

The Phantom Phocus

Volume 3 Issue 3

May/June 2011

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PHANTOM PHLASHERS



1/72 EA-7L
by David Geldmacher

Editorial

I hope this summer edition of the Phocus finds everyone well. We've covered a lot of ground since we last met in these pages. The Atlanta Show has been cancelled, Warner Robins held a delightful little contest, and hopefully a number of new models have been built!

I know that during the summer months, most folks modeling time slows down as it faces competition with other summer vacation activities, but we shouldn't eliminate our hobby time during these months. Instead, it should be there as always, a break from the everyday.

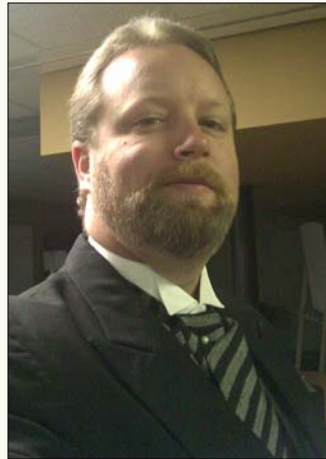
So visit your favorite local or online hobby shop. Pick-up a new kit, and make it the goal to finish it this summer. Call it a vacation from your other builds.

But as always, just have fun!

William R Nichols Jr.

**On the Cover:
David Geldmacher's 1/72 EA-7L & the
new club logo designed by Geoff Martin
of Afterburner Decals**

The Prez Says:



and try something new. New is good, remember?

In July we will be completing the first of these builds with the Darryl Contest. Others that I have in-mind include:

- A Small Scale Build, i.e. 1/100th or smaller
- Everyone paints a 1/48th Tamiya pilot figure (we all have a stash of them laying about, don't we?)
- Everyone builds the same model, say a good 1/72nd Revell or Academy kit
- Everyone builds a small scale tank

These are just a few of the things that I've

One of my goals for the club was to introduce a series on 'mini' builds every few months. These builds are supposed to be stress free, fun, and on occasion make us step out of modeling comfort zone

thought of for us to have fun with (fun being the operative word here) as a group. Which ever one the group decides upon will be the one we will embark on next (I'm leaning towards the 1/48th Tamiya pilot



Trey's P-70 coming along for the Darryl Contest— ed.

figure build myself).

I just want to say thank you again for the work everyone put in Anniston this year. It was passed on to me that people in Warner Robins were still talking about how much fun they had at show. Let's see if we can make next years even more so.

Meeting Round-up

The May meeting was well attended, and we were all happy to see the faces of members who lived in the areas affected by the storms of April 27. Rex Wadsworth of Pleasant Grove & Dave Wilks of Tuscaloosa were the stars of hour, and thankfully both families came through that days events with minimal damage (in Dave's case, the April 15 storm had cleared the way for the April 27 storm...)

Using the Museum's digital projector, we watched a few films. First up was the 1943 Bugs Bunny Short 'Hare Meets Herr,' in which the rascally rabbit gives Herman Göring fits. Next up was John Fords color footage of the Battle of Midway. The film fest closed with Barney Water's armor modeling DVD showcasing how to modify and paint armor models.

In June, the meeting was split between the Southern Museum of Flight & the Museum of Aviation In Warner Robins, GA for the Scottcon 2011.

The crew in Birmingham held a brief meeting before they returned to the armor modeling videos. The group in Warner Robins well rep-

resented the chapter. Six of us were in attendance (Phil Hale, Mike Houghston, Will & Robyn Nichols, Rex Wadsworth, & Dave Wilks) and several awards were won. Mike Houghston received a first place for his orange 1/48 Nakajima Gekko.

The July meeting will be a two pronged event, with the first part being the Darryl Epperson Memorial contest, and the second part being Carl's 'Saturday Afternoon Delight' quick build. The rules are simple:

- Bring any unstarted model (snap-together & pre-finished kits are not allowed)
- Bring your tools, supplies, & paints
- He who has the most work done in 1 hour wins!

We'll see everyone in July!

Up-Coming Events

- 10/1/2011 Huntsville, AL HPMS 35th Annual contest <http://www.hpmsweb.topcities.com/>
- 10/8/2011 U.S.S. Alabama Modelfest 2011 BATTLESHIP MEMORIAL PARK
- 11/5/2011 Murfreesboro, TN Middle Tennessee Annual Contest <http://www.ipmsmiddletennessee.com/>
- 1/21/2012 Chattanooga, TN 'A Look Back...A Look Ahead II' <http://www.chattanoogaascalemodelers.com/>
- 4/7/2012 Anniston, AL Phantom Phurball 3 <http://www.phantomplashers.org/anniston.html>
- 6/9/2012 Warner Robins, GA Scottcon 2012 <http://ipmsrlscottcontest.webs.com/>

These are all the Region 3 shows listed as of 6/25/2011 on the IPMSUSA website: <http://www.ipmsusa.org/MemberServices/EventsCalendar/EventCalendarList2.asp>

What's In An Emblem? by Will Nichols

Earlier this year I began a conversation with Geoff Martin of *Afterburner Decals* about designing a new emblem for the club. The traditional emblem shown here is on our club polo shirts, and has appeared on our trophies at contests past, but he's looking a little dated.



Another emblem used by the club incorporated the name & location



along with the traditional 'Phantom Man' that is the international symbol of the F-4.

This one too feels a little stale as we enter the second decade of the twenty-first century.

The central element of these emblems, and even our recent contest trophy art has been the Phantom Man. We ARE the



Phantom Phlashers, aren't we? Keeping that in mind, I sent Geoff all of our past & present images, along with one not usually associated with the club, the emblem

of the 117th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, which flew RF-4C's (our NAME-SAKE plane) from the Birmingham airport.



With these elements in hand, Geoff created this:



This not only embodies our rich heritage as a club, but also the history of our namesake, the F-4 Phantom, specifically those beloved Phantom Phlashers that flew from Birmingham from 1971 to 1994. This emblem will serve us well for many years to come on everything from shirts to trophies and all points in between. I hope everyone enjoys this new look as much as I do.

1/72 EA-7L by David Geldmacher

Electronic Aggressor: LTV EA-7L in USN Service

For many years, I had plans to build the electronic aggressor version of the A-7 in US Navy service. These were designated EA-7L and were converted from the two seat TA-7C and served to train surface ship crews to defend against incoming missile attacks. I had gone so far to acquire a 1/72 Fujimi A-7 and the old Maintrack TA-7 conversion set.

Nonetheless, easier projects always seemed to get started before I felt the need for hacking apart a kit and cajoling a limited run conversion set seamlessly into place. Then, several years ago Hobbyboss released their reasonably well-received TA-7C and WolfPak Designs produced decals for a VAQ-34 EA-7L with the classic aggressor red star on the tail.

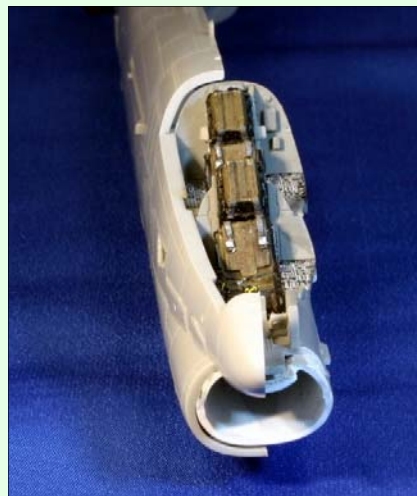
The kit

I won't review the Hobbyboss kit in de-

tail, because well-done reviews are easily available on line (see <http://www.modelingmadness.com/scotts/mod/previews/hobbyboss/87209.htm>). In brief, the engraved surface detail is prominent throughout, and out of scale with the actual panel lines. I felt they'd be acceptable under the mottled TPS paint scheme I was planning. The canopy has a molding ridge down the centerline which benefited from careful removal with sanding sticks and a dip in Future.

Interior and Intake

The kit cockpit interior is acceptable for the scale, but the seats are grossly simplified. I therefore modified the cockpit to accept the correct Stencil seats, molded in white metal by Aero-club. I like metal seats in this scale



because, although less sharply detailed than resin, they really help with getting enough weight over the nose gear. I removed much of the floor and parts of side walls to get the metal seats to fit. I also had to extensively thin the bases of the metal seats. The seats were painted per web references and I wound the low ejection pull handle from fine black and yellow wires.

I used a trick I found on the Aircraft Resource Center web forums for closing off the centerline intake seam. After cementing the intake halves together, I poured about 10 ml of undiluted white latex house paint into the opening and rotated the part, allowing the paint to run all the way around back to the closed aft end. After giving it a chance to set up a little (10-15 minutes), I poured the remaining paint out. Once the excess paint is gone, be sure to keep the nose up or remaining wet paint will still run forward (ask how I know). Even with flat paint, this takes a long time to dry. Once the latex paint was

cured, I masked the forward intake lip's color demarcation with strips of tape and stuffed inner portions of the intake with scraps of foam rubber. The Hobbyboss kit uses some clever engineering to firmly seat both the intake tunnel and cockpit, ensuring good alignment. When the fuselage seams



come together, those interior parts are all but guaranteed to be well seated.

Basic Airframe

Getting everything aligned inside is assisted by the good, positive fit of the fuselage halves; the fit of the dorsal spine is also good. The main gear wells are finicky and take careful fitting, but they do fit. In contrast, the refueling probe fairing on the starboard side of the nose did not seat well against the fuselage. Reference to photos

of the real aircraft indicated that the kit piece for the ventral rear fuselage housing should instead go behind the nose gear on the EA-7L. I had to modify the nose gear area to account for lack of catapult launch bar on these shore-based aircraft. I filled the slot extending forward from the nose gear well with plastic card, and puttied it smooth.

The Hobbyboss kit is designed for displaying detailed internal equipment bays, but my references suggested that Navy birds

were rarely left with those panels open. And besides, the molded internal detail is probably not accurate for EA-7L anyway. I needed to fill some sink marks on the access doors with Mr. Surfacer and since the doors don't fit well closed, I used additional Mr. Surfacer to fair them into the fuselage.

Once this fuselage work was finished, I painted the instrument panel

coamings with a black/gray RLM66, and used a true black wash to bring out fine details. The clear HUD piece was too thick, so I replaced it with scrap clear plastic from a blister pack, which I colored with Future tinted with purple and blue inks from Citadel Miniatures. It was now I realized that the canopy was slightly narrower than fuselage, but I had left myself no real options so I mounted as best I could to minimize any steps.

I drilled out the pylon holes in the wing before closing up the wing pieces. The fit between wing halves was good and only a little Mr. Surfacer was needed for the underside of wing to fuselage joint. The horizontal stabilizers also fit well.



The things under the wings

Along with the aggressor paint scheme, the EA-7L's unique underwing loadout was a real attraction for me. This meant I needed to I scratchbuild the unique "ordnance" of this aggressor/jammer. I used a pen of the proper diameter and an old 1/48 Sea Har-



rier drop tank to make the ALQ-170 threat simulator pod (this pod can be programmed to simulate any number of surface attack missiles for training surface vessels).



I made the smaller ALQ-167 jamming pod from appropriate-diameter sprue taken from an old Matchbox kit, sheet styrene, and fine wire.



Unfortunately, the shape of Hobbyboss's external fuel tanks is way off. The scrap box yielded some old Hasegawa A-6 tanks which I modified by adding a third (ventral) fin from styrene sheet.

Paint

Once fuselage and wings were assembled and the canopy masked (but before hanging the ordnance), I moved on to the painting Navy's TPS scheme. The fuel tanks were painted separately, as were the gear doors.

EA-7Ls in service with VAQ-34 took on the typical ratty appearance of many modern USN jets. Though the tech order has them painted in overall FS 36375 (light ghost

gray) photos show them heavily mottled with other tones of blue and gray. I started with a base coat of Tamiya primer, which is close to the 36375. After that I used Modelmaster enamels exclusively. I mixed up some highly thinned custom shades by adding blues and darker grays to Modelmaster's 36375; and shot along panel lines, following photo references. I did the same thing with lines and patches of highly thinned 36320 (Dark Ghost Gray) and tied it back together with a very light misting of slightly darkened 36375 .



I referred extensively to web photos to guide the final appearance. (Here are some links to what I was going for: <http://www.portierramaryaire.com/>

imagenes/ea7l.jpg

<http://www.air-and-space.com/corsair/8802a1.jpg>) I painted the ALQ-167 in ModelMaster FS 35109 Blue, and the ALQ 170 got a gloss white body with its radome in an appropriate tan.

After I was satisfied with the basic look, I added a light gloss coat, dirtied things up some more with heavy wash applications. I then added the landing gear. The nose

gear was built up without the catapult launch bar, and required some modification. The detailing on the landing gear was pretty heavy-handed with prominent mold lines on all of the parts. Fit of the gear was also a little finicky with no positive mounting point for the retraction strut. This is complicated by the main gear retraction strut bay being too shallow. Alignment of the gear doors is impossible with the heavy molded-on mounting



tabs. These had to be removed for proper seating (and better accuracy).

Once she was on her feet, I followed with another gloss coat for decals. The decals come from Wolfpak and work very nicely. To my eye, WolfPak's national markings

appear to have the bars out of proportion to the star (too long), and the sheet de-

picts symmetric rescue markings on each side. I corrected these with alternatives from the spares box. I also addressed the



lack of some red warning markings and tail hook warning stencils with spares from the decal dungeon. But since nobody else does the Russian-look aggressor markings for VAQ-34, I was satisfied with what Wolfpak provided. I made a mistake, putting the intake warning too far forward, but this also helped getting the Modex number in the correct spot.

Mounting of the wheels and tires went well. Getting the drop tanks and ordnance on



straight turned out to be a funky job, since I did not build in any alignment pins or tabs to work with. Once all those things were mounted, I evened out the finish with a light clear flat coat. I unmasked the canopy, removed the residual tape gunk on the clear part with a ball of BluTak, and called her done.

Meet David Geldmacher



Ed. Note: David joined the Phantom Phlashers earlier this year after moving to Birmingham from Ohio. Here's a

little biopic he sent me to go with the article on the EA-7L.

What's your IPMS number, and when did you first join?

I'm embarrassed to say that I'm not good at keeping up my membership. My most recent number was 35903 - I first became a member in the late 80s. After a time away, I came back around 2000. It's definitely time to re-up.

When did you start building models? Do you remember your first kit?

I began building models when I was about 6; my first kits that recall I building with my Dad were both from Aurora. They were a 1/125 Boeing KC-135 and 1/48 Northrop N-156 Freedom Fighter.

What do you usually build?

1/72 aircraft, focusing on reconnaissance, electronic warfare and naval aviation WW2 to present, but mostly Cold War. I love ship models, but haven't taken the plunge since doing the Revell Yorktown when I was about 12. I'm going to try a ship (probably Revell's 1/350 SMS Emden) soon.

Do you belong to any local clubs?

In addition to the Phlashers, I participate from afar in an informal 1/72 scale building group in Northeast Ohio known as the the "Divine Scale Society." I call myself the 'Deep South Division'

Do you have any hobbies besides modeling?

I enjoy cooking and travel with my wife, and am fascinated by history. I am an armchair model railroader and have enjoyed painting the miniatures from the Warhammer 40K gaming system.

Where do you live, and what do you do for a living?

I'm a neurologist on the faculty at UAB School of Medicine, where I started in March 2011. Right now I'm living in a Cahaba Heights

Tell us a little about your family?

I'm married and have two college age kids. My wife is extremely supportive of my modeling. My son is a Midshipman at the US Naval Academy (Class of 2012); he also builds and paints miniatures from the Warmachine and Warhammer 40K wargames. My daughter will enter the University of Miami with their class of 2015. She says my attention to tiny details in modeling is "just silly," but secretly I think she gets it.





Last time, we left our Hero hanging on a ledge above the Gay Pride Parade... Oh sorry, wrong article! So, onto the care and maintenance of the M-1 Garand Rifle...

Dang, far too many war movies! Where were we...?

Oh yeah...painting figures. I remember now. Yeah, the medication works most of the time. (*Remember, it's the BLUE pill, not the red one...-ed.*)

Ok, so you now have your figure all picked out and you've made all the necessary modifications as mentioned last month. Before we start to paint, we need a quick word about brushes. In his book about modeling the Mosquito, Roy Sutherland makes a good point concerning brushes. He says that a modeler should bite the bul-

let and buy a set of good quality brushes. You'll be much better off in the long run as they will perform better and last longer. Art supply stores stock great brushes. I buy mine from Hobby Lobby. They are made in China and are called "Master's Touch" but they are of good quality and perform very well. I use a "0" round for most of the painting and then an "18/0" round for detail work. I put the wash on with an "1/8 inch"



The figure's pose is finalized and ready for painting

Watch Hobby Lobby for their weekly sales
Watch Hobby Lobby for their weekly sales

flat and then I also dry brush with it. For blending on the face, I use a "5/0" or maybe a "10/0".

and you'll be able to get these for 40% off, but most of them retail for less the \$4.00 anyway. Take good care off them and keep the little plastic tubes to help protect the bristles between painting sessions. Now, it's time to paint, so we'll start with the base coat. I first block in all the basic colors using Model Master Paints. You can either darken your base from the start or let the wash do it for you later. Keep a good bit of thinned paint on the brush and just let it flow onto the figure. This will eliminate 99% of the brush marks and then the wash will take care of the rest. Whatever you do, paint your base coat and let it dry for a while.

Next dry brush at least two lighter shades on to the base coat. You'll want a little more paint than a normal dry brushing and you want to blend a little with each dry brushing. You'll need to practice this until you feel comfortable with it. Remember a little more paint. I've painted one of Tamiya's 1/48 US Infantry men here to show some of the steps along the way.

Hope this helps. Paint all the details on the figure, such as life vest, belts, oxygen masks and hoses, holsters, ammo pouches, etc. Leave the face until last. Once you've done this, you can mix up a wash and cover the whole uniform of the figure. I use acrylic paint from the Woodland Scenics brand. Yes, these are railroad colors and can be found in the railroad section of the hobby shop. I know, I know...you're afraid to go into that section. It's OK. So what if they look at you that way. You need the paint. Mix a little black and burnt umber, about 50/50 black/burnt umber. Add a little liquid hand soap...any kind will do. Stir in a few drops of water and bake until golden brown...uh...sorry, spaced out again. The amount of water is up to you but you'll want it a little thicker than a normal wash. Brush this mixture over the whole uniform and let it dry. This takes a while to dry and it must be dry before the next step.

Once the wash is completely dry, pull out the trusty cotton swab/Q-tip and lightly take the wash off the highlights. You want to leave as much in the folds of the uniform as possible. The folds and the



Next, the 50/50 wash is applied and wiped off.

sically, you are artificially creating shadows and highlights that would normally be created by sunlight. This wash will also help soften the dry brushing you did earlier.

The wash creates the shadows and additional definition.

You'll want to leave the wash around web gear, belts, pockets, and so on. Take care when taking the wash back off. If you take off too much,



The wash creates the shadows and additional definition

creases are darker than the rest of the uniform, so the wash needs to stay in them. Ba-

you can always put a little more in that area. Honest, it won't hurt.

Once this is dry, it is time to move to the dreaded face and hands. This is much easier in 1/48th scale than you think. You will have a little work to do, but it will look great when done.

I use Mod I Master Skin Tone (Shadow Tint)

#2004 for the base coat and, when it is dry, I wash the whole face and hands with my above-mentioned wash. Again, let it dry and then with a cotton swab or paint brush, remove the wash.

Leave it in the eyes/under the eyebrows, lips, under the nose and other creases in the face. Leave the area under the chin and neck dark. This is a shadow area anyway and it'll provide some contrast with the rest of the face.



The base coat and wash are applied head and hands.

You want to leave the wash in shadow areas.



All the details are added and receive final painting.

When this is dry, take Model Master Skin Tone (Warm Tint) # 2003 and lightly highlight the light areas of the face, top of the nose, the chin, cheek areas, ears, etc. You can blend this, but do it lightly and in stages if you need more. You want a slight contrast between the areas but not too stark. These colors work very well. You might want to add a little red to the Warm Tint and paint the lips with this color. Not too much contrast...we're not painting David Bowie...well, maybe you are. (*I've painted a Gene Simmons figure before, does that count?-ed.*)

If you want, you can paint the eyes with a little lighter shade of flesh and then paint the eyeballs. This is really not necessary

because in this scale, you're not going to see eyes anyway. If you do paint the eyeballs, DO NOT put little round dots in the middle of the flesh area. Eyes take up much more room so make them look more like balls that have been cut off on either end. You want more of a half round look than dots. It is important to remember that pilots and soldiers are usually more tanned, and soldiers can be very dirty, uniforms are ragged and worn, etc. Look at pictures and movies. Band of Brothers is one of the best

for details and so is Saving Private Ryan. Osprey has a whole series of books on various pilots and soldiers in each theatre of the War and they include some excellent color illustrations to follow. They are worth getting a few for your library. Remember all the little details because people will notice these things. It will make your figure stand out and draw attention to your model as a whole. Ok, that's it for now. Not too hard, eh? Well, practice a little before next month and then I'll give you some additional face painting hints. You'll get the hang of it and you will be pleased with your results.

Dr Phil, Plastic Surgeon, Self - Proclaimed Archaeologist and Possum Connoisseur



The face is finished off with highlights and washes.



IN CLOSING...



The editor in his little corner of the asylum...

Here we are again, at the end of another issue of the Phocus, and what can I say? I'm so stoked that I did

not have to create most of the content this time! Trying to fill a dozen pages every other month, much less when I tried to make this a monthly publication, is a very challenging thing. I don't know how many times I said at meetings and to others that everyone must be interested in what's on my workbench and in my stash, because that was all we were seeing!

In the past two issues, our main content has come from the club. Rex's fun-filled Johnny Quest diorama & David's excellent little EA-7L, a plane that I never existed

until I read his article, are real gems. Coupled with the two-part Dr. Phil on figure painting, and a few odds and ends, and we have two great issues of the Phocus.

Now the problem is going to be keeping this up. I have several Dr. Phil articles to sort through, and David has promised more 1/72 aircraft articles, and I have another Zero article in the works, but that's it.

As I've said umpteen times before, I'll take whatever content y'all will send me. Johnny Quest scenes, figures, armor, pictures of your models-you name it, I want it for the Phocus.

This is **YOUR** club newsletter, and these last two issues have embodied what I always envisioned it being. A group effort for the group, not just the sole enterprise of one person, namely me.

So, a laurel and hardy handshake is given to everyone who has kicked in lately, and a

thank you in advance to everyone who will contribute going forward.

See y'all **NEXT ISSUE!**

SOME THING FUNNY! BY JIM BARNETT

My neighbor knocked on my door at 2:30am this morning, can you believe 2:30am?! Luckily for him I was still up playing my bagpipes.



The wife has been missing a week now. Police said to prepare for the worst. So I have been to the charity shop to get all her clothes back.