



"STICKY FINGERS"

IPMS HORNCHURCH - NEWSLETTER

Ken's "Korner"

Hello there modellers

Greetings to you all for 1999 and may all your modelling faults be little ones.

Disappointment

Firstly I made a trip to "The Unicorn" restaurant in ample time to book us a place for our meal on 23rd Jan 1999. However this is not to be, as they will be running down the food arrangements during the week running up to that date because the whole building inside is going to be refurbished. Sorry about that, if anyone has any other suggestions for a venue please see me.

Club Matters

I do hope everyone enjoyed the Quiz last month and congratulations to the team that won. I should like to thank all those chaps who brought along some beautiful food and cakes etc. You certainly did us proud.

Again a big thank you to all those club members who took their turns in manning the tables at Olympia for the model show. Also to Ian Brown and his assistant in transporting all the models there and setting up.

As far as I can gather the show has not improved a lot, with large tracts of floor space taken up by military vehicles and new private cars on show. There were the usual many stalls just selling tools etc for the model engineer and nothing much for our field at all. Model railways featured a lot more than last time, but on the whole nothing has changed from previous years. I really do not know why people pay that kind of entry fee for so little to entertain them. (*Note next years 1999 show will be at Alexandra Palace between 10th & 14th December – announced on the last day of the show – Ed*)

Since our December meeting I have received an invitation on behalf of Barnet (IPMS) model club, to their 1999 annual show on Sunday 18th April from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., setting up from 8:00 a.m. on the day. We have been offered 12 foot of single width space, the same as last year. So to be fair to all those who may wish to display their models this size should be taken into consideration. I shall be asking whether we accept the invitation at this month's meeting. As they had so many requests for space last year, they hope to have the same amount of traders as last year. There is going to be a licensed bar this year (*but no drink driving I hope! – Ed*), they hope to be able to use the site facilities. The show is at the same venue.

I have no overseas news this month, as I have not had any communications from New Zealand for about 4 months, perhaps it's been too hot at their side of the world to do any modelling.

The February meeting is a "Video Night". To stop a repeat of last time's performance with loads of videos but no equipment, would anyone willing to bring along either a largish television or video player please let me know as soon as possible.



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"SKYHAWKS IN THE FALKLANDS CONFLICT 1982"

During the Falklands brief war in the spring of 1982, Argentina used about 300 aircraft of all types. One of these was the elderly A-4B Skyhawk, from GRUPO 5de CAZA, this aircraft gave a good account of its self during the campaign.

In 1976 Argentina took delivery of 25 reconditioned A-4C Skyhawks from the U.S. Navy which formed the "Escuadron Skyhawk" of the Grupo 4de Caza-Bombardeo of 4 Brigada Area based at Mendoza. These A-4Cs differed from the A-4B in having two extra hardpoints and an updated Nav/Attack system of British origin.

At the start of the conflict this unit had 18 A-4C's, most were deployed at San Julian airfield in Santa Cruz Province. In mid April the Grupo 4 A-4C Skyhawks used desert camouflage which was brown and sand upper surfaces and light grey undersurfaces. During the conflict they lost nine aircraft, and had the dubious honour of being the unit with the highest losses, also the unit with the least successful damage rates to the English forces.

During the Skyhawks attack on the British ships Sir Lancelot and Sir Galahad in San Carlos water, on the 24th May the aircraft were each carrying a single 500lb bomb of British origin. On another attack against British ships in San Carlos water, the Skyhawks were carrying 4 x 500lb bombs made in Israel. After the war a modest modernisation program saw the surviving A4C's receive some improvement in their weapons and E.C.M. systems, also being wired for both Matra Magic and The Rafael Shafrir weapons. The A-4B Skyhawk turned out to be Argentinas most successful combat aircraft, causing the loss of H.M.S. Antelope, H.M.S. Coventry, R.F.A. Sir Tristram, and sharing in the sinking of H.M.S. Ardent and damage to H.M.S. Glasgow & H.M.S. Argonaut amongst others.

During the war Grupo 5de Caza lost 10 A-4B Skyhawks, 9 of its pilots were killed and one ejected over the west Falklands. Aircraft number C-207 sank the Type 42 destroyer H.M.S. Coventry, believed to have been armed with a British made 1000lb bomb. Information reveals that later in the conflict the camouflage was changed to dark green and brown upper surfaces, with light blue undersurfaces. This was later changed yet again near the end of the war, to a Tan and Green scheme to make them less conspicuous over the dark landscapes. During only two short periods in March/April 1982 ESCUADRILLA 3a Skyhawks embarked aboard the aircraft carrier 25 de Mayo to attempt a carrier action against the British ships. Due to light winds and the fact that the British task force was "LOST", the attack was cancelled. The 6 Skyhawks were then in white colours with the word "ARMADA" in large letters each side of the rear fuselage, and the aircraft number further to the front by the Jet intakes, A large anchor design appears on the Starboard upper wing surface.

The national insignia of light blue and white roundels only appears on the camouflaged aircraft early in the war, and then only on the fuselage. I have no evidence whether the roundel was used on the wings. When in 1971-1972 Argentina took delivery of 16 A4-B Skyhawks from the US Navy, the export designation was for 16 A-4Q aircraft. Why were they changed back to A-4B's no one seems to know.

This brief account of the action in the Falklands by Skyhawks is for the benefit of Skyhawk Interested MODELLERS.



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Ken

Peter's Prattlings

Netwatch

Seen on the Net on 11/1/98

The following press release was received from Neil Robinson concerning the future of 'QSM' and 'S3M' magazines.

PRESS RELEASE 8/1/99
QSM and S3M Combine

Following successful negotiations with our printers, I am pleased to announce that Apple Tree Print, a division of Guildhall Leisure Services Limited., have now taken over the publishing rights of 'Quarter Scale Modeller' and 'Seventy-Second Scale Modeller'.

Following marketing advice, the radical decision has been taken to combine the contents of 'QSM' and 'S3M' to create a bigger and better and more commercially viable single publication, to be called 'AIRCRAFT MODELLER International' (or 'AMi' for short).

The January issue, (No.1 of AMi), will be sent out to 'QSM' and 'S3M' subscribers and trade outlets w/c 11.01.99, and sample copies will be available from Guildhall Leisure Services Limited. Phone +44 (0)1302 881108 (9am - 5pm)

Sadly, I shall not be editing 'AMi'. That honour has gone to fellow IPMS member Ian Hartup who takes over editorial control with Issue 2, due out at the beginning of February.

As of this Press Release, any correspondence concerning 'QSM', 'S3M' or the new 'AMi', should be addressed in the first instance to:

Guildhall Leisure Services Limited
Unit 15
Guildhall Industrial Estate
Kirk Sandall
Doncaster
South Yorkshire DN3 1QR
England

Neil Robinson - AIRgen Publications.

A Spotters Guide

Filched off the IPMS(UK) web site. Which one are you?



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Kit Swap Sam Reporting.

I have now taken part in my first Kit swap and what an interesting and enlightening event it turned out to be. I would like to share with you some of the characters I met and I feel certain you will come across them yourself some time in the future at model shows. I hope I am not infringing on any copyright by calling them, Mr or Mrs so n' so.

Ducker and Diver – You meet him/her before the show opens, they appear out of nowhere and are looking through your stock before you have a chance to set out your stand. They are into every storage box turning over the kits without regard to contents or value. Most enlightening comment is "Great innit, this is?" Emerging from under the table clutching a kit they ask "How much?" The kit(s) are quickly bagged and they go away as happy as a sandpiper.

Expert – Now here's an individual to avoid getting into a conversation with, for he/she will bore you to death with every little change in the colour of plastic used in the history of a kit and it's packaging, release dates and quantity produced. They very rarely buy a kit and just use you as a sounding board and to stock up on information.

Colour Mad – He/she believes all the colours used by all the paint manufactures are wrong and they can bore you for hours quoting FS numbers verbatim, date, time, place used and even down to the batch number. They rarely buy a kit and even more rarely make a model. If they do eventually build a model, everyone else is wrong and only they have the correct one.

One Type Only – These individuals only ever build one type of model and it is lined up in all its splendour on a club display stand. All 22-sub types of the same model, the only differences are decals or paint finish. They walk away muttering "I can never find the one I want". At home they have a loft full of the same kit.

Collector – Now this individual is the one you want to meet. For he/she will buy to fill that place in their collection of unbuilt kits. But be aware, it must be in the correct box undamaged by time or hands, the kit has to be in its original plastic bag and the instructions have to be creased in the correct place. They never builds kits, they just collect them.

On Approval – This individual asks to take a kit to their husband wife somewhere in the hall to see if they want to buy it. New type of kit lifting?

Average Model Maker – This is the individual you all want to meet and talk to, they are usually very good and have a broad knowledge of kits and problems with them. They have in their time built most types of kits and are prepared to pass on their knowledge in an unassuming way. They buy kits and build them.

Pointer – It seems to be their sole job at shows. Stand in a group, and talking under their breath to friends, they point out every kit on display but they never address you directly. They are only there to act as the eyes for the others; so they miss nothing. Their greatest claim to fame is to find that elusive kit or kits for friends and will go on and on about it for ages.



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Cheap – They can always get the same kit cheaper elsewhere and have tales to tell of the £45 kit they got for £35 (or less). Get rid of them as quick as you can, they kill trade stone dead.

Moaner or Doom and Gloom – They are always putting the hobby down. They spread rumours and gossip. Every kit has a fault or is in the wrong markings, the colour scheme is at fault and the show is in the wrong place. The organisers don't know how to put a show on or it's hard to get to (but they got there). They never do anything about it, or help in any way. They are only happy when spreading false information, (always seen in large numbers at the Nationals!). They will buy kits but only after a lot of moaning and trying to get the price as low as they think you will go.

Leave It – They will pick up a kit and ask you to put it to one side. They never pay for it and never return.

Rule No.1 – Put the kit to one side but ask them to pay up front, watch their expression change. They never had any intention of buying in the first place and get their kicks from denying you a sale, sad people!

Prowler – They walk round the hall making a mental note of every kit they are interested in and the price. After several circuits they will pounce on the unwary vendor selling kits. Their opening gambit is "What can you knock off the price?" They will then spend a long time trying to tire you out and attempt to make you give in. Stick it out if you can, for if you give in they will be back to gnaw at you time and time again.

Plausible – They will give you a tale of woe of being in a hurry and will ask you to buy their excess kits. Be very careful and examine everything, for it may just be little bits of scrap in the box, I know from bitter experience.

You will meet some or all of the above at the majority of shows at one time or another. With the exceptions of Average, Collector and Ducker and Diver, the rest belong to the four P's. Pick it up, Price it, Put it down and Pee Off Brigade.

How can you get bored at a Kit Swap? The three most common questions asked are in the day are: "Do you know?", "Where can I get?", and "Have you Got?".

On the plus side, you will meet plenty of genuine model makers who usually know what they want and how much they are prepared to pay. Mostly it is "How much?", and "Can I look inside?". They then make up their mind very quickly and pay up. These are the chaps and ladies who make it all worth while. To you, thanks, you know who you are.

Would I do another kit swap? Probably, because it's such a wonderful hobby. The main purpose of this observation is that it is a hobby after all and not to be taken too seriously. I hope I have not offended anybody but if by any strange chance I have, then if the cap fits, wear it.

Peter



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Wrighty's References

The Truth About The Flying Tigers

"The Flying Tigers", a romantic, legendary even mythical name you have all heard of and know, in reality they were known as the American Volunteer Group (AVG) and later the 23rd F.G. of the 14th US Air Force.

Indeed a number of their P-40 aircraft have been seen recently in both 1/72nd & 1/48th scale on display and in club competitions. Also we touched on their activities in my recent article on the Brewster Buffalo and 67 Squadron in particular with regards to the war in Burma.

When writing that story, I was somewhat surprised to find the AVG had worked with the RAF and searched a little deeper into my records. I thought you may be interested in some of the facts behind this legendary unit which I subsequently discovered, their story follows:

The war between Japan, who invaded China, began in 1937; the Japanese gained experience in this conflict much the same way as the Condor Legion of the Luftwaffe in Spain. By 1940 Japan had made large gains and generally the Chinese opposition was falling off.

Since 1937 a former US Air Corps pilot, 47 year old Captain Claire L. Chennault, had been Director of Training for the Chinese Air Force. During the years to 1940 Chennault had gained the ear of Madame Chiang Ki-shek, wife of the Nationalist President, and she bankrolled him (\$8,900,000 US dollars) for his plan to purchase 100 modern fighters and recruit a volunteer force of 100 pilots plus 200 ground crew specialists.

In April 1941 President Roosevelt signed the order bringing the AVG into being. 100 Curtiss P-40B Tomahawks were obtained. Some aircraft were earmarked for the RAF; others were proposed export aircraft for Sweden. The pilots and ground crews were given 1-year contracts; they came from US Air Corps or Navy backgrounds, including a few civil pilots. Soon all was ready. Shipments of crated aircraft began in May 1941 to Rangoon in Burma, then assembled at Mingaladon airfield near Rangoon. The men followed in July 1941, they were based at an ex-RAF airfield Toungoo, they were here until the intended base Kunming in China was ready for them.

From August to December 1941 training took place where Chennault put his theories into training with the P-40s. He believed a small, well organised, force of fighters could prevent bombers getting through to their targets. Problems with aircraft, weather, accidents (3 men were lost) and men leaving all slowed down training, which was still in progress when the Japanese struck on December 7th.

Chennault then organised the AVG into 3 squadrons of 18 planes each within the group, the 1st Squadron was called the Adam & Eves, the 2nd the Panda Bears and the 3rd the Hells Angels. Their brief was to protect Chiang Ki-sheks' supply roads through Burma, the AVG then moved into Kunming airfield, its main base. The 3 squadron leaders were 1st Robert Sandell, 2nd Jack Newkirk and 3rd Aruid Olsen.



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In early December 1941 a magazine arrived at the base depicting 112 Squadron RAF in the Western Desert wearing their sharksmouth emblems on their P-40Bs, the AVG latched onto this and within weeks all their P-40s were decorated likewise. Thus disproving the myth that the AVG introduced the emblem. Whilst on about magazines, the March 1942 edition of "Life" depicted the sharksmouthed AVG on its pages, where the term "Flying Tiger" was quoted for the first time, but it stuck to the AVG with legendary status thereafter.

The groups first operation was a reconnaissance of Bangkok to check Japanese air strength, they noted almost 100 aircraft within easy striking distance of Rangoon. Chennault then sent the 3rd Squadron to Mingaladon (see Buffalo article) to assist 67 Squadron RAF. At Kunming a ground advanced warning system of Chinese observers @ 60, 125 & 185 miles out, provided warning against attack. On the 20th December this system provided the 2nd Squadron with the detail to attack Ki-21 Sally bombers, 3 were shot down, and 3 were damaged and did not return to base, not bad for a first engagement.

In Burma on the 23rd and 25th big raids took place on Rangoon and Mingaladon, they were met by 67 Squadron RAF & AVG 3rd Squadron. The Japanese Ki-21 Sally bombers and the fighters, K-43 Oscars & Ki-27 Nates all of the Japanese Army Air Force got a hammering. Claims were made for 7 for 3 on the 23rd and 12 for 2 on the 25th, although 25 were claimed many of the Japanese bombers did get back to base very badly damaged. These figures are for the AVG only. 67 Squadron also took a toll of the attackers. As the action slowed the 2nd Squadron were sent to Mingaladon with 17 planes and 5 from the 1st Squadron to relieve the 3rd Squadron, who returned to Kunming in early January 42.

In the following 10 weeks to mid March the "Tigers" encountered the enemy 31 times, losing 16 aircraft with 6 pilots killed. During this period Singapore fell on the 15th February, and 67 Squadron replaced its Buffaloes with Hurricanes around the same time. The odds were overwhelming and the "Tigers" evacuated to Magwe with only about 20 aircraft left, by April they were at Lowing where new P-40E Kittyhawks were obtained via the fledgling 10th Air Force where Chennault had contacts. Strength was upped to approximately 75 aircraft (36 + 39 u/s) by mid month, but the pressure told and by May 1st Lowing was evacuated, the group pulling back into China at Kunming.

At this point in early May, morale dropped, some pilots resigned and the 2nd & 3rd Squadron pilots told Chennault they wouldn't fly escort to slow RAF bombers (Blenheims) or fly "Moral Missions" over the Chinese forces, which had proved costly. Only after 23 men resigned was the crisis eventually sorted.

The pilot's yearlong contracts were due to end on the 4th July 1942, so it was decided to induct the AVG into the new 14th Air Force, 23 Fighter Group on that day and the AVG would no longer exist. But it wasn't quite that easy, out of 87 pilots, 164 ground staff, only 5 & 17 respectively chose to be inducted into the USAAF. 20 pilots volunteered to stay on for an extra 2 weeks to help the newly arrived but inexperienced Army Air Corp pilots, as action was still going on. So in reality the 23rd Fighter Group was activated at Kunming on 4th July under the command of Col Robert L Scott, subordinate to Chennault, who was inducted into the USAAF as a Brigadier General. The state of



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equipment was 34 P-40E Kittyhawks (16 new arrivals) and 28 ex AVG Tomahawks, of which a total of 51 were serviceable. They were split into 3 Squadrons, 75th at Kweilin, the 76th at Henyyang and the 74th (basically an OUT for the inexperienced pilots to be brought up to standard) at Kunning. After 2 weeks were up, all AVG personnel apart from those inducted were shipped home to the States. They were technically still civilians (mercenaries) so the USAAF had no claim on them.

So in reality the 23rd FG could hardly be called the "Flying Tigers", but the legacy the AVG left was a firm base to build on by the new 14th Air Force.

In 6 months they had claimed over 200 aircraft destroyed and many more probables in the air, plus another 40 on the ground, *(see note below) for the loss of 12 P-40s in combat and a further 60 in accidents, ground attacks, by airfield bombing and self destruction when evacuating bases in Burma during the retreat. A total of 26 pilots achieved acedom and 2 were awarded the US Medal of Honour. A final accolade to the "Tigers" was the emblem of the newly created 14th Air Force.



*Note

Actual claims vary in different books, some say nearly 300 but in view of overclaiming and true result of the 25th December (conformed by C. Shores via Japanese sources in the book "Bloody Shambles, published by Grubb Street), the 200 figure could still be slightly on the high side, but with many damaged aircraft, that may have been withdrawn from action if and when they got back to base, it has a realistic ring about it.

The Sharksmouth

The Sharksmouth was a feature of all the 23rd FG and also the 51st FG, who also flew the P-40, later aircraft in both groups like the P-51B did use the marking initially but it was discontinued by the time these groups had the P-51D Mustang, when different Group markings were used.

Number 112 Squadron RAF who arrived in the Western Desert at Sidi-Heneish in September 1941 with new P-40B Tomahawks applied the sharksmouth here, at this time they still had not applied the newly allocated GA code. You probably know the well-published picture. They in fact appropriated the marking from the Me-110 "Zerstorer" Gruppe II/2G 76 who used it on the Battle of France & Britain, thus making them the original inventors.



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Final Thought

When compared to 67 Squadron RAF and their colleagues in Malaya and Singapore, the AVG had similar preparation time but competed much better in the real action. The conclusion I draw from this is that free thinking men on the spot know what they are doing, i.e. the AVG refused to fly on pointless missions, whilst the RAF were ordered to do so, they could not say "no", the results prove which system was best.

Alan