



Perimeter Perspectives **By Bob Nuszbaum**

To many visitors and participants, the Chicago Show is about figures -- stock, converted, scratch built -- all meticulously painted and dramatically displayed on velvet-draped plinths. Perhaps more by expedience than design, the heart of the exhibition is composed of just such displays. But around this core are arranged the perimeter tables featuring myriad noteworthy attractions. Things that fly, float, fire projectiles, or otherwise have weight and occupy space. Marvelous things the Show Committee designates as Ordnance. It is to these wonders that our worthy editor has assigned my attention. ["Oh, and while you're at it," says he, "throw in the Junior, Basic, General, Wargame, and Antique categories, as well."]

To begin, a few stipulations and disclaimers: First, if an item is on display at the Chicago Show, it is good. Good on a quality continuum of meritorious to superior. Therefore, my inclusion or exclusion of any particular item is in no way a judgment of its excellence; nor is one descriptive adjective meant to convey any ranking over another the show judges have already determined such things beyond our poor powers to add or detract. Second, apologies are tendered for any misspelling or misidentification. So, let's travel.

Shipping Out

Of the subjects modelers choose to miniaturize, ships pose the added problem of making something really big look good *really small* -- usually without benefit of groundwork or figures to help establish scale. An excellent place to begin is with a really big ship, the famed *RMS Titanic* as modeled by Jay Stone. Even in miniature, Jay's *Titanic* stood out for its impressive size as well as the intricate fittings, railings, and radio wires replicating the original. Just as an authentic *Titanic* would show very little weathering, a venerable windjammer such as the *Thermopylae* would. This is just the effect Jim Lyne achieved on the copper hull of his model. In addition, the miniature running rigging looked as though it could work the ship even in static display. Larry Peters employed "groundwork" (actually an extremely well done epoxy water effect) to set his *USS Keokuk*, a twin-turret Civil War monitor, in motion. Larry also did a fine job depicting the rust lines and smoke stains that doubtless bedecked the original.

Taking us from the surface to beneath the waves was Dwight Workinger's V3501 Type XXI submarine. Titled, "Hitler's Hope," this late-war V-Boat, looking very prototypical of the early nuclear subs to follow, proved too little, too late to win the conflict. Dwight really nailed (or is "riveted" the better word?) the difficult to replicate panel lines in small scale. Another nice job with a nasty subject was Van Olson's treatment of the Revell V-218 "Grey Wolf" Van caught the sleek, but menacing look of this North Atlantic predator just right.

Up in the Air

The transition from the deep blue sea to the wild blue yonder isn't difficult if we begin with seaplanes. Bob Hickl combined his finishing skills with his sense of humor to treat us to a slick Schneider Cup-like Rossi Seaplane done in a flawless Ferrari red; engine mounted above the wing, plane mounted on a wooden dolly, and all surmounted by a porcine pilot caricature. Although rightfully recognized for his outstanding helicopters, Ron Hilker made those of us of an age remember our early modeling days with his Revell PBM-5 Mariner looking as we wish we had done it in the 1950's replete with that distinctive Revell plastic globe as a mounting base. Of course, Ron's globe was fully painted!

The flying machines of the First World War have always been appealing to modelers. Perhaps the fascination is with their fragility. Perhaps it is their colorful markings or romantic associations. But it is just these qualities that make the early aeroplane difficult to portray convincingly. Mastering the genre was Curtis Knight whose diminutive Etrich Taube in Austrian service showed the intricate wing-warping wires and fragile dove-like wing structure to perfection. No name is as synonymous with World War One aircraft as that of Anton Fokker. Ron Hillman paid tribute to the genius of the flying Dutchman with a display of familiar types such as the biplane D- VII and the triplane DR I as well as the less often seen D-II, B-II, and monoplane E-III types. All properly exuded the essence of castor oil.

More spruce and doped linen was in evidence from Dave Fisher who did a whale of a job on a Roland CL-II Walfisch sporting an early version of the shark-mouth motif. The curtained observation window was a homey touch. There aren't many interactive displays at the Chicago Show, so a card reading, "Please Blow on the Propeller" is irresistible. Behind the card was John Bowery's extremely clean 1172nd Nieuport 17 replicating a craft from the recent "Fly boys" film. The flying wires done in this scale were outstanding. Sharing the flying wire honors would be Bob Sheldon whose Hamiot HD 3 featured tiny turnbuckles and Jack Taylor whose Sikorsky S-16 bomber was a virtual maze of complicated wiring and braces. *Pour le Merite's* to all!

The miniature portrayal of World War Two aircraft poses other challenges.. Here the paint finishes tend toward low visibility or camouflage schemes and heavy weathering through extended service; features which can too easily be overdone. Not a problem for intrepid modelers such as Rick Harley. Rick's Ilyushin Stormovik of the Red Banner Fleet at Leningrad featured flawless panel lines, drilled gun tubes, and a most convincing Cyrillic slogan painted on the fuselage. No, not Geiko; Gekko! Winston Vermilyea might have employed a parody of the insurance company slogan to display his three Japanese Gekkos used as home defense insurance against allied air raids. Winston rose above such base humor, however, by displaying his well-weathered aluminum warbirds on an exceptionally well rendered Japanese battle flag, instead.

The Messerschmitt Bf 110-4B was a twin-engine fighter bomber that packed a potent sting. Tom Kavanaugh captured the formidable look of the plane admirably right down to the clever bumble bee nose art. Nose art also figured prominently on Bob Ferreira's

P-40E. But instead of the familiar shark mouth, this Warhawk's beak sprouted parrot feathers! Ironically, camouflage is intended to obscure its subject; but a well-painted camouflage scheme on a model makes it stand out all the more. Such is the case with Bob Hennings' nicely mottled Me-109. Each of the several planes displayed by Felix Gonzales is noteworthy, but especially so is the F6 "Hellcat" from the *USS Essex* with its characteristic exhaust stains on the fuselage.

Felix Gonzales leads us from the fixed-wing variety of aircraft to the whirlybird types where his impressive ACH-47 Armed Chinook replicated a refurbished example at Fort Eustis. Doug Cohen turned his considerable skills loose on a UH-1D helicopter, unusual both for its partial camouflage/partial rescue yellow paint scheme and its amazing attention to detail down to first aid kits and searchlight. Detail likewise abounded on Ron Hilker's large Russian MIL M14 Hound on which the engine compartment was opened to reveal the very realistic power plant. And Chris Wedke garnered attention for his 1/48th scale KV-107 "White Heron" with a well-executed colorful livery.' '

Seeing the aeronautical shark mouth motif used in both World Wars, it should come as no surprise to see it employed in Vietnam, as well. Such was the case with Don Junis' business-like, olive drab camouflaged A-7D Corsair II. Then, from fancy flights to flights of fancy with David Bainbridge's futuristic out-of-this-world Space Walker. Dave's model strode purposefully over a blue surface groundwork in a galaxy far, far away.

Making Tracks

Armored fighting vehicles are by nature large, heavy, dirty, and very metallic. Conversely, models of the same are small, light, clean, and decidedly plastic. The challenge here, of course, is to make the latter resemble the former as realistically as possible. In this respect, it would be hard to fault the German Panther hybrid of Leonardo Dominguez with its chipped zimmerit treatment and anodized exhaust system. Perhaps due to their intriguing variety, German AFV's continue to maintain their popularity. The evolution in size and firepower of these tanks was shown to fine effect and great 1/76th detail by the Panzer III and Tiger I examples of Craig Davis. Among the largest of these WW II behemoths was the Ferdinand, which Rick Rasmussen rendered masterfully as the final production model complete with German graffiti. *Zehr gut!* And what became of all these tanks after the war? Well, a few at least ended up in Syria as attested to by Jessica Sotelo's desert dusty Pz.Kpfw IV.

The ubiquitous M4 Sherman was well represented by Doug Somers who dealt us a pair of the American tanks set off by gear and track links used as additional protection. Another approach to additional "armor" was shown by Tony Higgs whose M4A2 used very realistically modeled wood planks to bolster the survival factor. Survivability is still paramount as shown by the modern Russian T-62 with applique' armor and mine plows skillfully modeled by Jacques Duquette. Similarly, a menacing low profile assists modern AFV's such as the American M1A1 Abrams as shown by Douglas Smith IV on his Iraq War "Sinister Minister" and Stuart Hines' modern Wehrmacht Leopard 2AS in winter

camouflage. Both are outstanding examples of realistic small-scale heavy metal.

The tank's World War One origins were well represented by George Romano's battle-muddied replicas of the French St. Chamond and German A1V; whereas Michael Bedard used a Char B 1 bis to show us the development of the species at the outbreak of World War Two as well as his skill in the subtle blending of camouflage colors. Inspiring models all. But where do the modelers get their inspiration? Thomas Foti answered that question in one way by posing his model of the massive Russian KV-1 next to the wartime photograph that served as its genesis.

Rolling Right Along

One might think the distinction between a tank and something not a tank would be fairly clear: tracks - wheels, big gun - no gun, armor hide - soft skin. One might be wrong! Take Dan Tisoncik's excellently weathered German Saurer RK-7, for example. This unusual German reconnaissance vehicle had wheels and tracks! Dan's rendition also featured a driver figure detailed to include epoxy "glass" in his goggles. On the other hand, Ro Annis' very crisply painted Russian BA-6 armored car had wheels all right, but sported a huge tank turret as a deterrent to mistaking it for anything benign.

The German word *sunder* denotes something special, but often with the connotation of special in an odd or peculiar way. Thereby, the designation for German armored cars and such as *sonder kamf zug* (Sd.Kfz) seems most appropriate. Andy Gulden expertly modeled the unusually articulated eight-wheeled Sd.Kfz 234/4 using a very cleanly applied tan/brown camouflage pattern. Chris Mrosko showed equal expertise by using a Sd.Kfz 7/2 half-track mounting a formidable FLAK 37 gun as an exercise in photo etch application and rust effect weathering. And Chip Childs found that the four wheels of the Sd.Kfz 223 were quite sufficient to demonstrate his considerable skill in putting chains on the tires!

Somewhat easier to separate from their more heavily armed and armored brethren are the service vehicles and artillery pieces. The most panzer-like thing about Joe Hudson's Krupp truck was its panzer gray paint; but beyond that, this piece stood out for its accurate treatment of the cargo (including sacks of potatoes) and the scratchbuilt folded tarps. Cargo figured prominently in both Mike Bedard and Dave Fisher's homage to the diminutive Ford Model T lorry as used in the Great War. Mike's featured a very realistic canvas tilt while Dave posed his straddling a muddy stream.

Almost lost in the land of the giant AFV's was Bill Dunkle's tiny Zundapp motorcycle, but well worth noticing for its amazingly detailed spokes, fuel lines, and brakes. This year's artillery contingent featured large guns in small scale and small guns in large. John Meyers went large scale with his Civil War 12 Pounder field piece and limber, then displayed each in a ruined and abandoned setting as "Remnants of War" following the Battle of Gettysburg. The weathering on the wood and rust on the metal was very realistic. Mike Reaves also concentrated on the aftermath of warfare by posing his smaller scale WW II German cannon in an elaborate groundwork emplacement complete with its

gunner "Fallen for the Fatherland." So, what would be the equivalent of an "88" in futuristic scale? Sam Buonadonna gave us a glimpse of the Age of Aquarius with his mean-looking Warhammer "Grinder '88" of 3035 A.D. (Don't point the laser at your eye!).

Return Trip

One last lap around the perimeter should bring us to all those other great displays that don't readily fit the categories above (some because the display areas for Junior, General, and Ordnance seemed to have gotten co-mingled on the outside tables).

The F-89 Scorpion certainly resembles its namesake and Adam Cochenet certainly did full justice to the sleek early jet with a very cleanly built fighter. "Beware the Jabberwocky" came to mind upon viewing the dangerous dentition of Dan Gordon's fierce Fire Dragon. Both were Junior displays for the age of their modelers, certainly not for their promising quality. If small figures in large numbers is your cup of British tea, then the "Battle of Abu Klea" by Kelly and Anne Baird hit the spot. The hundred or so wargame size Brits and Dervishes made quite a Mahdist affair. (Sorry!)

Generally speaking, demure modesty was not an issue for Joe Furioso's "Christmas Spirit" who apparently lost her Santa suit while coming down the chimney. Joe did dress up the scene nicely, though, with a fireplace, mirror, and Christmas tree. Equally spirited was Van Olson's treatment of the Musketeers in which two caricature figures overlooking a crumpled candy bar wrapper inquire, "Who Ate D' Artagnon?"

The once abundant Historex figure has become a rarity, so it was good to see Jay Stone's Irish Brigade at Fontenoy on which the strapping was first rate. First rate also applies to the Soum

Hussar of Bill Cann for his treatment of the lace "effect as well as the always difficult to paint yellow dolman.

Another difficulty for painters is creating the effect of texture in various types of cloth. Pat Luedke did a remarkable job with the felt and velour on his Merlin bust. Still more difficult is the depiction of character or emotion in a painted figure. Despite this difficulty, the transfixing sinister stare of Jay Ruggiero's Dracula was chilling. Still more difficulty comes from painting figures in the 25mm range where eyestrain must be an occupational constant. Overcoming this were Glenn Shott with his Nassau contingent and Wendy Rafalski with her 1812 Redcoats. Both minuscule Napoleonic units were thoroughly and skillfully shaded as they stepped smartly out of the pages of history. Another eye-catching piece in the Wargame area came from Matt Crofford whose fantasy "Gorbad Ironclaw" was anything but bad. The tusk treatment on this warthog with attitude brought home the bacon.

A born-to-be-wild hog of a different color was shown by Alexander DeLeon. His "Reaper" was a large-scale, scratchbuilt motorcycle with a Monogram engine. This truly impressive three-barrel V8, twin-seat, tricycle came festooned with skulls and a tremendous amount

of rivet detail displayed on a coffin base with yet more skulls. Wood is not a common medium for scratchbuilding at the Chicago Show. So those of us unable to properly carve a turkey were doubly impressed by Leo Slawski's carved wooden Winchester and Sharps rifles.

A featured display at the Chicago Show is always the Antique category. This year, after far too long a hiatus, Dave Fisher took top honors with a multi-tiered display of "Victorian Firepower." Gloss-painted old toy soldiers manned various examples of field guns and Maxims in use when Britain held dominion over palm and pine. Another favorite display type is the shadowbox. Here, Jim DeRogatis artfully took the viewer back to the days of Napoleon as *L'Empereur* reviewed the Old Guard Grenadier Band, which played a fanfare at the push of a button (again and again and again ...). Added to the dozens of foot and mounted soldiers were a youngster on the balcony and a maid at the window looking to see what all the commotion was about. A nice touch, that. Equally fine touches were evident in Kathi Bird's nostalgic look at an olde toy shoppe. This box was actually the shop itself the window displays of which feature wargame-size (and smaller) figures representing the *petit soldats* for sale. Her birthday present to her husband proved to be a gift to all.

To anyone who has read all the way through this tour, you should do more modeling and less reading so we can include a description of your display at the next Chicago Show!