former was compiled in haste from incorrect published estimates and should be ignored.

The Bf-108 monograph is less impressive, although it too is one of the few works on the subject. The text seems fragmented and superficial while the scale drawings exhibit some suspicious contours about the tail. The issue is carried by the many excellent photos, some of which are in color. Also included, and I believe a first for this series, are six color profile drawings.