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FROM THE EDITOR

By Aaron Skinner

The future is looking bright

As I write this, *FineScale Modeler* is packing to move to its new home, a couple of miles from the building it has been in since 1989. While I'm a little sad to leave — I have walked through the same front door, up the same flight of stairs, and down the same hallway to the same office for nearly 18 years — the building was never important. I came to work for *FSM*, not a nondescript brick-and-glass office building.

The most important thing about the move, and with *FSM*'s recent purchase by Firecrown Media (read CEO Craig Fuller's letter on Page 5), is that the brand and the magazine will endure. The new space includes work-

shops and photo and video studios, so we can continue producing the kind of reviews, features, and videos that keep you coming back. We have fun doing what we do and are optimistic about the future and the possibilities. Tim, Kendra, and I are constantly brainstorming things we can do to bring you more entertaining, engaging, and informative content we hope helps you at the workbench, inspires you to try something new, and makes you smile. Or laugh, even if it's at us.



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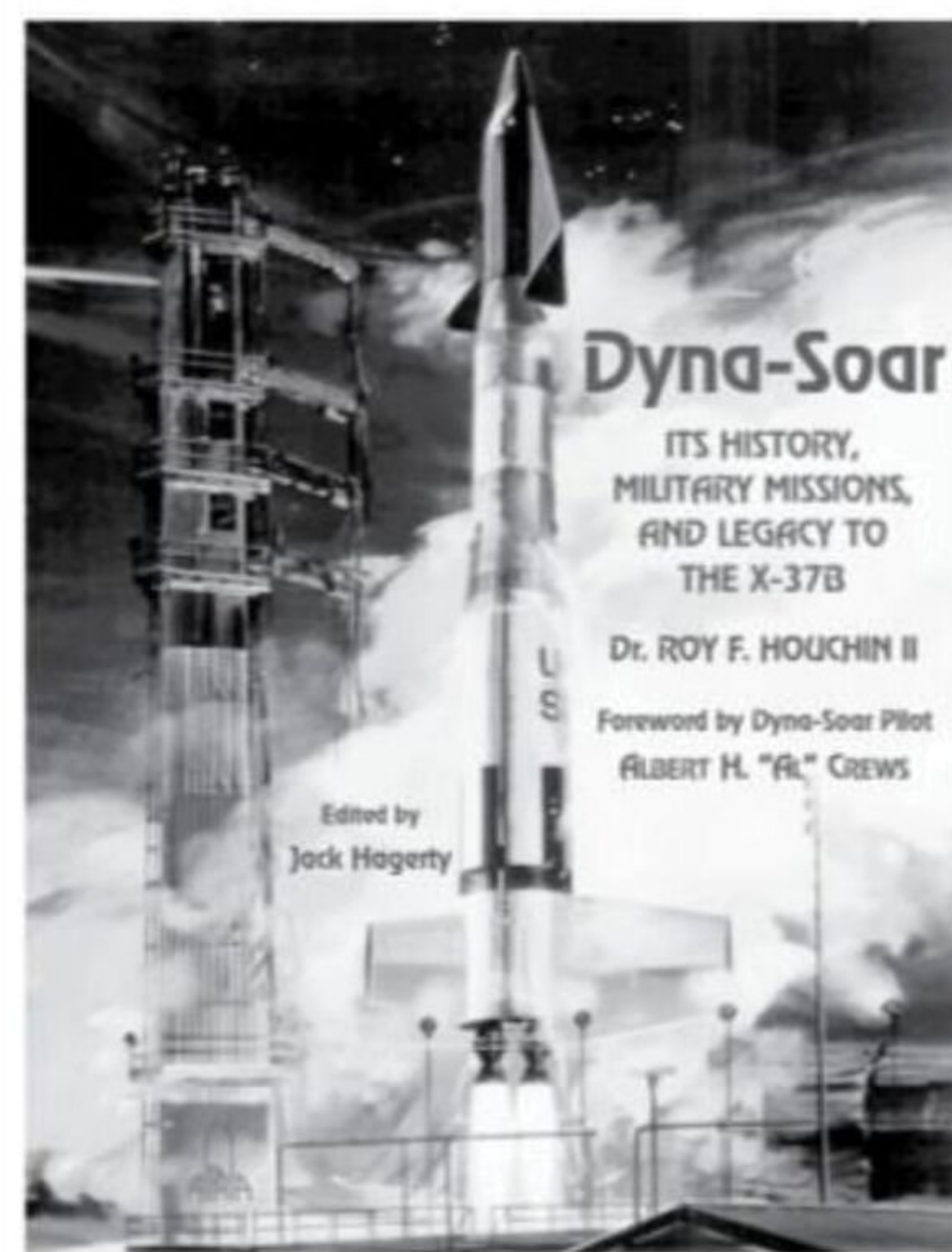
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A note from Firecrown Media CEO

BY CRAIG FULLER

My company, Firecrown Media, has acquired *FineScale Modeler* from Kalmbach Media, along with that company's esteemed railroad magazines and media properties, including *Model Railroader*, *Classic Trains*, *Trains*, *Garden Railways*, and *Classic Toy Trains*.

As the new custodians of these cherished and respected brands, we are committed to upholding their legacy and nurturing their growth.

Firecrown Media, a rapidly expanding media company, is dedicated to acquiring and stewarding magazine and digital media brands in the transportation sector. Our portfolio includes *FLYING*, *Boating*, *Yachting*, and *FreightWaves*, among 50 other loved brands.

Firecrown is young; it has only been around for three years, but it is funded by a billion-dollar family office with a significant focus on media. After acquiring these signature brands, we have invested over \$40 million in them.

As Firecrown's founder, I drive much of the passion and energy behind our media strategy.

I started in media in 2017 when I launched *FreightWaves*, a digital media company often called the "Bloomberg of freight." In just seven years, it has become the most prominent voice covering the freight industry, with deep news and analysis of the trucking, rail, air, and ocean container markets. *FreightWaves* is also one of the fastest-growing B2B media companies in the world.

While I am a digital native, I love print magazines.

My love for magazines began when I was a boy; *FLYING* was a magazine I grew up reading. So, when I had the opportunity to acquire it in 2021, I did. My purchase of *FLYING* began as a passion project; I have been a private pilot since I was 17.

My initial plan was to shutter the magazine and focus on the digital edition. However, I remembered how I



felt each month when I received my copy of *FLYING* in the mail. Fully understanding and appreciating the power and love of magazines, we soon realized that magazines offered an experience for readers that digital couldn't match. Unlike digital apps or websites, consuming print content provides the reader with an undistracted journey. When reading online, one is constantly distracted by emails, Slack messages, social media feeds, etc.

None of that exists in print.

Magazines offer the reader an experience and a journey unparalleled in any digital format. In recent years, we've seen younger generations (the "Zoomers") start to prefer print magazines over digital. For them, magazines are innovative and tangible, providing a premium experience compared to digital offerings.

After our success with *FLYING* (revenues up 5x since we acquired it in 2021), we expanded our portfolio through 20 acquisitions and rebranded as Firecrown Media.

Firecrown's playbook for the Kalmbach titles will follow our experience with other publications and digital assets we've acquired.

We will invest significantly in the publications, creating coffee table-worthy magazines with gorgeous photography and stories that engage

audiences. Magazines should be timeless and something that readers want to keep.

In addition to creating beautiful magazines, we will also make significant investments in the digital websites in our portfolio. This will include significant upgrades to *FineScale.com* and affiliated properties.

Rest assured, we plan to keep the forums, but our roadmap includes significant upgrades to ensure their stability and functionality with more modern aesthetics and experience.

We also have big plans for video products and plan to introduce new podcasts to serve and engage the community.

All of these investments will take time, but in a few months, you will start to see improvements in the online products, and over the next year, you will see a relaunch of the magazines.

You will also be glad to know that we are committed to the modeling community and the railroad brands we just acquired.

I am bullish on the future of modeling and its attractiveness for younger generations.

As a father of five children (ages 3–17), my wife and I spend much time and effort introducing our young children to hobbies that do not involve screens and devices. We want to find experiences that exist in the physical world for them.

Scale modeling offers a four-dimensional experience that does exactly that. For example, I have a small Lionel layout that I have been building with my five-year-old son.

It is an opportunity for the two of us to make something that is limited only by his imagination. Best of all, I can share my knowledge and love of the freight railroads with him as we develop and play with our evolving layout. As an entrepreneur, I love building things; he can help me participate in the journey.

I would love to hear your thoughts and ideas on improving the *FineScale Modeler* experience.

Find me on X: @freightalley.



Chad Truss painted this Sprinter with Tamiya acrylics and drew speed lines on foam-board.

Impressed by originality

I'm not much of a car guy and I know next to nothing about anime, but I think Chad Truss' anime cel paint job ("Drawing inspiration," July/August 2024) is just brilliant. I especially love the title shot of the model on a notebook page. It's perfect.

Thanks for including something so clever and original.

—Joe Devlin
Anaheim, Calif.

Ed.: Thanks, Joe. When we saw Chad's Sprinter Trueno (left) at NNL Milwaukee 30, we were smitten. So, when he offered to write a story showing how to do it, we couldn't say yes fast enough. And the idea is gaining ground with models across genres showing up on contest tables similarly finished. —Aaron Skinner

Reactions to Tim's stones

Ed.: In a recent FSM At the Workbench episode, Tim Kidwell showed how he is paving the base of Budweiser eight-horse hitch underway at his workshop by cutting individual bricks out of cork. Needless to say, it is a labor-intensive method that some critics might label as tedious. —A.S.

Great video. I have started making individual bricks for dioramas using high-density foam insulation cut on a hot-wire table. It took a bit of time to figure out the sizing and the technique to get consistently sized bricks.

What I like about the foam is that I can put a bunch of bricks in an old paint can

with a few stones. Shaking the can results in [transferring] the [stony texture] and rounding off the corners of the bricks much like [Tim's] sanding technique. Building the walls with individual bricks takes time, but like you, I find the process satisfying, and I like the ability to customize the walls I build rather than struggling to modify styrene wall kits, although I still rely on the Tamiya Brick Wall kit from time to time.

—Paul Clarry
via FineScale.com

Great video, warts and all! Things don't always go to plan and may require a little tinkering and trial and error before we get the results we're after.

All of us have our moments, and it helps knowing even the most experienced guys stumble a little. I like that you tackled this with determination and humor, and you were able to get through it. By the way, things are looking great!

—Jerry Volpini
via YouTube

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WonderFest 2024 model contest photo gallery

America's biggest pop-culture model show got even larger this year, punctuating the growing popularity of sci-fi, fantasy, and horror in scale modeling. More than 1,100 vehicles, figures, dioramas, and mechs hit the tables in Louisville, Kentucky, and *FineScale Modeler* was there to capture nearly 100 of them for this gallery. Visit [FineScale.com/show-galleries](https://www.finescale.com/show-galleries) to see photos of the most exciting models this year.



FineScale Modeler Weekly videos are back!

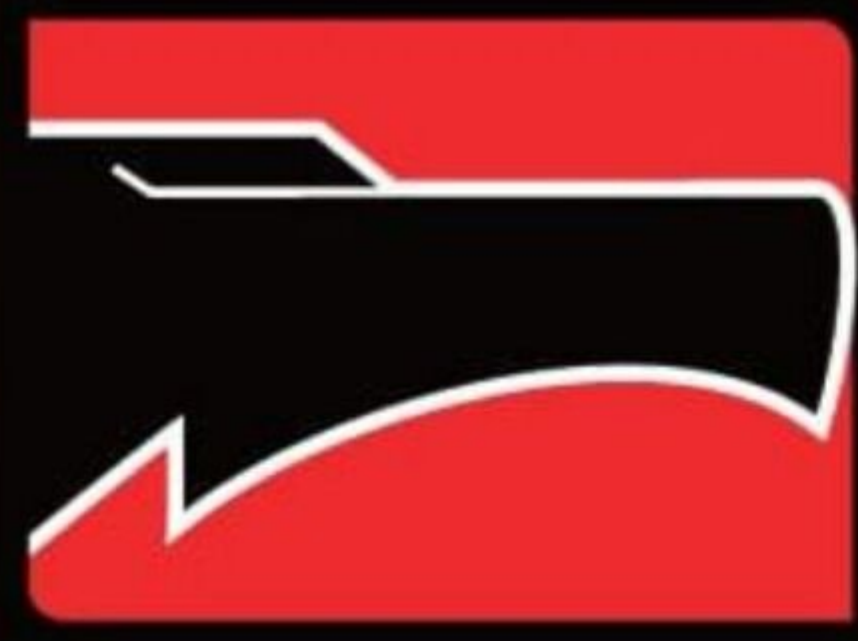
Don't miss an episode of *FineScale Modeler Weekly*! We open the latest kits from scale model manufacturers, show you new tools or some that you might have forgotten about, and share the love of the hobby with show footage, build updates, and behind-the-scenes videos you won't get anywhere else. Head over to [FineScale.com/videos](https://www.finescale.com/videos) to see the latest *FineScale Modeler Weekly* and be sure to leave a comment!



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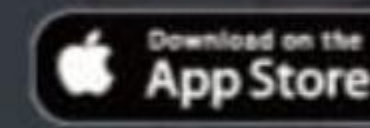


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USAF KC-135R Stratotanker, No. 12638, \$23 from Academy.

ARMOR

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Tiger I Early Production model with steel wheels with Zimmerit Gruppe Fehrmann, No. 2202, \$62.95 from Takom.

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StuH 42 and StuG III Ausf G Mid Production 2 n' 1 (Blitz), No. 8017, \$TBA from Takom.

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PzKpfw VI Tiger I Ausf E, No. 556754, \$49.99 from Italeri.

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FIGURES

1/16 SCALE

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1/48 SCALE

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OTHER

1/350 SCALE

DON-2N Pill Box ballistic missile defense radar, No. 6010, \$69.95 from Takom.

AUTO

1/24 SCALE

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1/25 SCALE

2022 Corvette Stingray Z51 Coupe, No. 14556, \$32 from Revell.

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1/700 SCALE

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F-16C Block 30 cockpit (for Kinetic), No. 648969, \$34.95 from Eduard.

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1/72 SCALE

L-39 wheels (for Eduard), No. 672351, \$7.95 from Eduard.

AIRCRAFT DECAL SET

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F-16A/B Vipers of the Caribbean, No. 48-283, \$18 from TwoBobs.

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VF-201 Lone Star Hunters, No. 48-285, \$16 from TwoBobs.

ARMOR DETAIL SET

1/35 SCALE

StuG III storage and equipment set (Blitz), No. 8018, \$17.99 from Takom.

1/48 SCALE

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PAINTS

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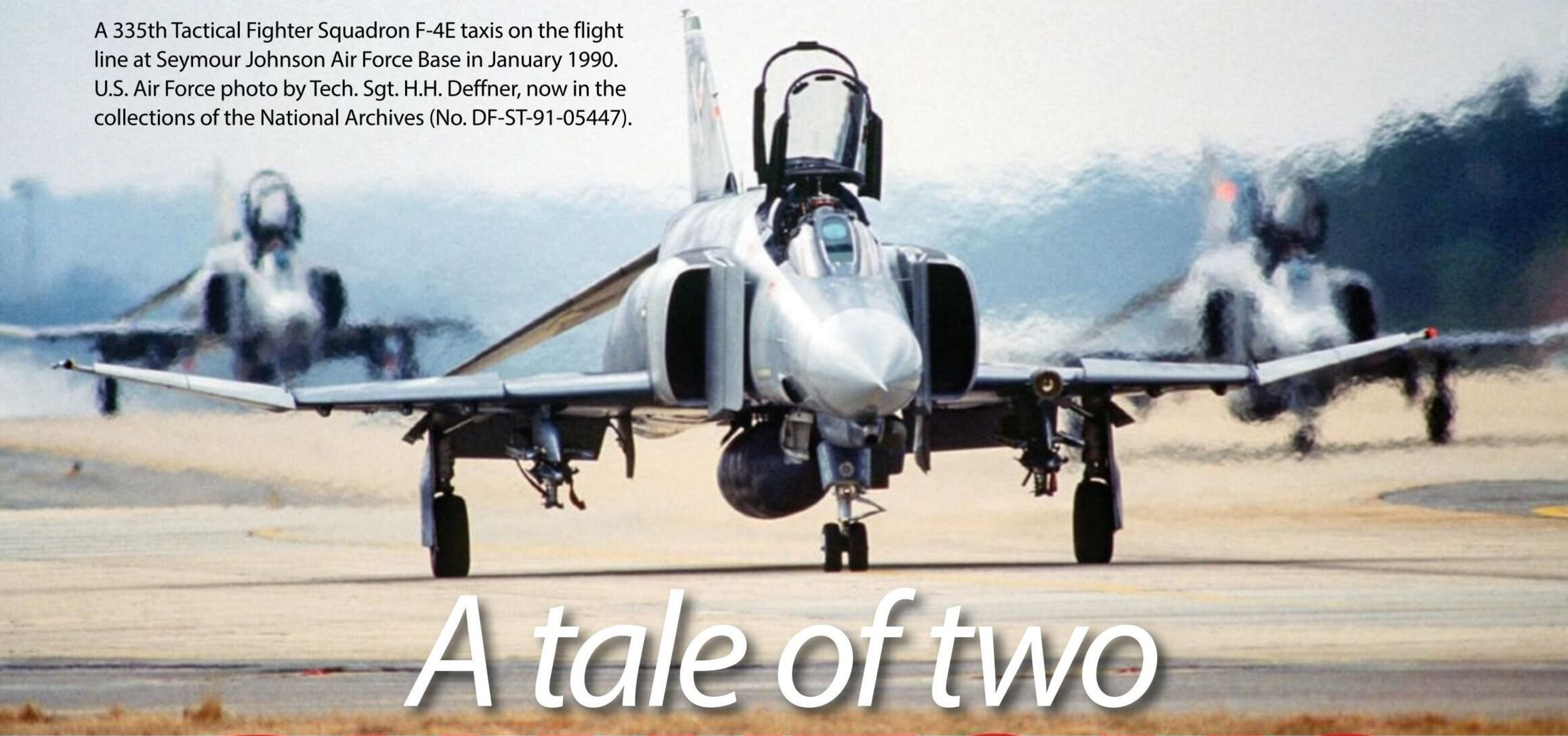
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A 335th Tactical Fighter Squadron F-4E taxis on the flight line at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in January 1990. U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. H.H. Deffner, now in the collections of the National Archives (No. DF-ST-91-05447).



A tale of two **PHANTOMS**

Building a pair of F-4s, one state-of-the-art, the other not so much

BY AARON SKINNER

The F-4 is arguably one of the most popular modeling subjects on the planet, and it has been for a long time. A quick look at scalemates.com reveals more than 1,000 kits of the big McDonnell Douglas fighter having been produced in just about every conceivable scale — and some outliers like 1/2400, 1/90, and even some egg planes. Some of these originated when the Phantom II was new in the 1960s, but 70 years later, new-tool kits of it have been released with all of the finesse we expect from 21st century models.

Given this, it makes sense John Ferdico and Darren Roberts would model Phantom IIs, specifically F-4Es, for their second build-off challenge for *FSM*. For these, one of the modelers builds a modern kit straight from the box, and the other tackles a vintage kit of the same subject. In the initial build off (October 2020), Darren built a HobbyBoss 1/48 scale F8F, and John made the most out of Hawk's venerable Bearcat. This time, the tables are turned, as John breezes through Zoukei-Mura's state-of-the-art 1/48 scale F-4E while Darren takes on the Revell kit first released in 1977.

Why the F-4E? More than 1,300 were built, it had the first internal cannon carried on the F-4, and it was used by many countries. Some modernized F-4Es are still serving. **FSM**



An Egyptian F-4E flies with a 347th Tactical Fighter Wing Phantom II over Egypt during exercise Proud Phantom in June 1980. U.S. Air Force photo, now in the collections of the National Archives (No. DF-ST-82-01275).



Two F-4Es assigned to the 512th and 526th Tactical Fighter Squadrons fly one of their last missions over West Germany in March 1985 shortly before the units received F-16 Fighting Falcons. U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. F. Serna, now in the collections of the National Archives (No. DF-ST-8611796).

KITBASH

AN F-4

from two classic kits



Add Monogram parts to improve Revell's 1977 Phantom

BY DARREN ROBERTS

Planning to build an F-4E Phantom II from one of the older kits available, I looked at my stash. I found both the original Revell and Monogram releases. The Monogram kit was an F-4J, so I settled on building the old Revell kit.

It had been a while since I looked inside one of these 1977 releases and upon opening it, I knew I was in for a dogfight to even get it into the same universe as a modern kit like the Zoukei-Mura kit John Ferdico built at the same time. My first thought was to graft the F-4E nose of the Revell kit onto the Monogram kit

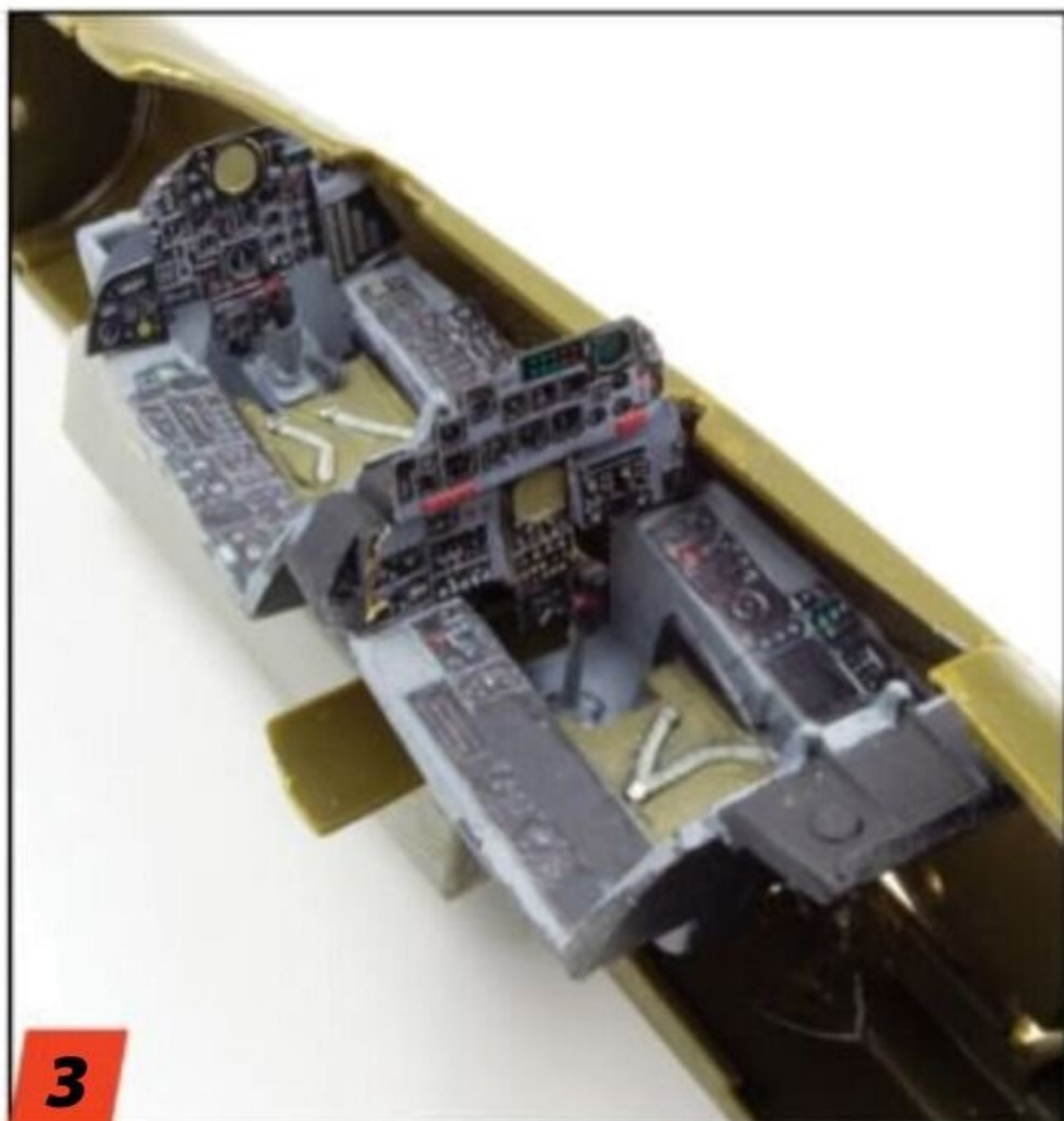
but was concerned about matching the profiles. In retrospect, that was probably the best way to go, but, instead, I decided to rob detail parts from the Monogram kit to “upgrade” the Revell kit. In a bit of irony, this would turn out to truly be a Revell-Monogram model! Looking to make this old kit stand out, I found photos of Egyptian F-4Es being ferried back to the U.S. with the markings painted out and replaced with American insignia in non-standard locations. I love oddball schemes and markings, and this was just about as oddball as you could get.



1
I planned to use the Monogram canopy, so I cut off the central support arches from the Revell fuselage halves. I also removed the instrument panel glare shield to make way for the more accurate Monogram part.



2
Devoid of detail, I cut the Revell front wheel bay away from the fuselage halves and replaced it with the detailed bay salvaged from the Monogram kit's lower fuselage. This allowed me to use the better Monogram landing gear.



3
I shoehorned the Monogram cockpit into the Revell fuselage and detailed it with Dream Models pre-colored photo-etched metal (PE) for a decent-looking front office.



4
Unlike most Phantom II kits, the Revell belly is split in half producing a seam down the center. I planned to attach the wings before joining the fuselage halves, but I first cut out the flaperons by scoring around them on the upper and lower parts.



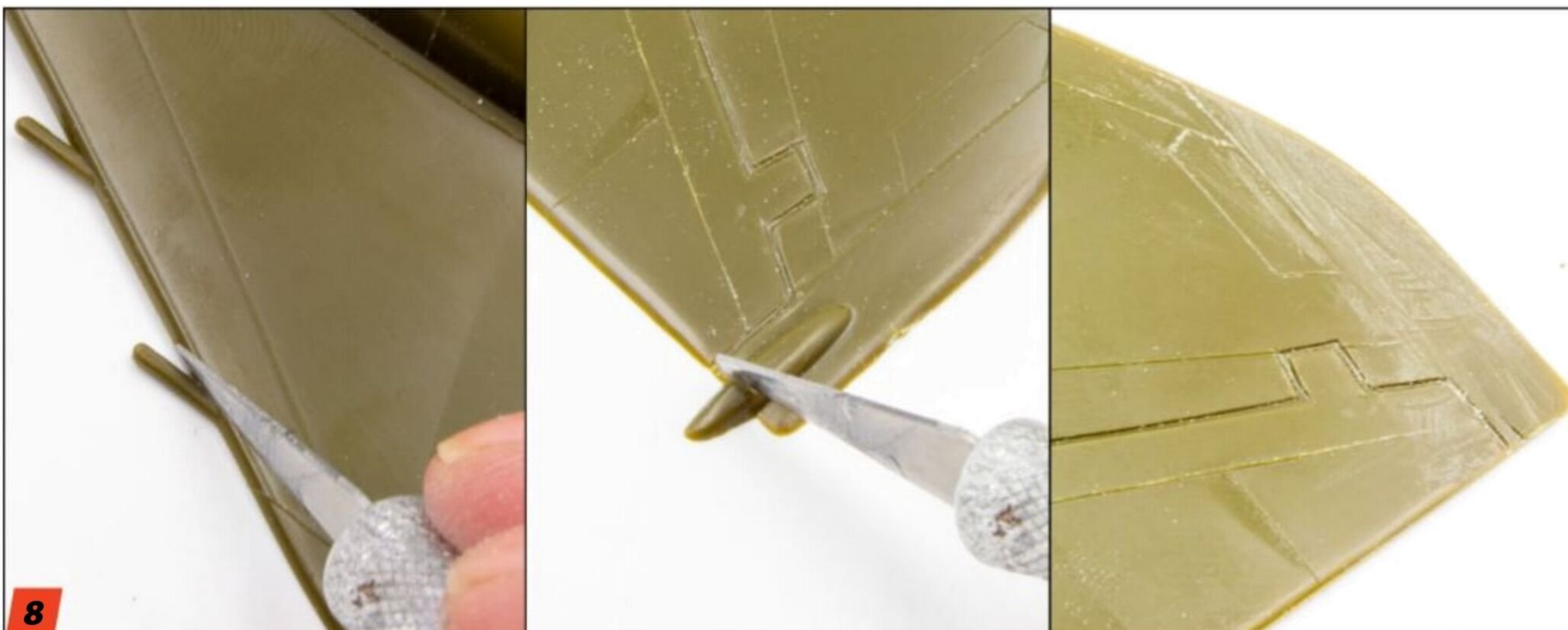
5
To display the auxiliary air doors in the belly open, I outlined them with tape to guide the scribe I used to score around the openings.



6
I replaced the auxiliary doors with the same parts for the Monogram kit. I did the same thing with the main-gear bay details and mounts, again making room for the detailed Monogram gear legs.



7 After sanding the main gear mounts molded inside the upper wing half, I attached the wings to their respective fuselage halves. Note the amount of filler required to blend the intakes into the fuselage on this old kit.



8 While I could still lay the fuselage halves flat on the bench, I sliced the probes molded on the leading edge of the vertical stabilizer and cut off the tip of the ECM antenna on the fin cap before sanding the remaining areas flush.



9 In place of Revell's simplistic burner cans and nozzles, I fitted a set from Reskit designed for the Hasegawa F-4E. A sanding drum in a rotary tool widened the openings for the nozzles.

10 After painting and assembly, I glued each of the burner cans into the fuselage halves and then attached the nozzles to the outside.



11

Revell molded L-shaped tabs to support the bottom of the fuselage, but they interfered with getting good alignment between the fuselage halves, so I removed them with a sprue cutter.



12

With the fuselage halves together, I attached the Monogram arrestor hook and its adjoining plate between the nozzles in place of the under-detailed Revell parts.



13

I attached the now-separate flaperons to each wing with a little droop typical of a Phantom II on the ground and added the outer wings. The final parts on the wings were the leading-edge slats and spare PE strakes from an Eduard set.



14

The Monogram front wheel bay was a bit shorter than the Revell opening, but a piece of sheet styrene cut to shape took care of the problem.



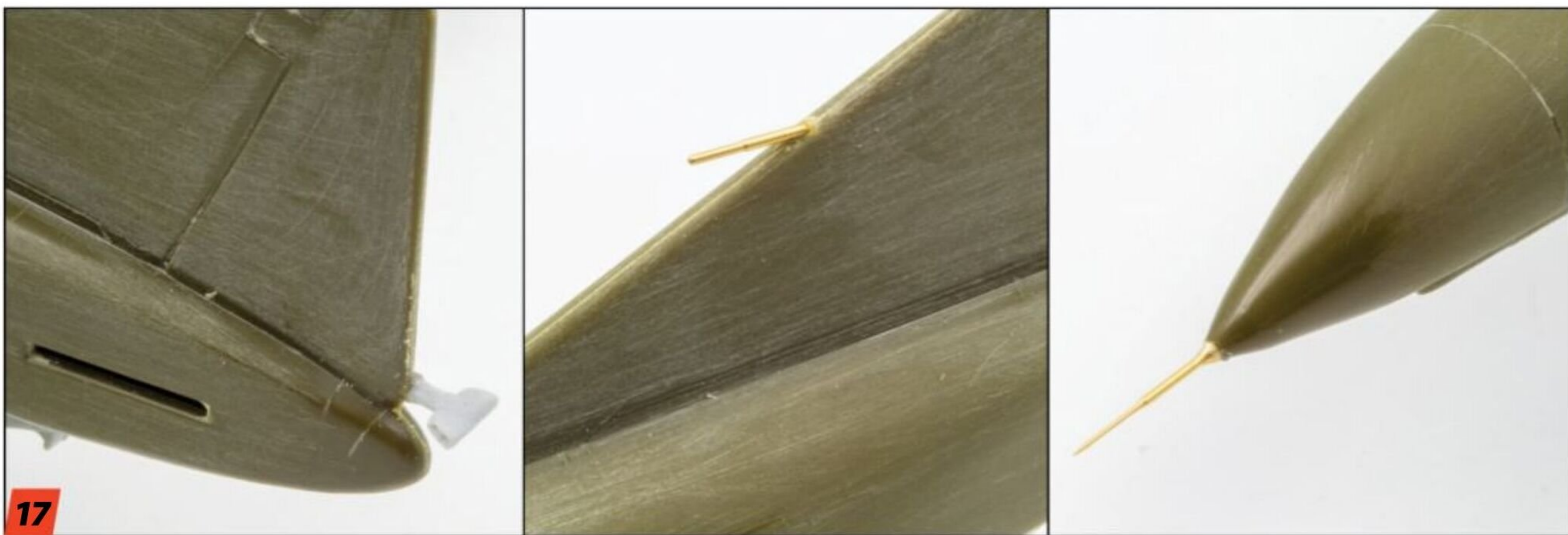
15

I finished the underside with a Steel Beach vinyl wing brace and added the landing gear before painting to ensure I got the perfect stance from the Monogram legs. The Revell doors for the front gear lacked detail, but the 1/48 scale Hasegawa F-4J includes F-4E doors that worked well.



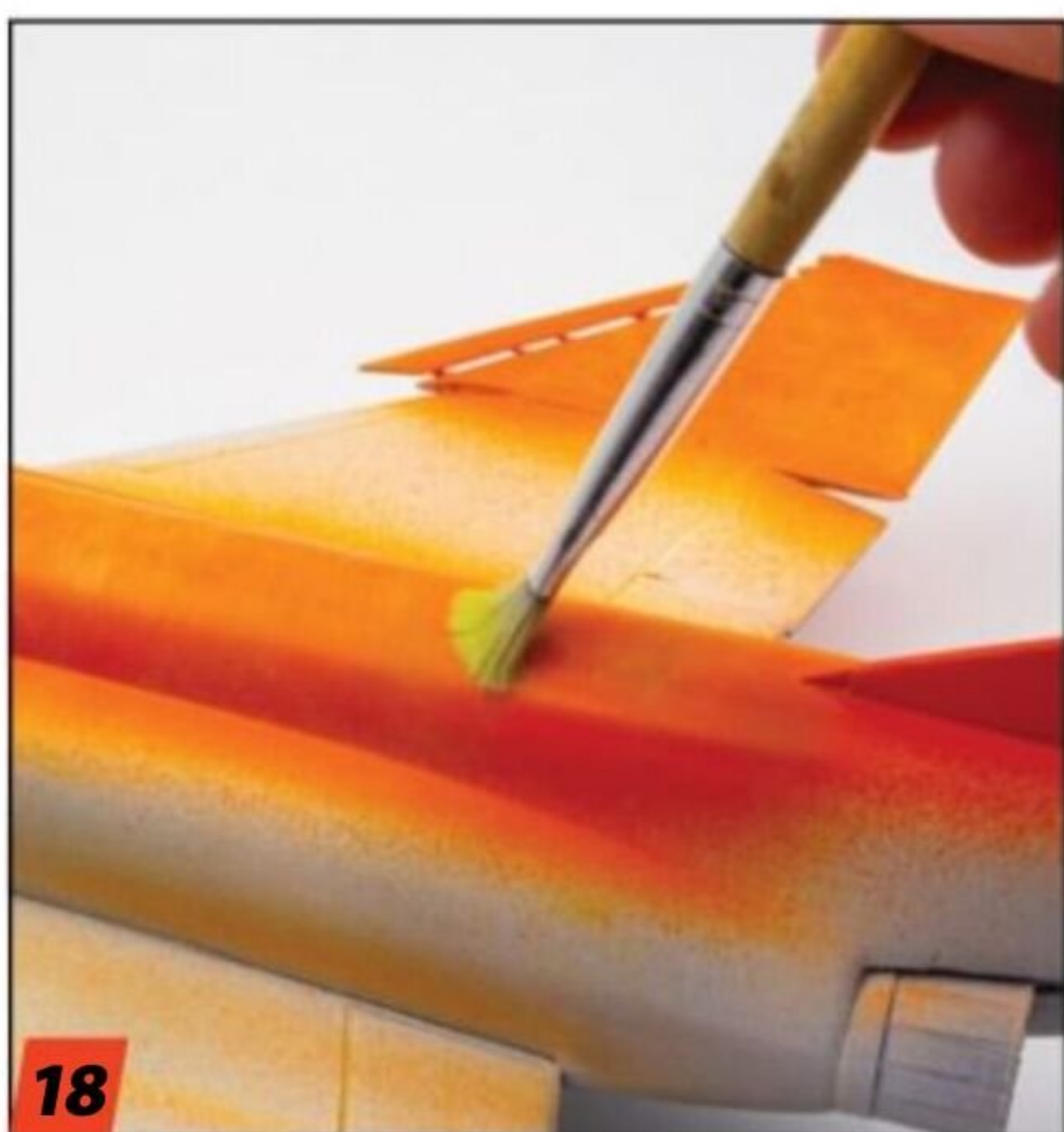
16

After slicing the Monogram glare shield from that kit's fuselage, I glued it in place of the Revell part. To spice it up a bit, I attached a PE gunsight and canopy sills from Eduard.



17

Before painting, I added the last few details, including a Steel Beach resin fuel dump at the tail and Master Model turned-metal probes for the leading edge of the tail and at the tip of the nose.



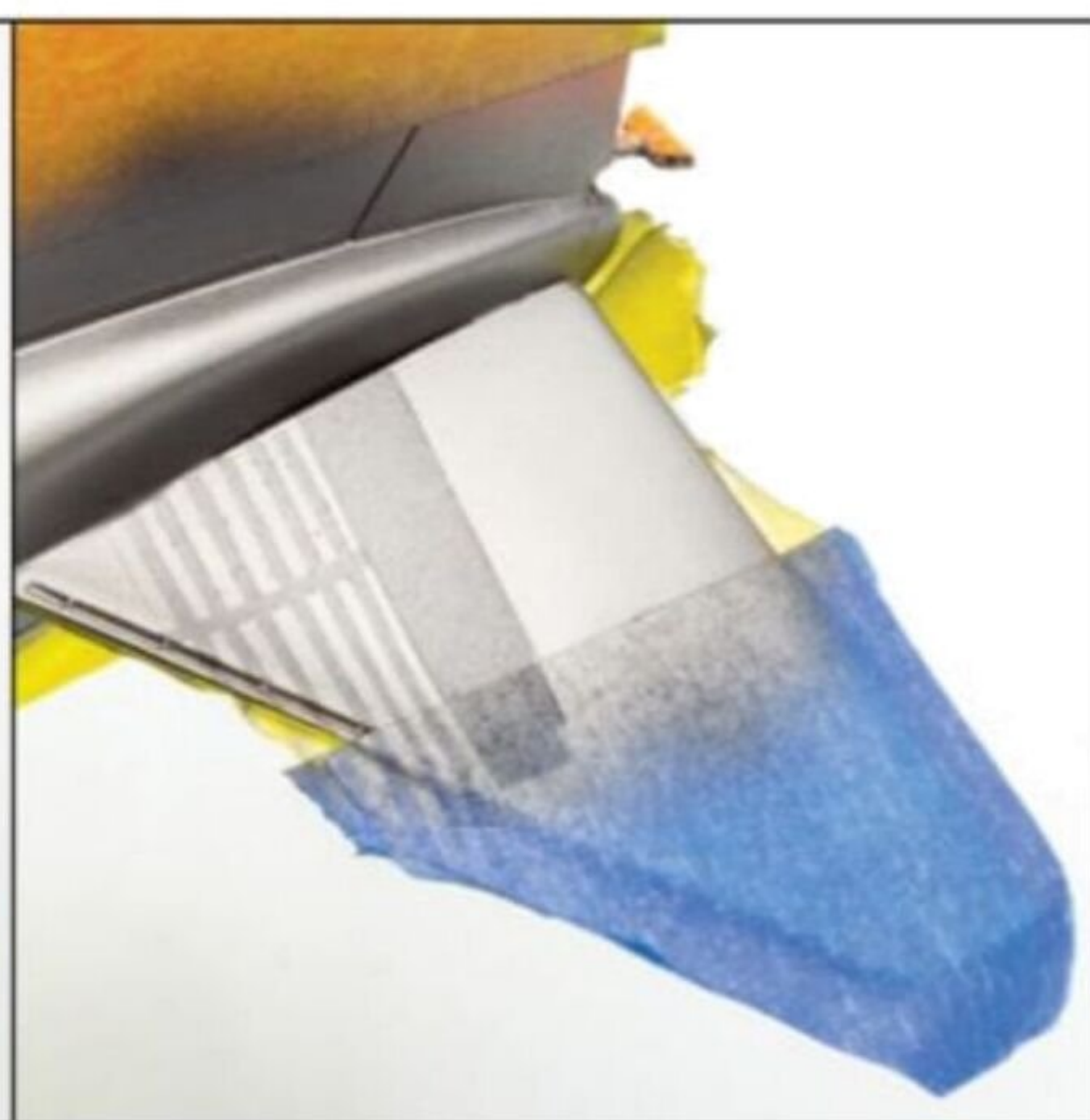
18

I airbrushed Mr. Color Orange (No. C59) on the fin, spine, and wingtips. I dry-brushed Model Master Acryl Yellow Zinc Chromate (No. 4851) and Insignia Yellow (No. 4721) to fade the top.



19

After airbrushing the metals areas around the exhaust with a base coat of Alclad II Burnt Iron (No. ALC-121), I masked the darker areas and sprayed Alclad II Steel (No. ALC-112). I removed the masks and airbrushed a mist coat of steel to tone down the contrast.



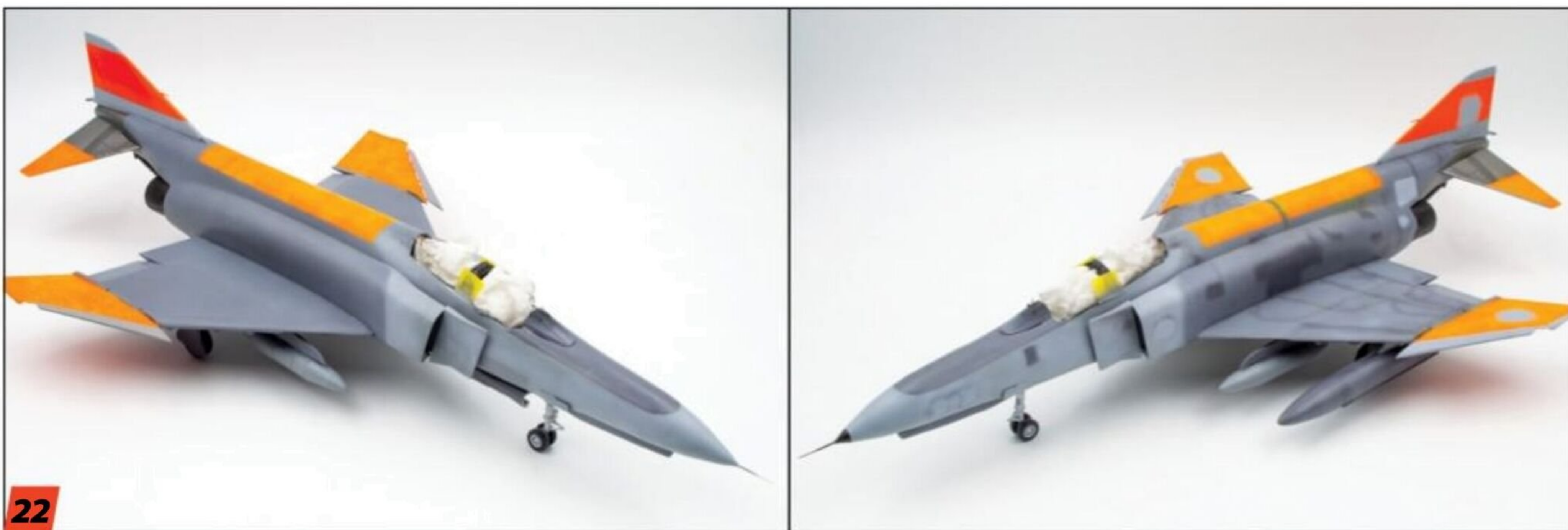
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More masking protected the metal areas, and I airbrushed the basic Hill camouflage pattern, starting with MRP Aqua Colors Gunship Grey (No. A066) followed by Model Master Acryl Neutral Gray (No. 4757).



21

Like the orange, the upper surface grays showed extensive fading, so while I had neutral gray in the airbrush, I misted it over the gunship gray areas. On the forward fuselage, I oversprayed the neutral gray with Model Master Acryl Light Ghost Gray (No. 4762).



Removing the masks revealed a pristine paint job, but that wasn't what I was after. I airbrushed darkened gunship gray for touch ups and to "mark out" areas where the Egyptian air force markings would have been. I switched over to light ghost gray and covered the gunship gray over the markings leaving a hint peeking out from the edges. A wash of AK Interactive Engine Grime (No. AK0082) enamel added dirty streaks.



A set of Speed Hunter Graphics F-4E decals provided the stenciling and national insignias, and I used black stripe decals to outline the orange areas. The national insignias were applied in non-standard orientations and locations, which is sure to have judges scratching their heads in confusion if I ever take this to a contest.

FINAL THOUGHTS

I TRIED TO KEEP THIS PROJECT as economical as possible. I already had both kits in my stash, but they can be found dirt cheap at swap meets and model contests. I splurged on the ResKit exhausts because they were too good to pass up, but the nozzles from the Monogram kit would have worked just fine. I also added a set of resin travel pods from KASL, but these were specific to my build to match the pictures, so they weren't necessary. If you're on a budget and enjoy the challenge of making a lesser kit into something more presentable, this is a great way to go. **FSM**



PUT ART in a state-of-the-art kit



Step outside the norm and try something new

BY JOHN FERDICO

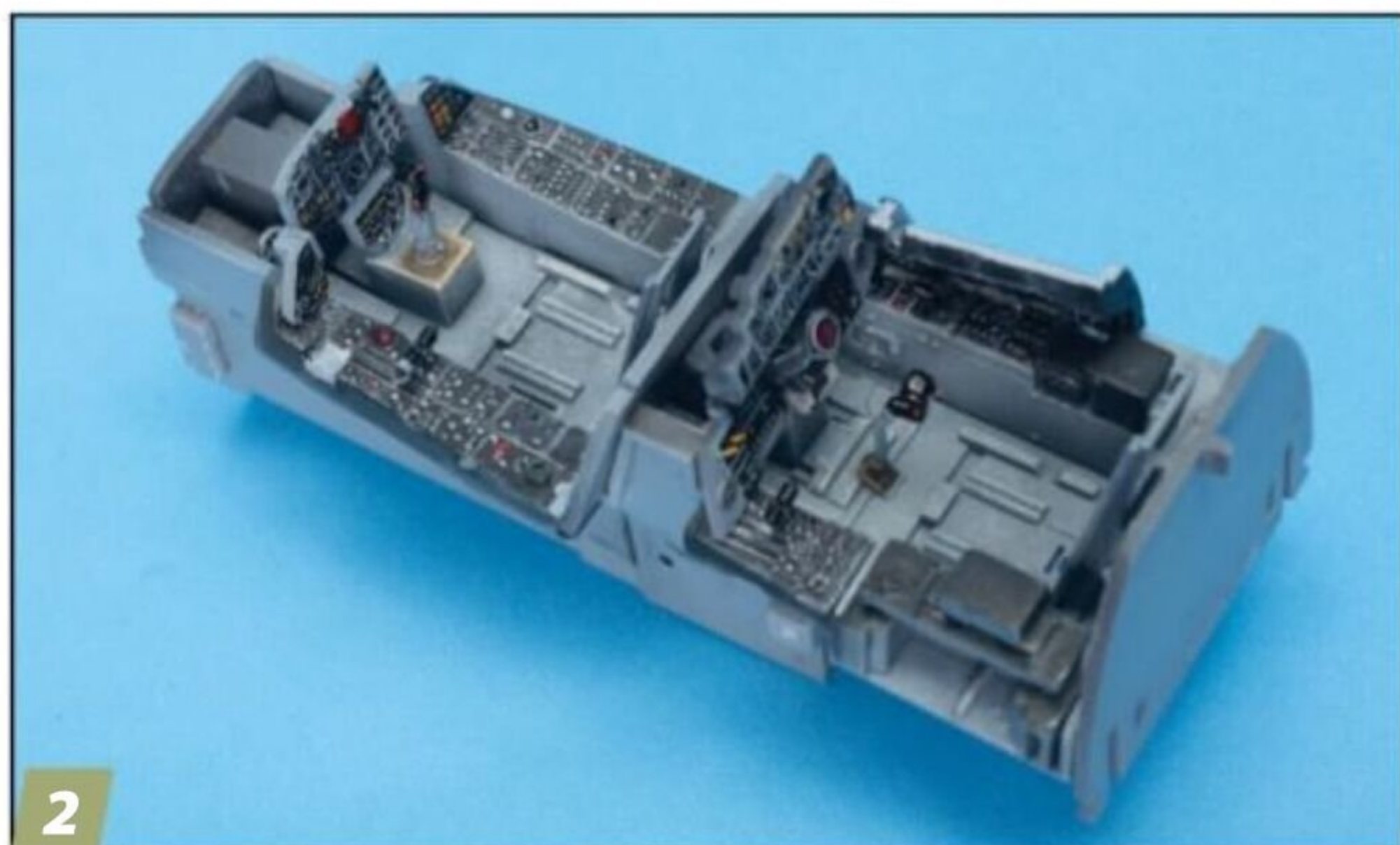
Building a modern kit, like a Zoukei-Mura 1/48 scale F-4E Phantom II, can be a fun and relatively easy process. Out of the box, these kits epitomize the pinnacle of scale model manufacturing with precise engineering, good accuracy, and a high level of detail.

Knowing I wouldn't be challenged on the assembly side, I decided building a Zoukei-Mura F-4E was a chance to try something I had been thinking about, a new weathering effect that changes with viewing distance. From farther away, I want the paint and weathering to look generally smooth, but when seen up-close, I was aiming for a more dramatic appearance.

The F-4E is an ideal subject, and I chose to model an Israeli Phantom II from the 1973 Yom Kippur War. With the frantic tempo of that conflict, pictures show the F-4s to be sun-bleached, dusty, and dirty.



This kit is so futuristic I started construction before it arrived by borrowing parts trees C and F from a Zoukei-Mura F-4J kit I had in my stash. The seats are terrific out of the box, so I only added Eduard photo-etched metal (PE) seat belts and Furball Aero-Design decals for the D-rings.



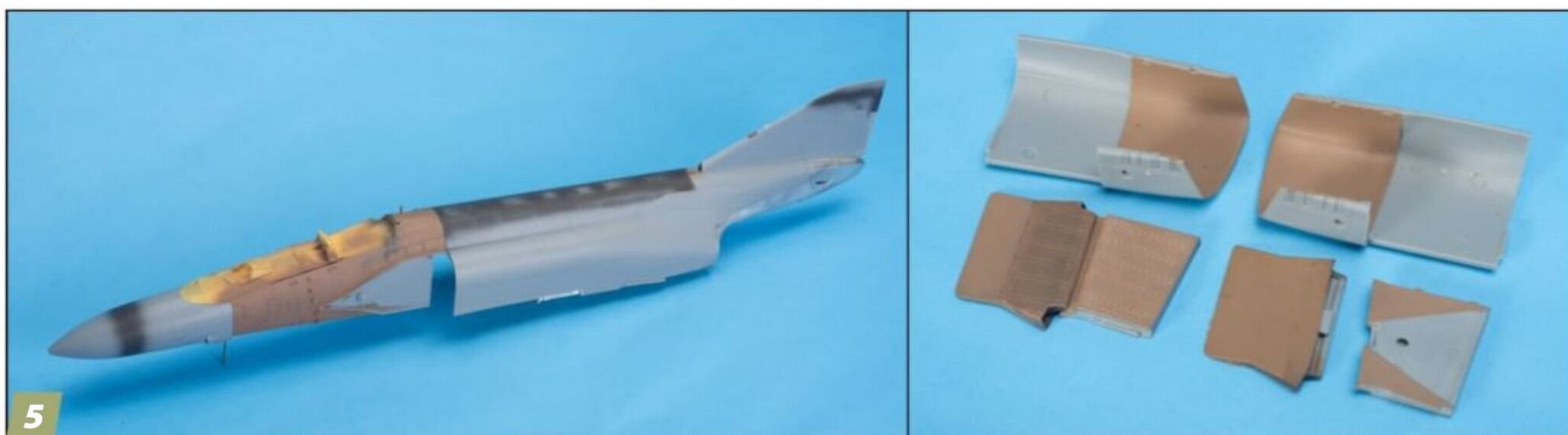
To my surprise, the F-4E floor, side walls, and bulkheads snapped together without any glue, which left a little flex in the joints that would ensure the fuselage halves fit snugly around the cockpit. The nose gear bay is part of the cockpit assembly.



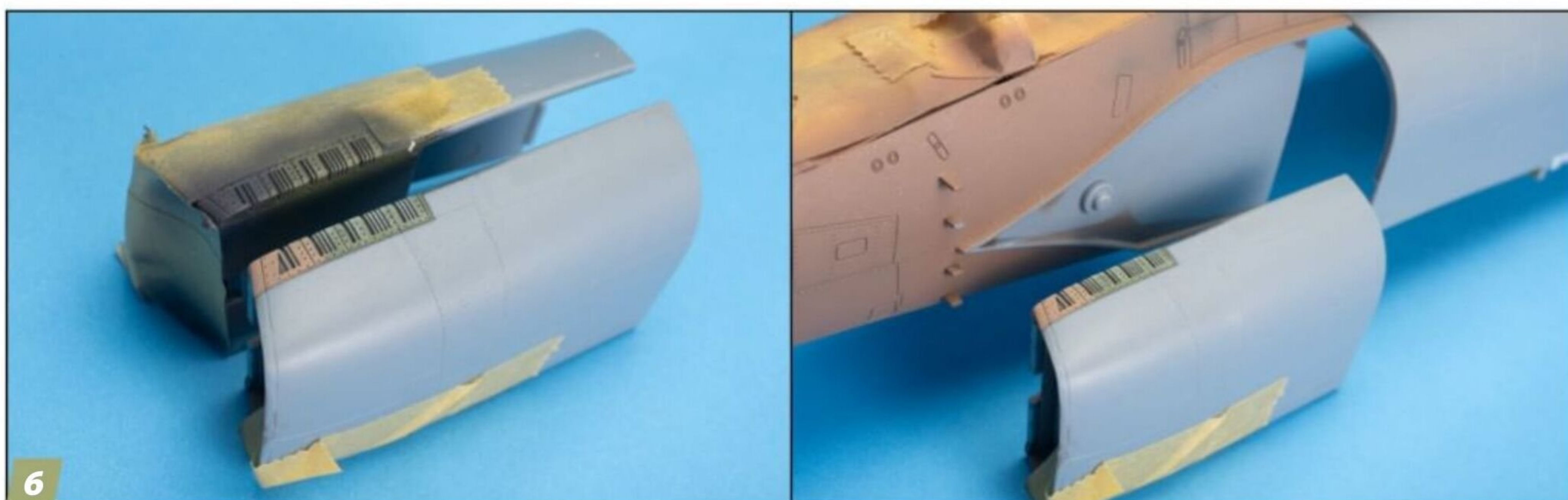
I love jets but hate intakes. Thankfully, the kit has both intakes molded in two parts with the seam bisecting them. Half of it is obscured by the inward curve and the outer seam is on a mostly flat surface making filling and painting relatively painless. I masked the outer surfaces of the intake parts against overspray and sprayed thick coats of Rust-Oleum gloss white lacquer on the unassembled parts. After assembling the intakes, I spread white Vallejo Plastic Putty along the seams and smoothed it with sandpaper wrapped around a cotton swab. A final coat of gloss white airbrushed through the openings and the worst part of any jet was done.



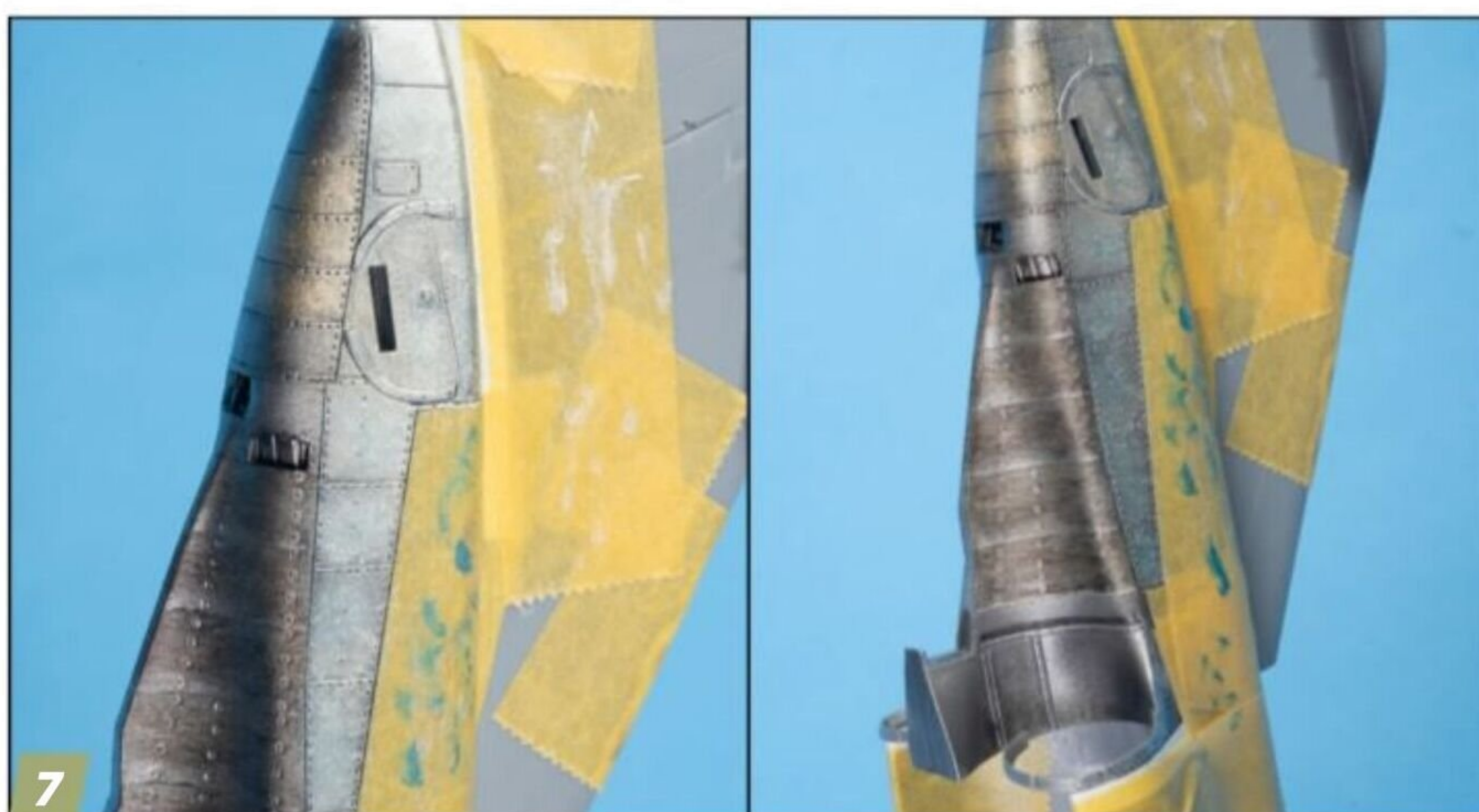
In photos, Phantom II afterburner ducts are a whitish-gold with a speckled green patina. To reproduce this, I airbrushed a base coat of Vallejo Model Air Gunmetal (No. 71.072) followed by a watery wash of Vallejo Model Color Gloss White (No. 70.842). When the white was dry, I stippled on Testors Model Master Acryl Gold (No. 4671) and Testors Green Metallic Flake enamel (No. 1530).



The instruction to fit the cockpit into the fuselage without glue is spot on because the parts shift and flex to a perfect fit. Once the cockpit was in place, I ran liquid cement into the seams and locked it down. Much of the kit is best assembled in this manner. I painted the fuselage behind the intake and splitter plates — it's tricky to get there after the intakes are attached. While I had the paint out, I airbrushed the interior and inner surfaces of the intakes, the vents on the upper and lower inside, and the splitters.



To show off fantastic, recessed detail in the vents on the intakes, I airbrushed the areas with decanted MTN 94 Metropolis Gray (No. RV-78), a dark, bluish gray, keeping it thin to avoid clogging the detail. After letting it dry for a few days, I carefully dry-brushed acrylics around the recesses, using Vallejo Model Color Cork Brown (No. 70.843) and Citadel Straken Green (No. 51028) on the splitter and upper vents, and Vallejo Model Air Pale Blue Grey (No. 71.046) on the lower vents.



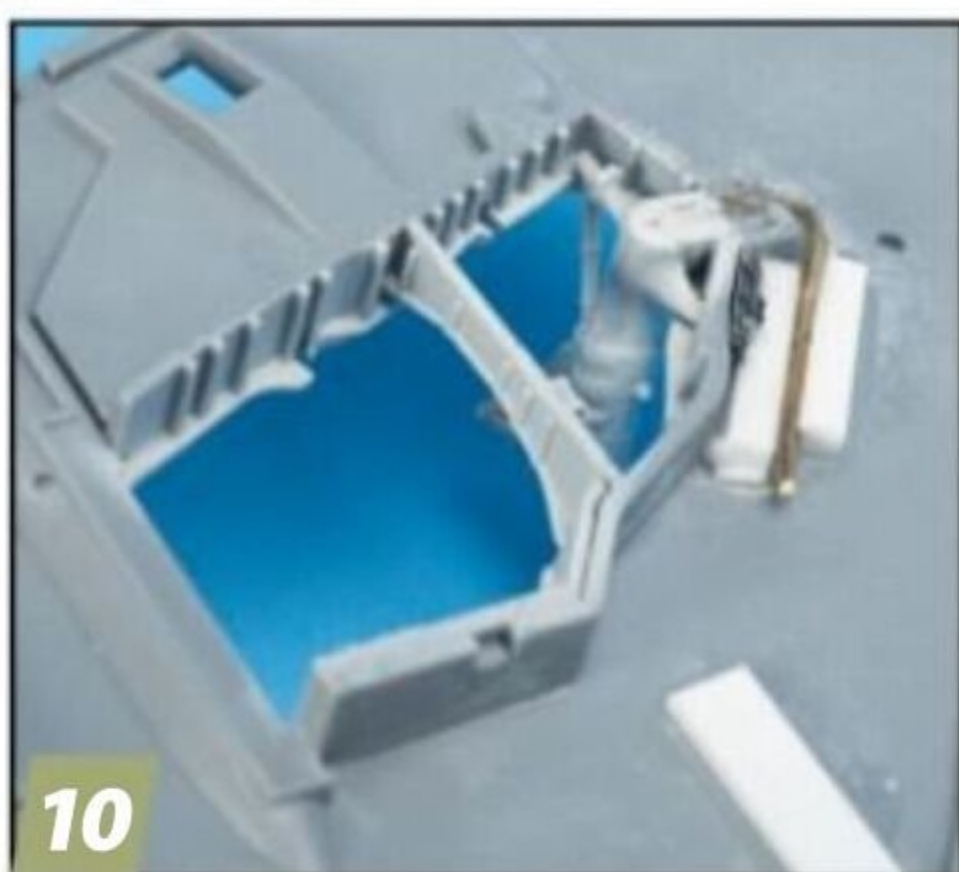
For the metal areas around the jet nozzles, I started with a base of MTN 94 Jewel Silver decanted from the spray can and airbrushed. Over this, I applied Polly Scale Metallic Blue and various Citadel metallics — Leadbelcher (No. 50028), Warplock Bronze (No. 50031), Liberator Gold (No. 51073), and Runefang Steel (No. 51060) — using a technique painters call scumbling. It is like dry-brushing, but rather than a light paint stroke, the bristles are pushed, twirled, stippled, and otherwise mashed around. Think of it as dry-scrubbing. The paint is scrubbed into the primer coat in a random pattern of varied opacities. It is hard on the brush, so I use cheap and worn brushes, usually with stiffer bristles. When different shades and tints are scrubbed over each other, a subtle and richly varied surface can be easily achieved. Best of all, scumbling is fun to say.



Next, I scumbled Arteza gouaches over the acrylics. These are transparent and contain finely ground metallic pigments, producing a colorful glimmer. I sealed the burnt metal effect with decanted Krylon Crystal Clear (No. 1303), a solvent-based acrylic coating made to protect fine artworks — maybe scale modeling is an artform after all!



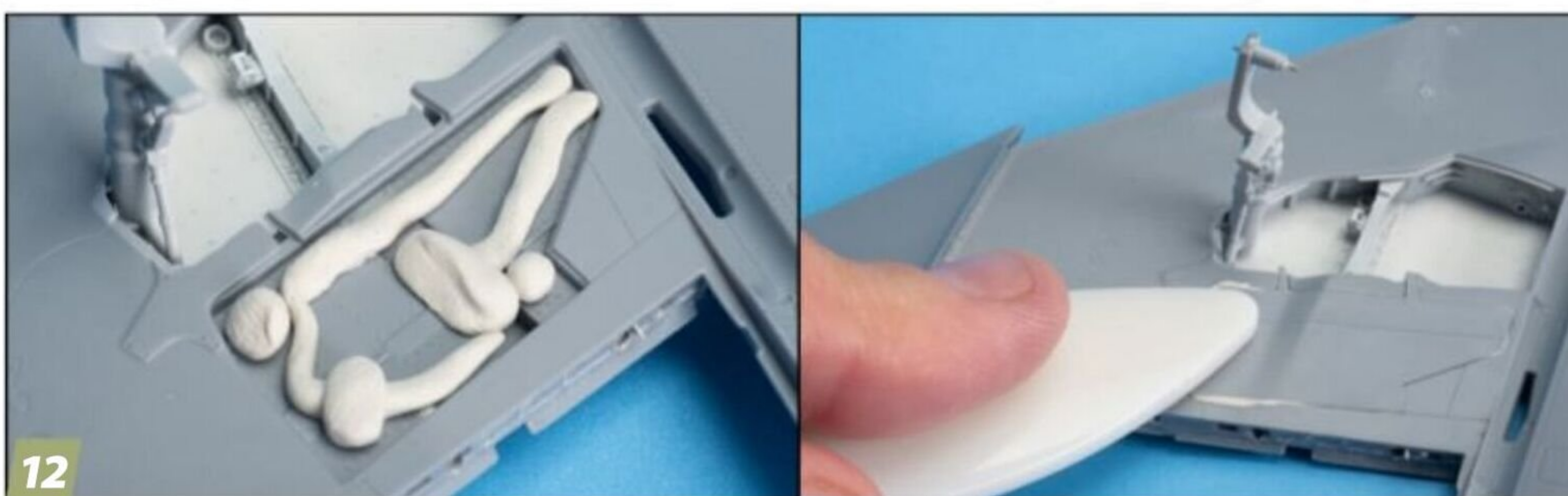
The instructions show gluing the intakes, engine bulkhead, and engines onto the lower fuselage/wing section, and attaching the intakes lips after the wing subassembly and fuselage are joined. While fit was excellent, I worried the convergence of so many subassemblies could result in misalignment, gaps, or steps. Instead, I first attached the outer intakes to the fuselage, checking alignment, and then installed the intake trunks, ensuring alignment with the intakes. Next, I snapped the bulkhead in place and the engines behind them. I didn't glue the bulkhead so it could flex.



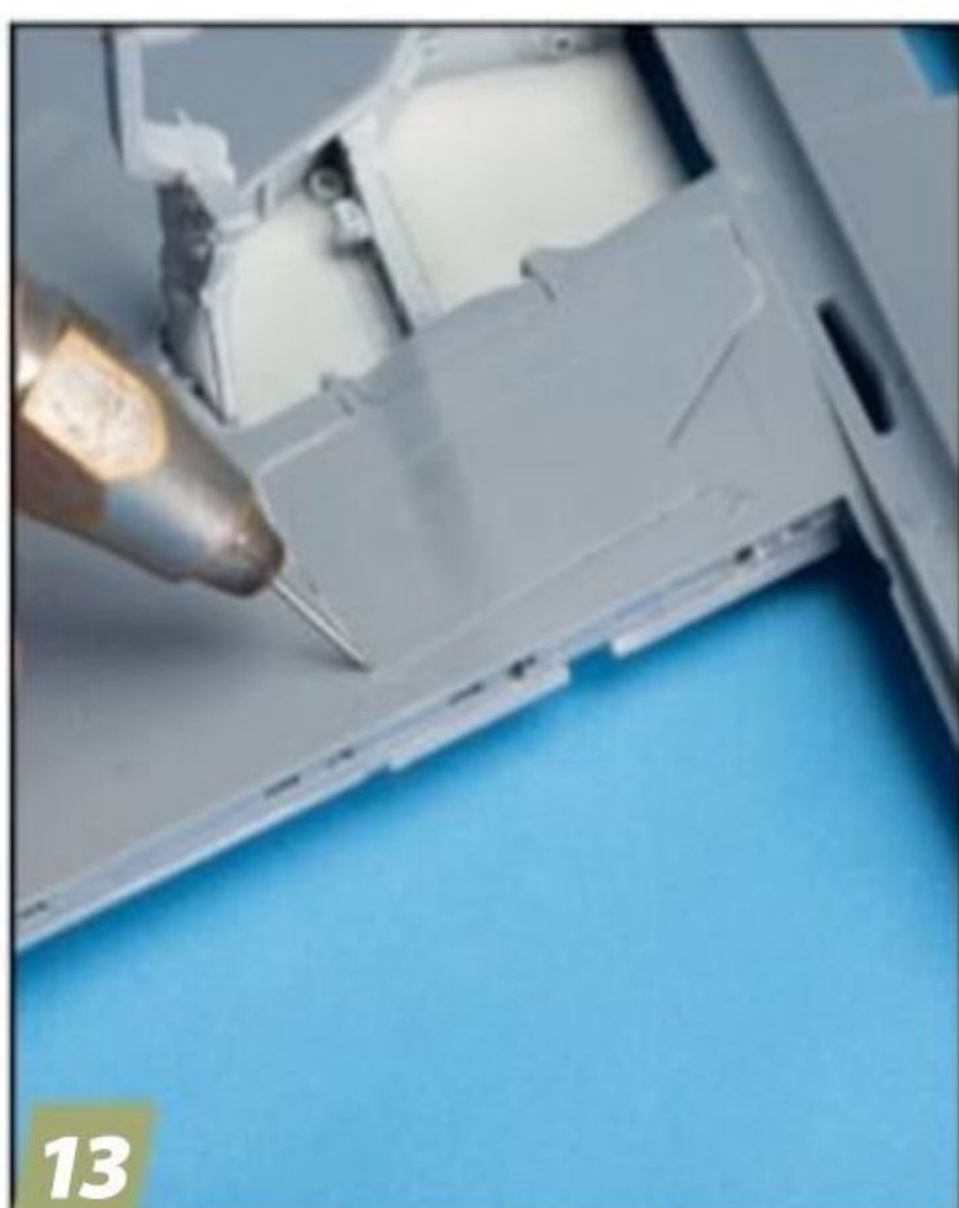
This was supposed to be a quick, straightforward build, but I hate when, not if, I break off the landing gear. So, I drilled holes halfway down each strut, slid in brass rod, and bent it to anchor the leg to the wing. I secured the wire with superglue and boxed it with styrene strip.



The instructions provide drawings with the angles for the flying surfaces and outer wings, which I used to make alignment jigs from 1/4-inch square basswood strip. Clamping those to the various surfaces as the glue set made sure everything ended up exactly where it needed to be.



Photos showed the speed brakes retracted. To ensure the posable kit parts sat flush in the closed position, I placed thin ropes of Apoxie Sculpt in the bay and pushed the brake into it. The putty gives the speed brake a firm, but malleable surface to sit on, making it easier to position it flush with the surface using a nylon folding tool.



Some epoxy bulged out of the seams, so I trimmed it away and ran a pin through the soft epoxy in the seam to restore a clean panel line. The Apoxie Sculpt bonds the speed brake in place and dries hard beneath the part, preventing me from accidentally pushing it in while handling the model later.



As a foundation for the dusty, sun-bleached camouflage, I airbrushed decanted MTN 94 spray cans — Native Gray (No. RV-303) for the light tan, Marrakech (No. RV-138) for the brown, and Bonsai Green (No. RV-179) topside, and Jaws Grey (No. RV-307) underneath. These are close-enough matches, because the scumbling to come will allow me to adjust them.



When the base coat dried, I selected Vallejo and Citadel acrylics, looking for colors that were a tad lighter or darker or of a slightly different hue than the base colors. I also chose some browns and grays for dirt and grime. Then I scumbled away, building a patchy field of color and value changes using Post-it notes as masks and palettes.



If the effect appears overdone — too dark or too light, for example, let the acrylic dry and scumble in one of the lighter colors, bringing it back into balance. For the final layers, I used colors from Hataka's Blue Line acrylic set matched for Israeli air force camouflage to unify the colors and increase the accuracy.



I applied Cartograf decals from an Italeri F-4E kit with Israeli markings. I didn't bother with most of the stencils because many early Israeli Phantom IIs were repainted U.S. Air Force airframes. Needing to get them into combat quickly, I doubt the IAF bothered to reproduce all the stencils. I sealed the decals and paint with Krylon Crystal Clear.



Rather than flowing in a wash to emphasize panel lines, I rubbed Gallery Artists soft oil pastels into recessed details. Thick and creamy, the excess pastel wipes away easily with a cotton swab or paper towel. It also fills recesses like mortar for a surface that is neither raised nor recessed and adds subtlety to the effect.



The technique is gentle enough to work over decals, as well.



20

Stubborn pastels can be wiped off using a cloth slightly damp with mineral spirits. The Crystal Clear protects the paint below and the oil-based pastels lift away easily.



21

I chose slightly different tints and shades from the underlying colors: lighter where dust would build up and darker in areas stained and grimed. The underside shows the effect nicely. Instead of a typical brown or gray washes, these colors lessen the contrast between panel line and paint, causing them to recede and vanish as the viewer moves farther from the model.



22

I sealed everything with a thicker coat of Crystal Clear, which dried glossy. Rather than finish with an overall flat coat, I wet-sanded the surface starting with 600-grit sandpaper. This smooths surface imperfections, like uneven paint, dust bunnies, decals edges, and orange peel. Finishing with light circular strokes flattens the finish. If it becomes too dull or sanding marks are evident, passes with 1000 and 1500 grit usually do the trick. Recesses and other tight spots often remain glossy, so I airbrushed acrylic clear flat on those areas to blend them with the finish.



23

To restore gleam to the metallic areas, I masked and buffed them with Novus No. 2 plastic polish scrubbed in with a Mr. Clean Magic Eraser and then polished with Novus No. 1 on an old cotton T-shirt. This creates a shine that appears to reflect from the metallic surface rather than a gloss overcoat. It's subtle, but I think it's a more convincing effect.



FINAL THOUGHTS

HAPPY WITH THE FINISH, I attached the stabilizers, gear doors, wheels, exhausts, antennas, pylons, and more. With that, I called my Zoukei-Moura F-4E Phantom II done and ready for the display shelf. Rather than taking the easy approach to building this state-of-the-art kit, I used it to try some new techniques and invent new processes. It's fun to be part of a modeling renaissance! **FSM**



Hey, hey, model the
MONKEEM



Tips and tricks for building MPC's kit of the famous show car

BY JIM JAMES

OBILE!

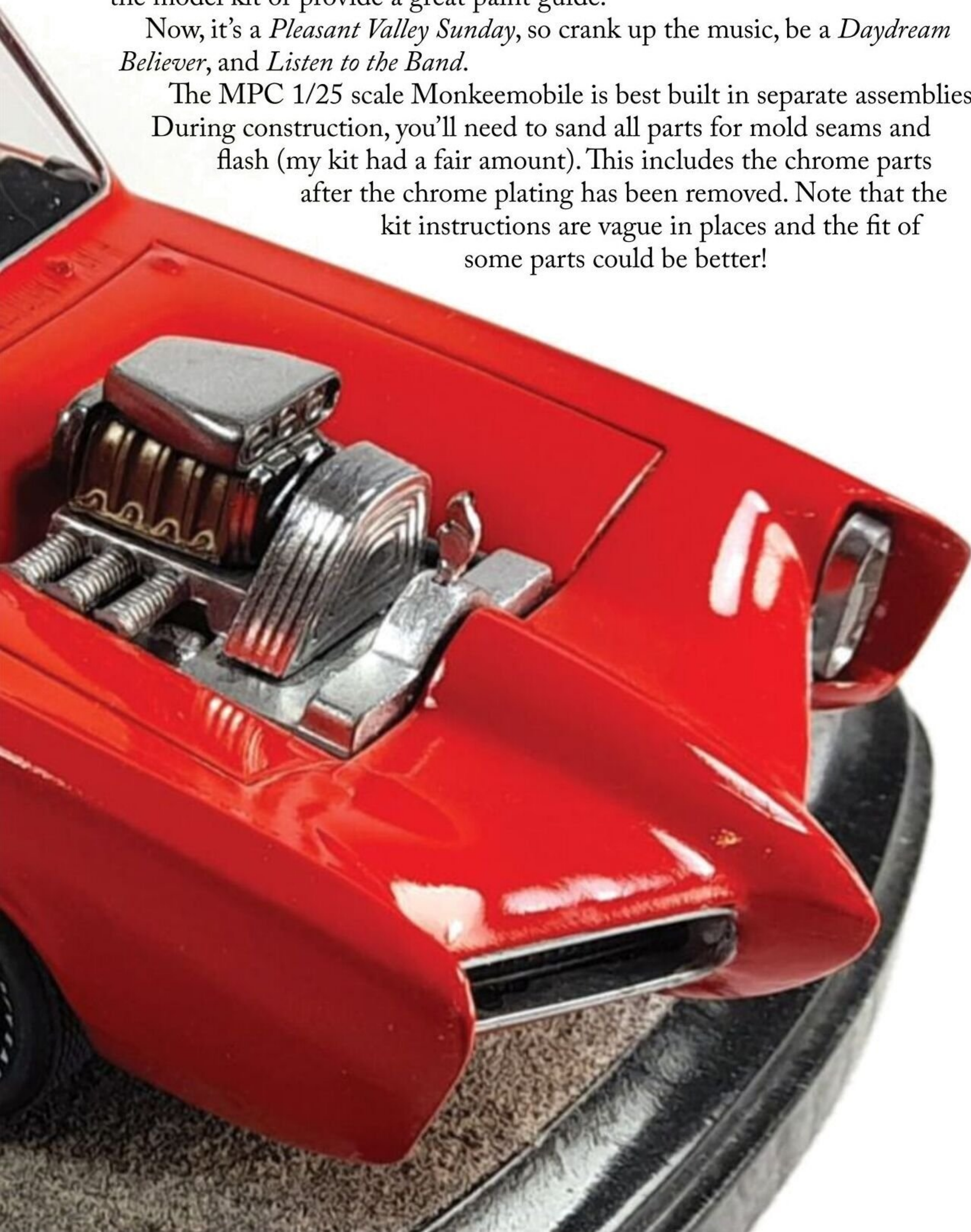
There were only two original Monkeemobiles, both Pontiac GTOs modified by designer Dean Jeffries specifically for *The Monkees* TV show. At the time, Jeffries worked for Model Products Corporation (MPC) and as part of a deal with Pontiac, MPC received exclusive rights to sell a model kit of the car. It sold over seven million kits.

One of the two cars was built to appear on screen, the other for promotional appearances. Although similar, there are differences between the two cars, and MPC's model more closely resembles car No. 1, the one used in the show.

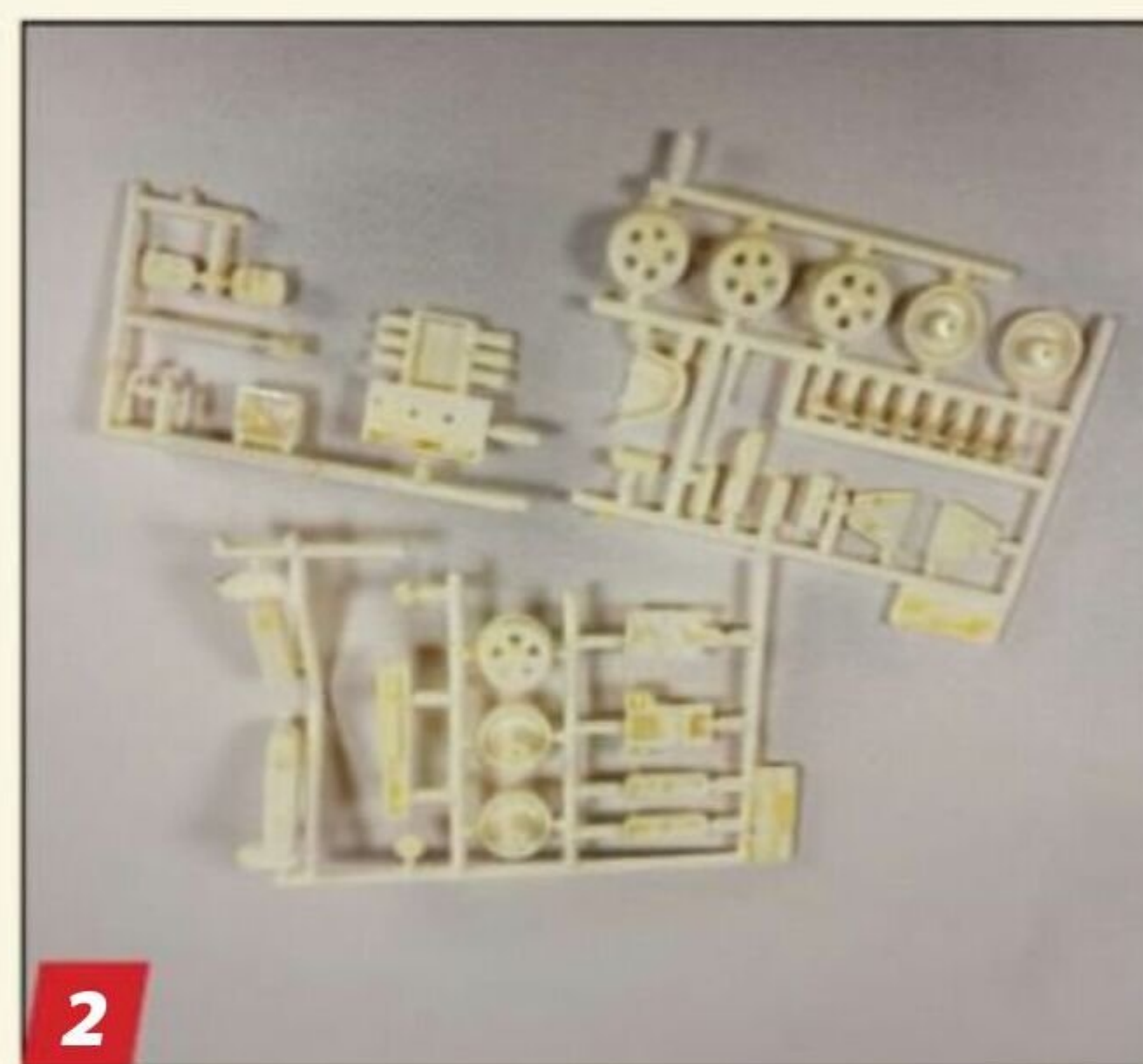
Both cars still exist with slight modifications and cosmetic changes, and several copies have been made. As a result, online research may not match the model kit or provide a great paint guide.

Now, it's a *Pleasant Valley Sunday*, so crank up the music, be a *Daydream Believer*, and *Listen to the Band*.

The MPC 1/25 scale Monkeemobile is best built in separate assemblies. During construction, you'll need to sand all parts for mold seams and flash (my kit had a fair amount). This includes the chrome parts after the chrome plating has been removed. Note that the kit instructions are vague in places and the fit of some parts could be better!



Chrome-plated parts can be too shiny and hard to finish because sanding removes the chrome. So, I strip the chrome by soaking the plated parts trees in a mix of equal parts bleach and water. A degreaser or a drain cleaner would also work.



After soaking the parts for several minutes, remove any remaining chrome with a stiff brush or sanding stick. The brown residue left from the plating can be removed with a sanding stick. Wash the trees with soap and water, rinse, and air dry.

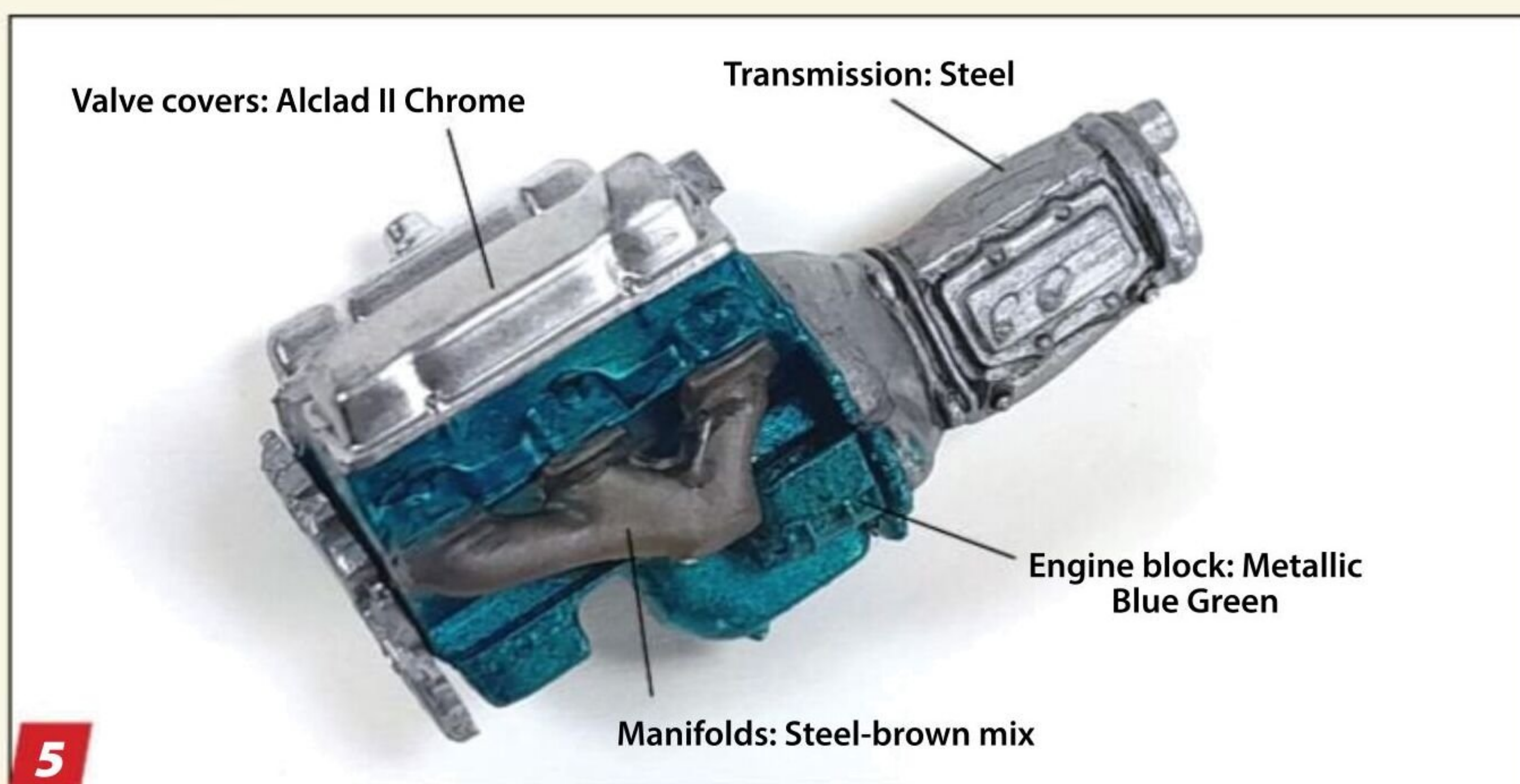


After taping the assembled radiator/blower, wheel hubs, headlights, mirror, console, gas cap, exhaust ports, and rocker covers to a piece of wood, I airbrushed them with Alclad II Gloss Black Primer. Dust is the enemy of gloss paint, so I covered the parts with a plastic box.



4

I airbrushed the gloss black parts with Alclad II Chrome (No. ALC-107) and covered them again with the plastic box to prevent dust contamination.



5

The engine block should be Pontiac Engine Blue but Mr. Color Metallic Blue Green (No. C57) seemed a good match. Unable to find a good color for the manifolds, I mixed steel, flat black, and brown to create something close and then applied a flat black wash and set the engine assembly aside.



6

The blower (parts 114 and 115) sits front and center on the car and needed to be smooth. Most of the assembly is Alclad II Chrome, but I painted Part 125 with Vallejo Gunmetal Grey (No. 70.863) and the main block with Alclad II Gold (No. ALC-108).



7

I sprayed both sides of the chassis flat black and dry-brushed the entire chassis with steel to highlight detail. The exhaust pipes and assembled rear axle were painted with Revell Aqua Color Steel (No. 36191) and detailed with a flat black wash.



8

The joins for the engine and the exhaust and transmission seemed weak. After sanding the ends of the exhausts, manifolds, and transmission, I carefully drilled holes in the exhaust pipes and manifolds and pinned them together with fine wire secured with superglue. Another drop of superglue bolstered the transmission joint. To use a professional modeling term, this was "fiddly."



9

Before assembling the wheels, I sanded the tire treads with a coarse sanding stick to make them look worn. Drops of medium viscosity superglue joined the front and back of the wheels that sandwich the tires. Mount the wider tires on the hubs with longer axle stems.



10

I airbrushed the walls of the interior tub with Tamiya Lacquer Pro Racing White (No. LP-39). After masking the upholstered sides, gas pedal, and seat supports, I brushed the floor with thin white glue and liberally sprinkled on fine model railroad ballast to simulate carpet. I dumped the excess and let the glue dry.



11

I painted the carpeted area with Tamiya Flat Black (No. XF-1) and, while the masking was still in place inside, I sprayed the outside of the tub with the same color to hide it if it is seen from outside. The seats were painted Pro Racing White and added along with the chrome-painted console and the shifter.



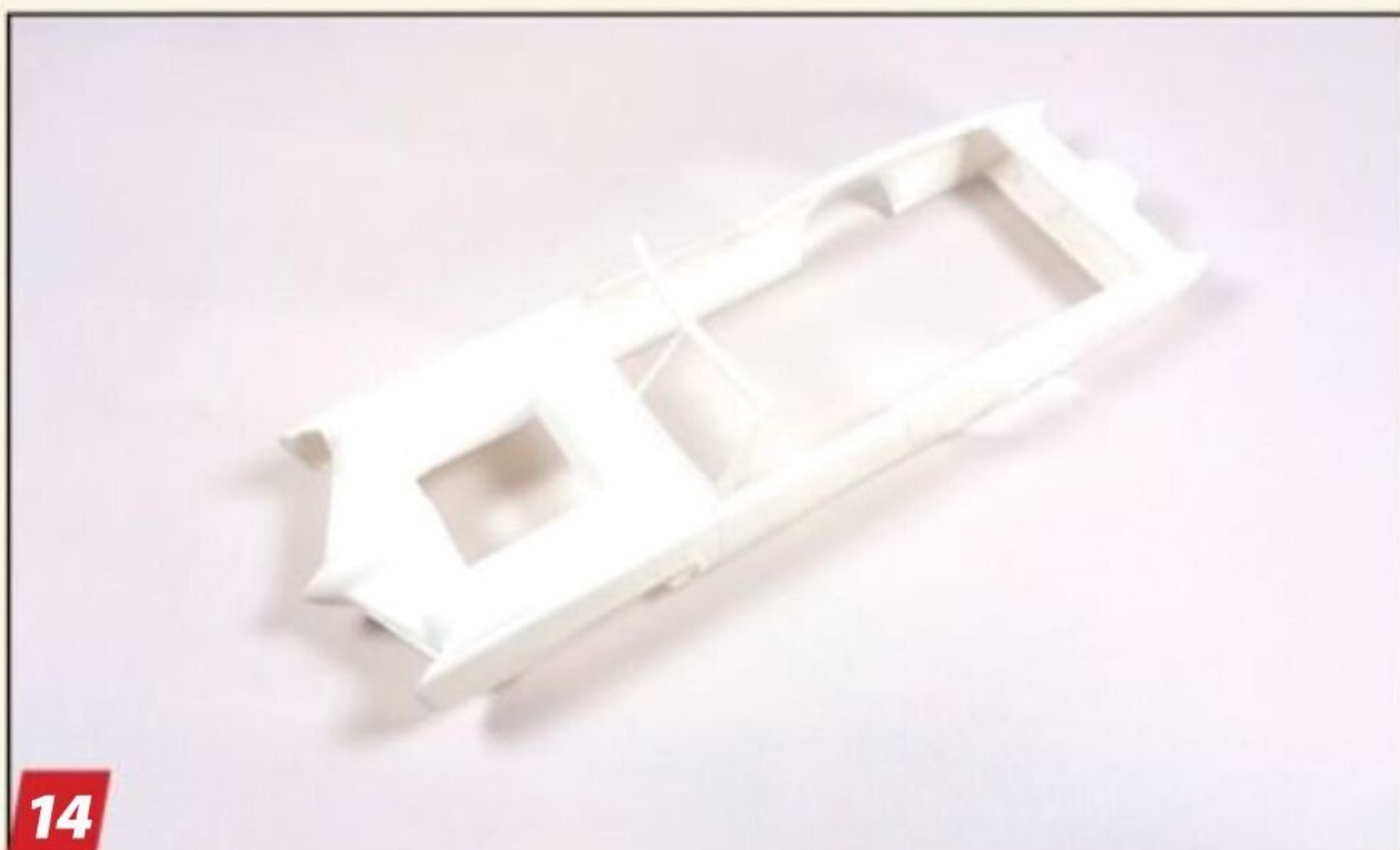
12

While the dashboard was still on the tree, I painted the dial surrounds flat black and applied the gauge decals. I sanded off the license plate detail and painted the frame silver. Bill Spencer (spencer1984.com) was kind enough to supply artwork for the original car's license plate. I printed a correctly sized copy, covered it with clear adhesive tape, and glued it to the license plate frame.



13

I painted the dashboard with Tamiya Linoleum Deck Brown (No. XF-79) with a semigloss black top and surround and picked out detail with Tamiya Acrylic Chrome Silver (No. X-11). I glued the larger gauges in place, the smaller set under the dash, and the tachometer to the top front. The steering wheel was painted with chrome with a deck brown rim. I printed a decal for the Pontiac emblem on the wheel center.



14

Because the TV car didn't have them, I removed the window supports behind the windshield. The rear and front roll pans (parts 2 and 3) were glued in place, and I also added the exhaust port mounts (parts 10 and 11). Next, I sprayed the body with white Tamiya Primer.



15

I washed the body with dish soap and water and let it air dry before applying a light, even coat of Tamiya Pure Red (No. TS-86) from a spray can. I covered the painted body with the plastic box to prevent dust settling and let it dry. I applied second and third coats. Afterward, I touched a fine brush lightly loaded with thin flat black paint to engraved lines to outline the hood, doors, and vents.



16

I gently applied a coat of Meguiar's Cleaner Wax car polish and, when it was dry, buffed the paint with a polishing cloth. The result was not super high gloss but acceptable and realistic. From this point on, it's a good idea to wear cotton gloves when handling the body.



17

Although most photos show the Monkeemobile with a Monkees logo on the door, the TV show car didn't have that. Therefore, I left it off — a decision made easier when I discovered the kit decals were too big. I applied the GTO decals above the front wheel but omitted the rest. A Molotow Liquid Chrome Marker was used to carefully outline the windshield frame.



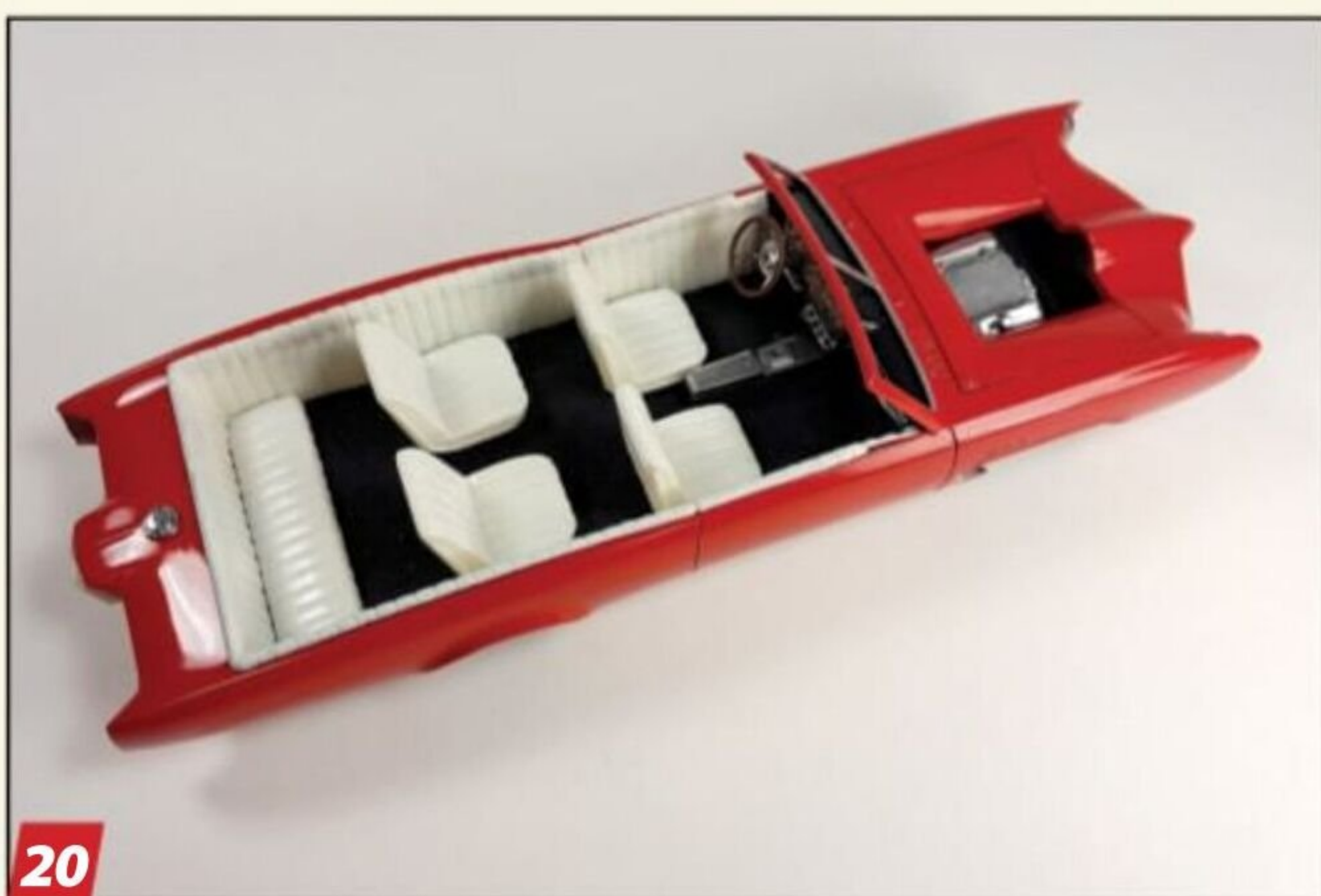
18

I applied a flat black wash to the headlights. Then, with the parts level, I used a microbrush to place a small amount of clear Gorilla Glue into the headlights to simulate the lenses and let it dry for 24 hours.



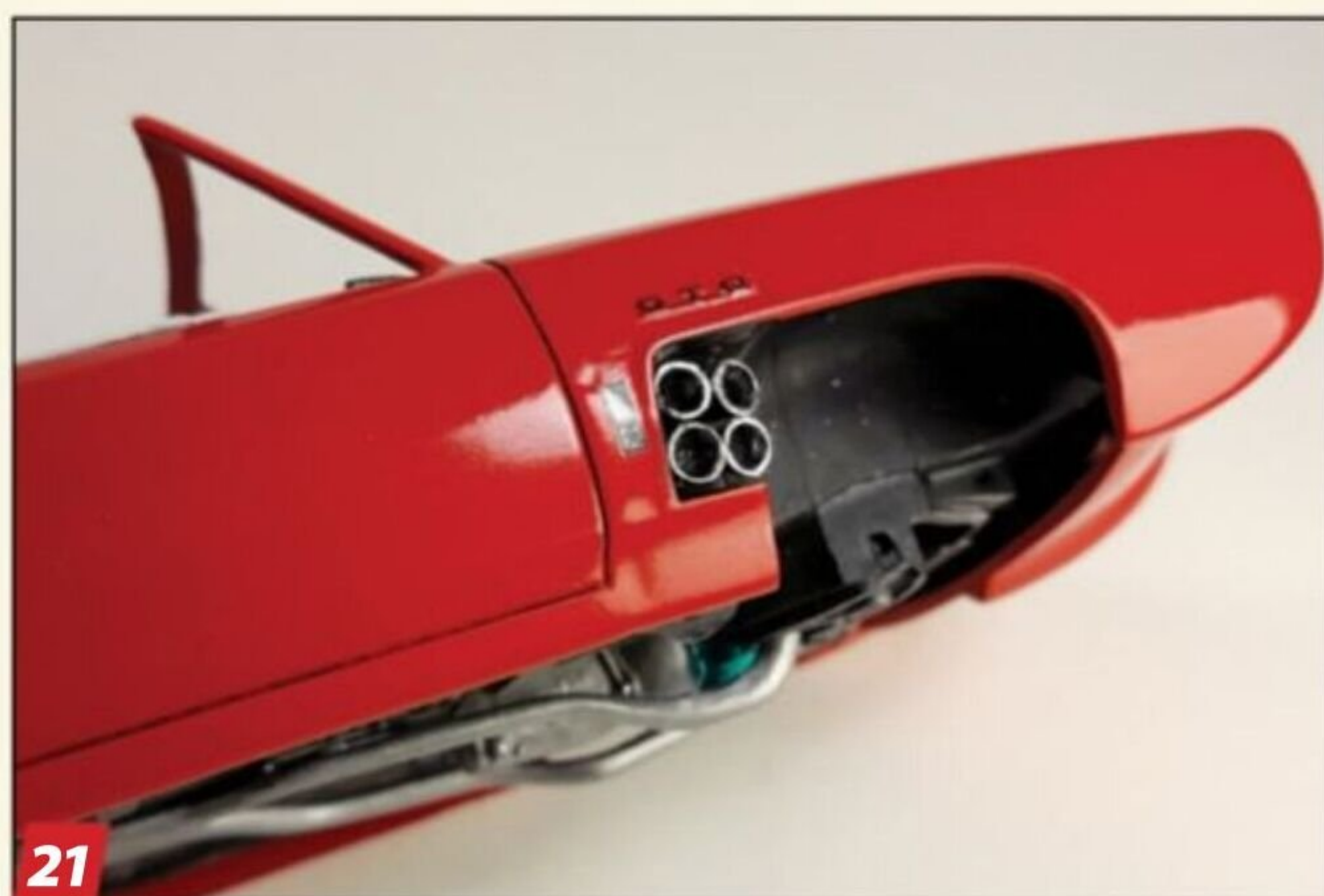
19

The backs of the taillights were painted silver and glued in place with a little white glue. After painting the drag 'chute light tan, I flowed on a flat brown wash and glued it to the rear of the body along with the chrome gas cap and the license plate.



20

To glue the interior tub in place, I applied superglue with a microbrush from inside the body. Superglue also attached the chassis to the interior tub. I applied resized MPC logo decals behind the exhaust ports.



21

Before adding wheels, I installed the exhaust ports. Enlarging the locator holes a little before gluing helped. Test-fitting showed I needed to grind the area behind the headlights for them to fit evenly.



The holes in the wheels and front chassis were too small for the axles and needed to be enlarged. To install the wheels, push one wheel on to each axle, thread the axles through the chassis and push the remaining wheels into place. The radiator/blower assembly sat on the engine but the surface between them was uneven. I applied a small blob of two-part epoxy putty and pressed the assemblies together.



The windshield was held in place by the dashboard without glue. There was no attachment point on the windshield for the rearview mirror, so I drilled a shallow hole at the front of the fabric top for it. I airbrushed the fabric top with a mix of 85% Testors Flat White acrylic and 15% Testors Sand. I just placed on the body, but it can be glued, too.



I built a simple base with asphalt texture and arranged a collage of The Monkees album covers to display my Monkeemobile. Alternatively, the key chain emblem included with the kit can also be used as a nameplate. Hopefully, these tips will be your *Steppin' Stone* to a better Monkeemobile. **FSM**



ELLIOT KACIR
MOUNT CLEMENS, MICHIGAN

Elliot dressed up an Eduard 1/48 scale P-39 with extra Eduard photo-etched metal and scratchbuilt the cockpit and wheel-well details. He painted the Airacobra with AK Interactive Real Colors lacquers and weathered it with washes, pigments, and artist oils to finish it as a fighter based on Canton Atoll.

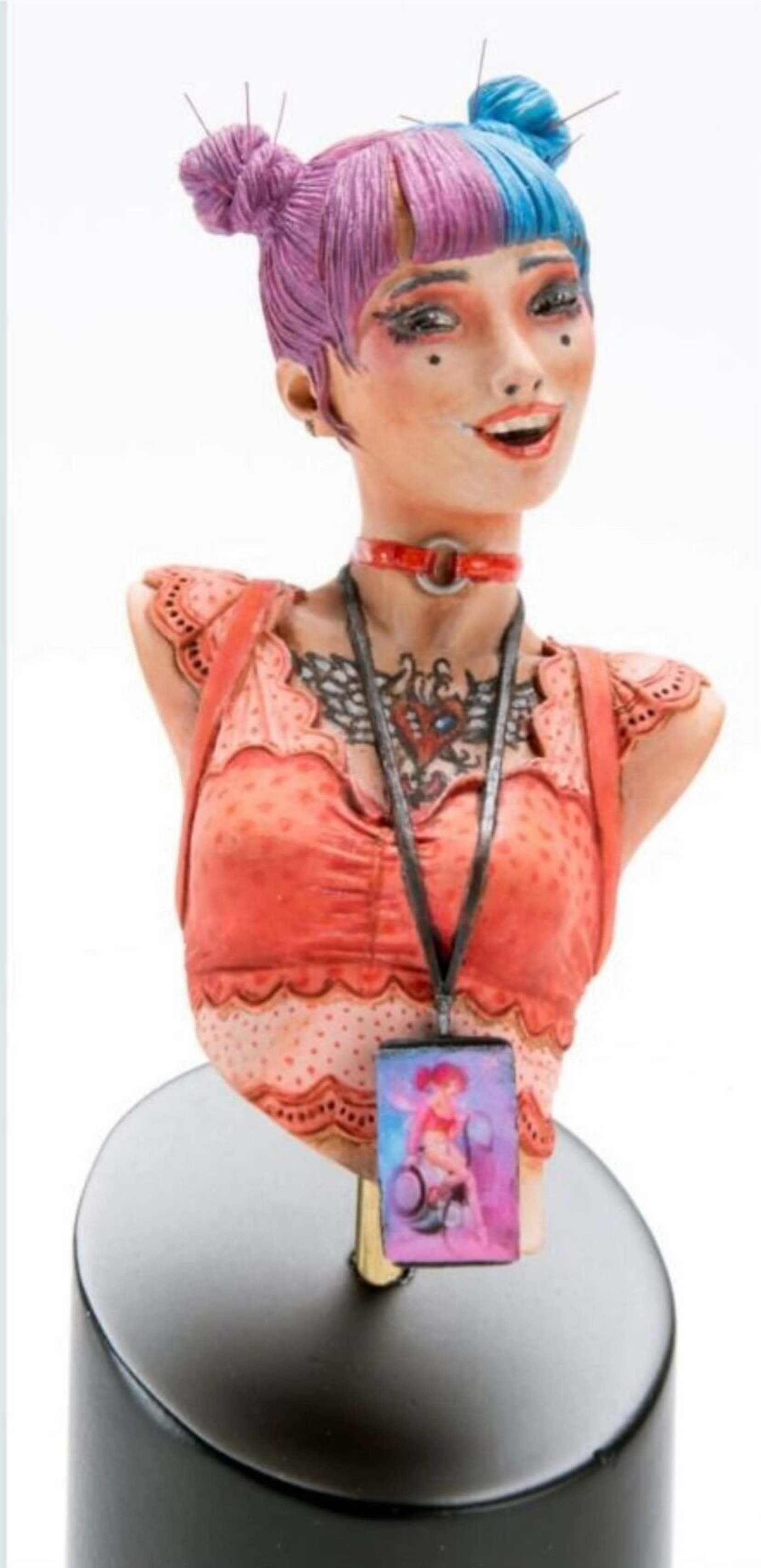


▲ **STEVE BACON**
NEW WHITELAND, INDIANA

Steve's 1/35 scale E-60 Panzerjäger started life as a Modelcollect Fist of War kit to which he added too many things to list, including scratchbuilt details, Friulmodel metal tracks, and an Aber turned-metal Lowe 105mm gun barrel. He airbrushed the camouflage freehand with Tamiya acrylics. Steve weathered the what-if tank destroyer with Winsor & Newton oil paint and AK Interactive and Ammo pigments and enamel washes.

◀ **BRIAN DUDDY**
DAYTON, OHIO

Brian hand-painted most of this Life Miniatures 1/9 scale bust of Amelia Earhart with oils, using acrylics only on the pioneering aviator's scarf.



◀ **KEVIN FOUREMAN**
ARCANUM, OHIO

Working with a 1/9 scale bust called Ayaka representing a Japanese club goer, Kevin added hair spikes and finished with Scale 75 acrylics, Prismacolor pencils, and Pan Pastel pigments. Even the tattoo was done by hand.

▼ **KEN SPRIGGS**
MUNCIE, INDIANA

Ken replaced gray plastic parts in the engines of a Revell 1/24 scale N-1 starfighter with clear resin to be able to light the *Star Wars: The Mandalorian* ship. He painted with Vallejo acrylics and Alclad II lacquers and then posed the Outer Rim hot rod in flight over a rock formation made by placing oven-bake clay in molds and hot-gluing the results over a foam-core shape.



◀ **KIP PELTON**
CRESTWOOD, KENTUCKY

Going real with his fun, Kip painted a Border 1/35 scale Apocalypse Tank with Mr. Hobby acrylics using salt to produce chipping and AK Interactive dark brown wash for grime and to emphasize panel lines. The vehicle, from the video game *Red Alert 2*, sits on a foam base covered with broken cork roadway.



▲ **PAUL LAROCK**
MT. PROSPECT, ILLINOIS

To show an Indian Army tank in 1944 Burma, Paul scratchbuilt stowage boxes for an Academy 1/35 scale M3 Lee and added eyebolts and rope to the turret rear. He painted the vehicle with Tamiya acrylics, added MiniArt figures with Hornet heads grafted on, and placed everything on a central Burma road sculpted from foam.

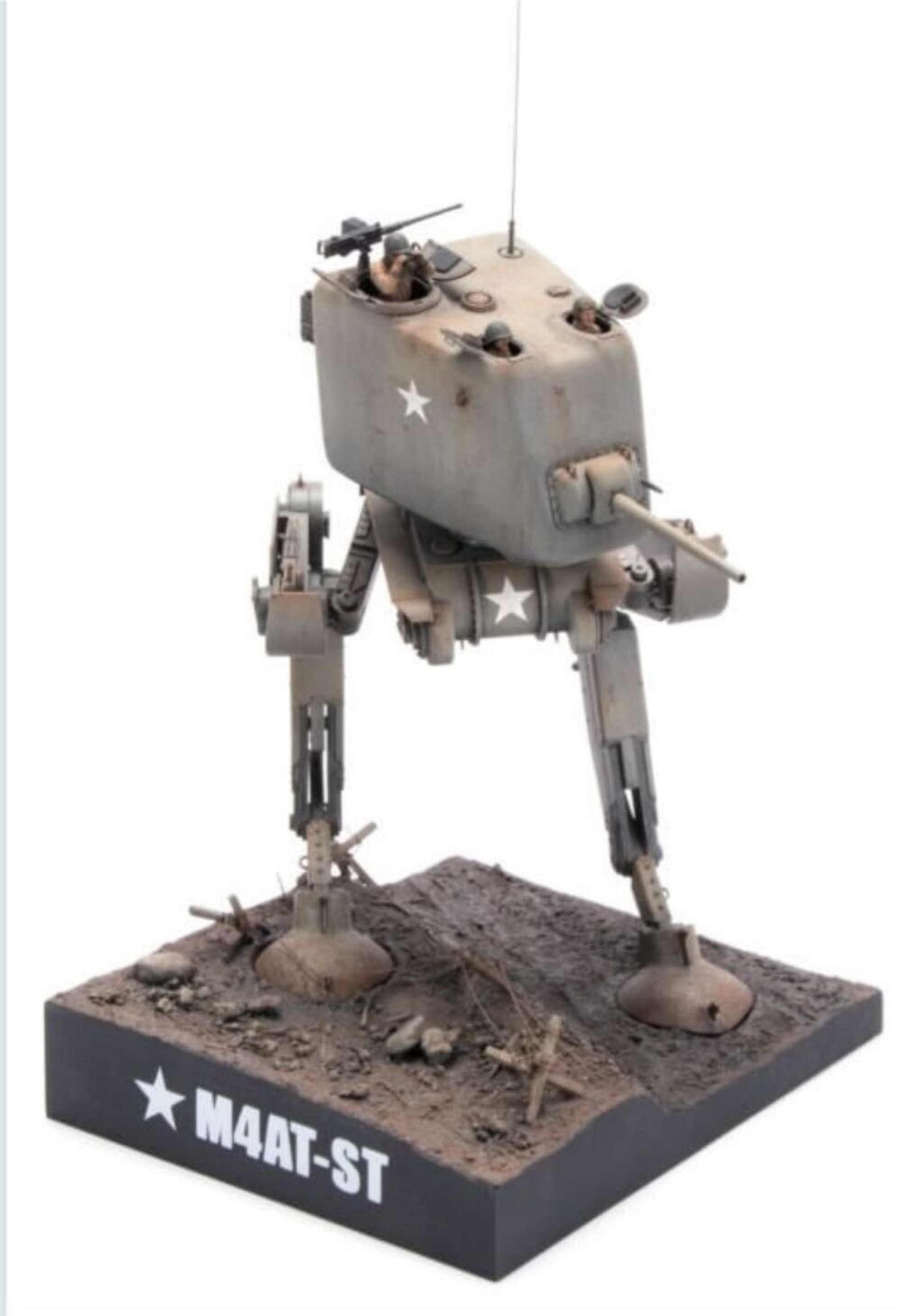
► **AARON KUCK**
DUBLIN, OHIO

Taking a hypothetical vehicle to a new hypothetical level, Aaron fitted a Hasegawa 1/35 scale Ma.K Nutcracker with a pair of metal 12.8cm KwK L.55 gun barrels. He painted the new vehicle he dubbed "the Jagdrocker" with Tamiya acrylics, airbrushing the camo freehand, and weathered with artist-oil washes.

► **PATRICK BROWN**
CHANTILLY, VIRGINIA

To model an Egyptian T-34/85 as it looked at the time of the 1956 Suez Crisis, Patrick added smoke canisters and a scratchbuilt tow cable mount to a Tamiya 1/48 scale kit. He painted it with Tamiya acrylics using pre-shading, post-shading, artist-oil washes, and dry-brushing. He airbrushed the markings through masks made on a Silhouette Cameo desktop cutting machine.





▲ DAVID STEELMAN
VILONIA, ARKANSAS

A fan of sci-fi and history, David mashed up a Bandai 1/48 scale *Star Wars* AT-ST with parts from a Tamiya 1/48 scale Sherman for his M4AT-ST. He smoothed the Bandai walker's head with putty to make it look as if it had been cast, added the Sherman hatches, replaced the laser cannons with the M4 76mm main gun, and added extra armor to the legs.



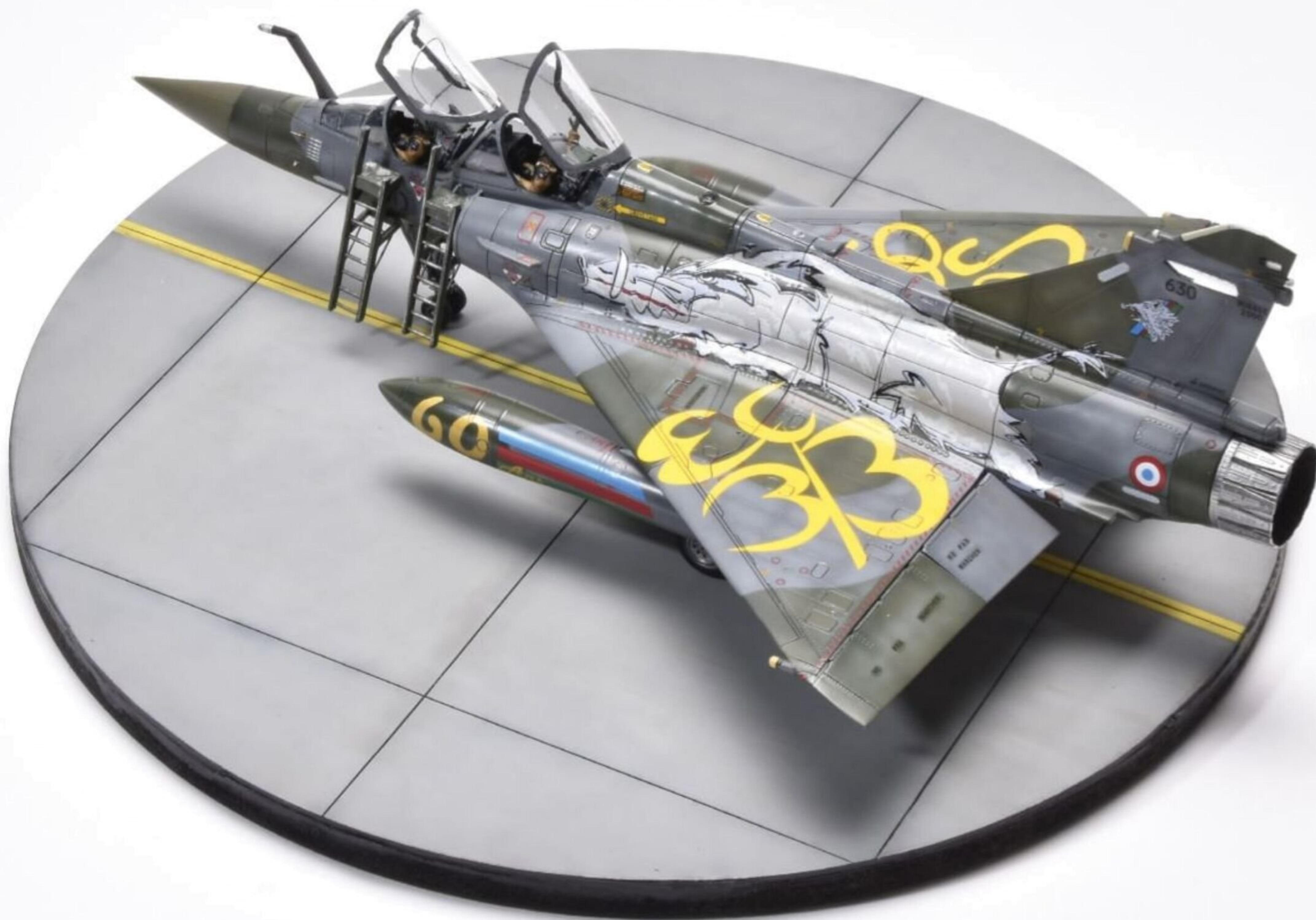
▲ ROBERT HALLACK
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

To model an Australian tank at the Battle of Tarakan during the Borneo Campaign in June 1945, Robert converted a Tamiya 1/35 scale Matilda with armored track covers and telephone box from MR Models and Green Stuff Marsden matting over the engine compartment. He painted the tank with AK Interactive Real Colors lacquers over Mr. Hobby Mahogany Brown primer and added highlights with yellow-green.



MARK WOLF
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

When a sidetracked project left Mark with a Tamiya Möbelwagen with a big hole in the floor, he reimagined it as Panzer IV Schlepper and the project quickly expanded to mounting a 2cm gun from a Dragon SdKfz 251/17 and pulling a scratchbuilt trailer and a Dragon 7.5cm PaK 40. In between, there was a lot of modifications and scratchbuilding and the long combination was painted with Tamiya acrylics and weathered with Vallejo and Ammo products.



▲ **WENJI WANG**
OAKVILLE, ONTARIO, CANADA

After scratchbuilding a boarding ladder and more cockpit details and adding ResKit wheels and an exhaust nozzle to a Modesvit 1/72 scale Dassault Mirage 2000D, Wenji painted it with Mr. Color lacquers. Weathered with Tamiya Panel Line Accent Colors and AK Interactive and Ammo products, the French fighter sits on a homemade tarmac display base.

► **ALEX MCKELVEY**
LINDSAY, ONTARIO, CANADA

"This model depicts *Lucky* the tugboat on its last trip before scrapping," Alex says. He removed all the molded details on a Revell 1/108 scale Harbor Tug Boat kit, replaced them with scratchbuilt items, and painted with Tamiya and Vallejo acrylics. Extensive artist-oil washes and paint chipping applied with a sponge hint at the working vessel's long career.





◀ **STEVE COYKENDALL**

HONEOYE FALLS, NEW YORK

Working with a 3D-printed kit designed by Carlose at Cults3D.com, Steve finished this 1/8 scale Catwoman with acrylics from Golden, Tamiya, and GarageKitsUS using Silly Putty for masking.

▼ **SYLVAIN PLANTE**

MONTREAL, QUÉBEC, CANADA

Sylvain's only addition to Eduard's 1/48 scale Fokker D.VII was the Uschi Van Der Rosten elastic line for control cables. He painted the fighter with Vallejo acrylics.



TIM HARRISON

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA

After building a Zvezda 1/144 scale Boeing 787-9 straight from the box, Tim painted it with Tamiya spray-can lacquers and applied 8A Decs decals for a special Aeromexico livery celebrating Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent.

Detail an AUSS



IE M113

Extra interior features and weathering puts the APC in Vietnam

BY ANDY COOPER

One of my modeling friends spent time in the Australian Army driving M113 armored personnel carriers. Nowadays, he volunteers at a military museum that features a M113 in its collection. With that much reference material and info on tap, it seemed natural that I should build AFV Club's 1/35 scale Australian M113A1 (No. AF35291).

The kit provides some interior detail, enough to open a hatch or two, but not if you plan to open all the separate hatches like I did. That meant adding missing details for a full interior.



I built the hull first in order to have an interior to detail. After adding the kit's major interior parts, I airbrushed SMS Duck Egg Green lacquer (No. PL87). For what it is worth, SMS Sea Foam Green (No. PL154) and Tamiya Sky (No. XF-21) match duck egg green almost exactly.



The kit omitted the driver's brake levers used to steer the vehicle, so I scratchbuilt them from styrene rod and added them to the backside of the lower glacis at the front of the driver's compartment. Prominent wiring seen in photos was replicated with solder wire of various gauges, and I scratchbuilt electrical boxes for the left wall.



After painting the components and applying decals as required, I scratched and scuffed the interior with a small piece of sponge dipped in dark gray acrylic. I blotted excess paint from the sponge on a rag before dabbing it on edges and surfaces. Randomness and subtlety are key.



I was given a spare Academy M113 engine to fill the empty compartment on the AFV Club model. It's a good starting point. Based on photos, I added thick solder for cooling system hoses and wiring and thinner plumbing with various gauges of wire.



I assembled the driver's station and engine bay and test-fitted the powerplant. It needed to come up slightly, so I shimmed it underneath with bits of sprue. The air hose on top was fashioned from thick sprue and shaped to line up with the filter when it was mounted.



The Academy radiator parts required sanding and adjustment to get them to sit correctly under the AFV Club upper engine panel. I painted this assembly with various metallic and black paints and weathered with artist-oil washes.



Convinced that everything fit into the bay, I painted the engine before gluing it in place. Once it was in, I added the smaller wiring and connections to the space followed by the glasis plate that encloses the driver's position.



That offered the opportunity to test-fit the radiator and air filter subassembly, which fit perfectly but was not fixed in place at this time.



The rear compartment needed stowage. On the right, I added Australian pattern water cans and a milk crate from an Australian vehicle supply set. The latter contains a billy (cook pot) and a jaffle iron (toasted sandwich maker), and a ration box.



Australian M113s often had a plywood map board on the fuel tank. I painted styrene light beige and dry-brushed clear orange for a wooden look. After resizing and printing period maps of Vietnam, I attached them with Micro Kristal Klear (No. MI-9).



11

The kit supplied the radio and shelf along with the fire extinguisher. The space below the radio often contained personal items, so I added a bowl with a mess tin and cups, empty ammo boxes used for personal storage, and a bed roll. I found 1960s *Playboy* magazine covers, reduced and printed them, and added them to the personal stuff.



12

Before closing the interior, I built the turret basket to check the fit. This turned out to be smart move because the basket hit a part — a heater, I think — that sits above the engine access panel. I sanded the heater down until the basket fit unimpeded.



13

A cylindrical rotating-joint sits below the turret floor to provide power and communications to the turret. I scratchbuilt it using styrene tubing of different sizes and added fine styrene rod for the conduit. An ammunition box holder was made from fine styrene angle stock.



14

I weathered the interior with a black artist-oil wash applied to recesses and edges. Dry-brushing highlighted details, and I scrubbed the floor with powdered pastel chalks to replicate the red soil of Vietnam tracked into the APC.



15

I sealed the interior weathering with flat clear and attached the hull top. Intending to pose the engine hatch, ramp, and crew hatches open, I left them off for painting.



16

Before assembling the turret, I painted the interior and masked the exterior faces of the vision blocks.



17

I like to fit as much detail as possible before painting, so I started adding the multitude of small parts that make up this detailed model.



18

There are some kit parts I just know will break during placement, handling, and painting. Saving on frustration, I replaced them with wire using the original part as a pattern.



19

Although not mentioned in the instructions, PE straps are provided in the kit presumably to secure tools and other items on the vehicle's exterior. I decided to use more flexible wine bottle foil for the straps combined with the kit PE buckles.



20

With all the subassemblies ready for painting, I masked various parts with tape and blocked the hatch openings with foam.



21

I started by pre-shading the vehicle's outline and panel lines with SMS Primer Surfacer Black (No. PLP02). To fill the spaces between them, I airbrushed SMS Primer Surfacer White (No. PLP03).



22

A light spray of SMS Camo Green (No. PL31) followed, allowing the underlying patchwork to show enough to give the finish a subtle faded and mottled appearance.



23

In reality, the trim vane was made from plywood edged with metal and the spare road wheel simply screwed in place. To make it look like worn paint over wood, I dry-brushed buff and clear orange over the green. Hex bolts punched from styrene secure the spare wheel.



24

I hand-painted the edges of the assembled tracks with Tamiya Hull Red (No. XF-9) before adding them to the model. According to my veteran friend, correctly tensioned M113 track should allow space to fit a hand between them and the top of the first road wheel. Wads of tissue paper held the tracks in place while the glue set.





25

I applied the decals between layers of gloss clear acrylic.



26

Australian M113s in Vietnam had a hard life and forcing the vehicles through thick bush produced scratches and marks along the sides. I replicated this wear by dragging a piece of stiff foam along the sides to apply dark brown and then dirty yellow paint.



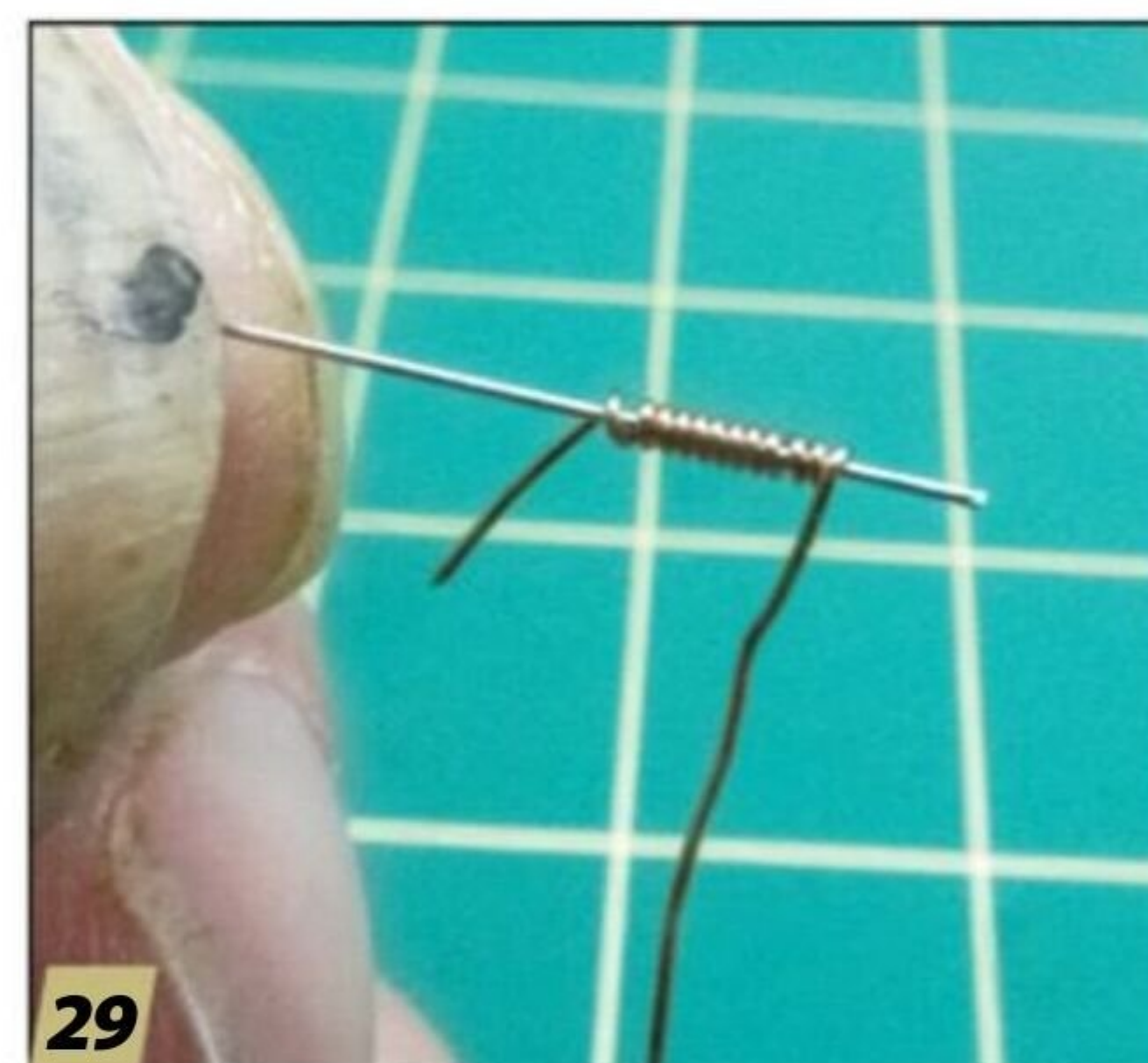
27

I flowed thin burnt sienna and raw umber artist oils into recesses and around details. Next, I applied dots of leaf green, yellow ochre, light red, and titanium white artist oils to the body and dragged and blended them into the surface with turpentine on a wide brush.



28

For wet, red mud, I mixed ground artist pastels with white glue. I applied this mixture to the lower hull and running gear and added a few "footprints" to the top. Before this mix dried completely, I airbrushed SMS Pilbara (No. PL34) for a layer of dry dust.



29

To make the two radio antennas, I cut steel guitar string to length and wrapped fine copper electrical wire around one end to represent a spring base.



FINAL THOUGHTS

I ATTACHED THE VARIOUS hatches and the ramp open offering a good view of the detailed interior before spraying the model with flat clear and peeling the masks from the vision blocks. This was a great build. Not only was the kit itself good but having information on tap from a mate who used and operated these vehicles was invaluable, fascinating, and enlightening. **FSM**



PAIN **CHASSIS** ***DETAILS***

Tips to spruce up the underside of cars and light trucks

BY TIM BOYD

Detail painting is one of the easiest and most enjoyable ways to add visual interest and realism to the underside of car and light truck models.



Kit makers often design chassis and suspensions to simplify manufacturing and expedite assembly so you can get on to more fun like the body and engine. The result is that what are distinct parts on a real car or truck chassis are typically molded together as a single piece.

For example, a kit's one-piece frame might include a portion of the real car's front suspension. Other parts of the front suspension might show up on a molded crossmember or subframe. Painting

these parts just as they come from the box does not accurately replicate the 1/1 scale appearance of a vehicle.

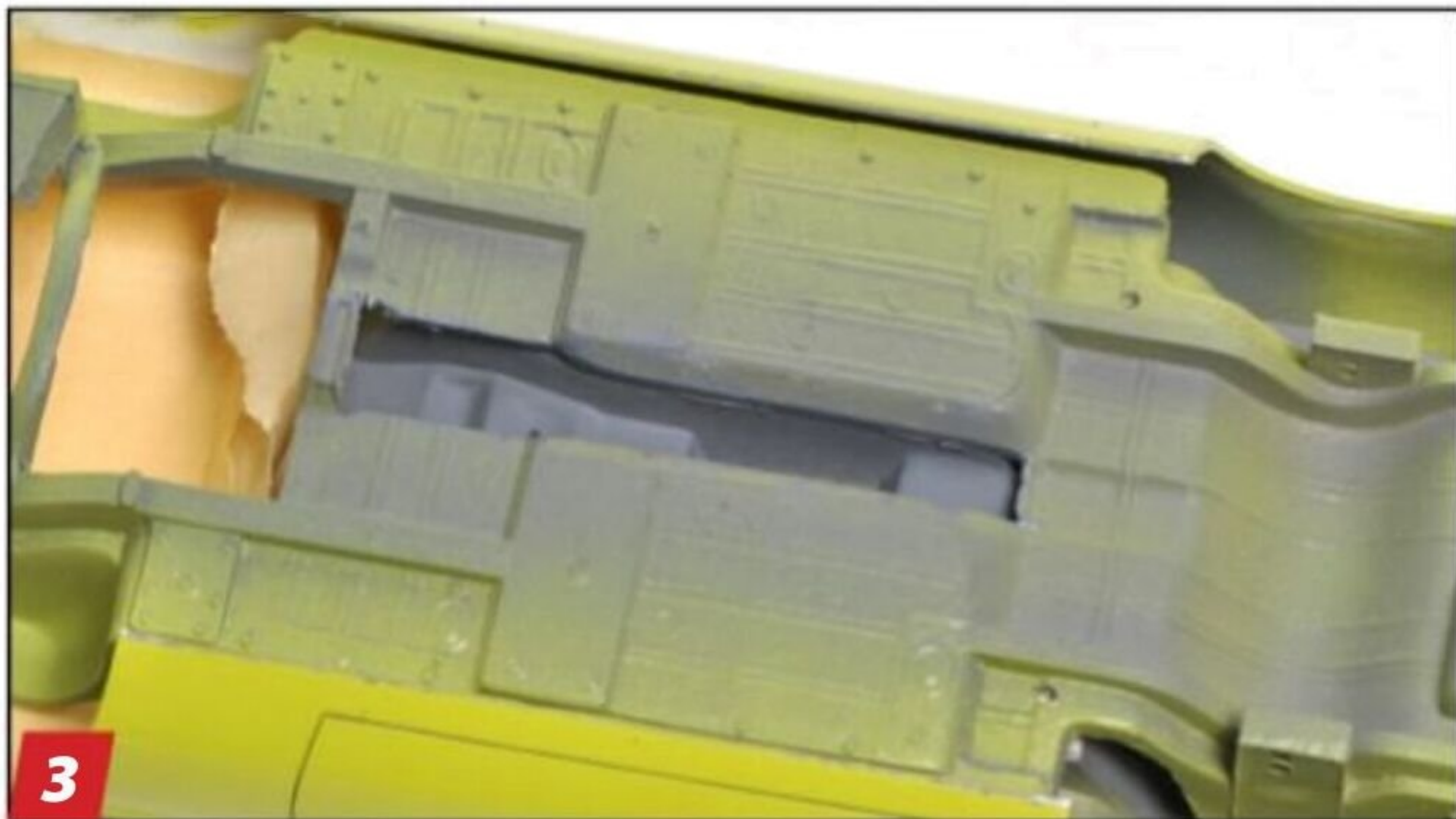
Fortunately, careful painting of the molded parts can overcome this issue. There are also ways to add further realism to an underbody, whether it's on a classic muscle car, a modern sports car, or a street-machine pickup chassis. These techniques will surely elicit a "Wow!" rather than a "ho-hum" when someone looks under your model.



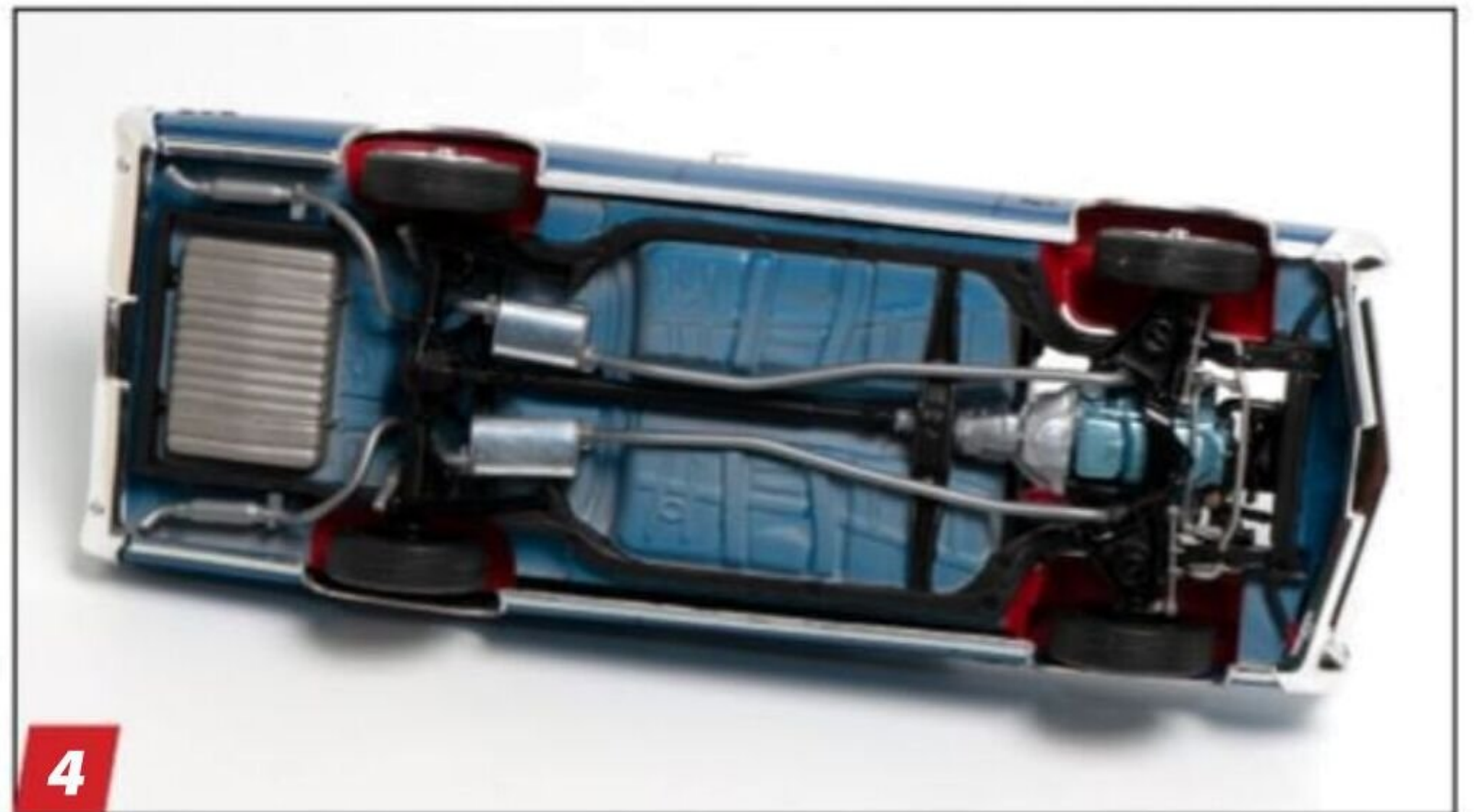
To detail chassis, I use Tamiya acrylics. Silver (No. X-11) and Metallic Grey (No. X-56) are useful, but I mix custom shades like the golden bronze in the center. Washes like Vallejo Dark Grey (No. 76.517) will emphasize details and lend parts a realistic, lightly used appearance.



To finish brake rotors, I brush on metallic gray followed by a dark gray wash. The calipers, separate parts on real cars but often molded with the rotors for models, were painted a gold/bronze color. Alternatively, they can be glossy yellow or red shades, or the body colors.



Many 1960s and 1970s unibody cars — primarily Chrysler and smaller Fords — have remnants of the body paint color overspray underneath. After applying a light gray or rust colored primer, carefully add the overspray; less overspray is more accurate than more.



For body-on-frame cars of the same era, like this 1966 GTO, the underbody areas showed the same overspray, as they were typically painted before the frames (usually painted semigloss black) were added. Underbody gas tanks should be a flat metallic color.



GM cars from the same era usually had black suspension parts, but the sheen varied between components. Stabilizer bars and tie rods wore metallic finishes. Note the red fender liners, seen on certain later '60s cars like the GTO and Barracuda and the early 1970s Olds 442.



Mid-century Chryslers came with a variety of underbody colors and finishes. Front-end K-frames were semigloss black and the bare-metal lower A-arms wore a golden Cosmoline coating. Torsion bars were gloss black and tie rods, anti-roll bars, and spindles were untreated metal.



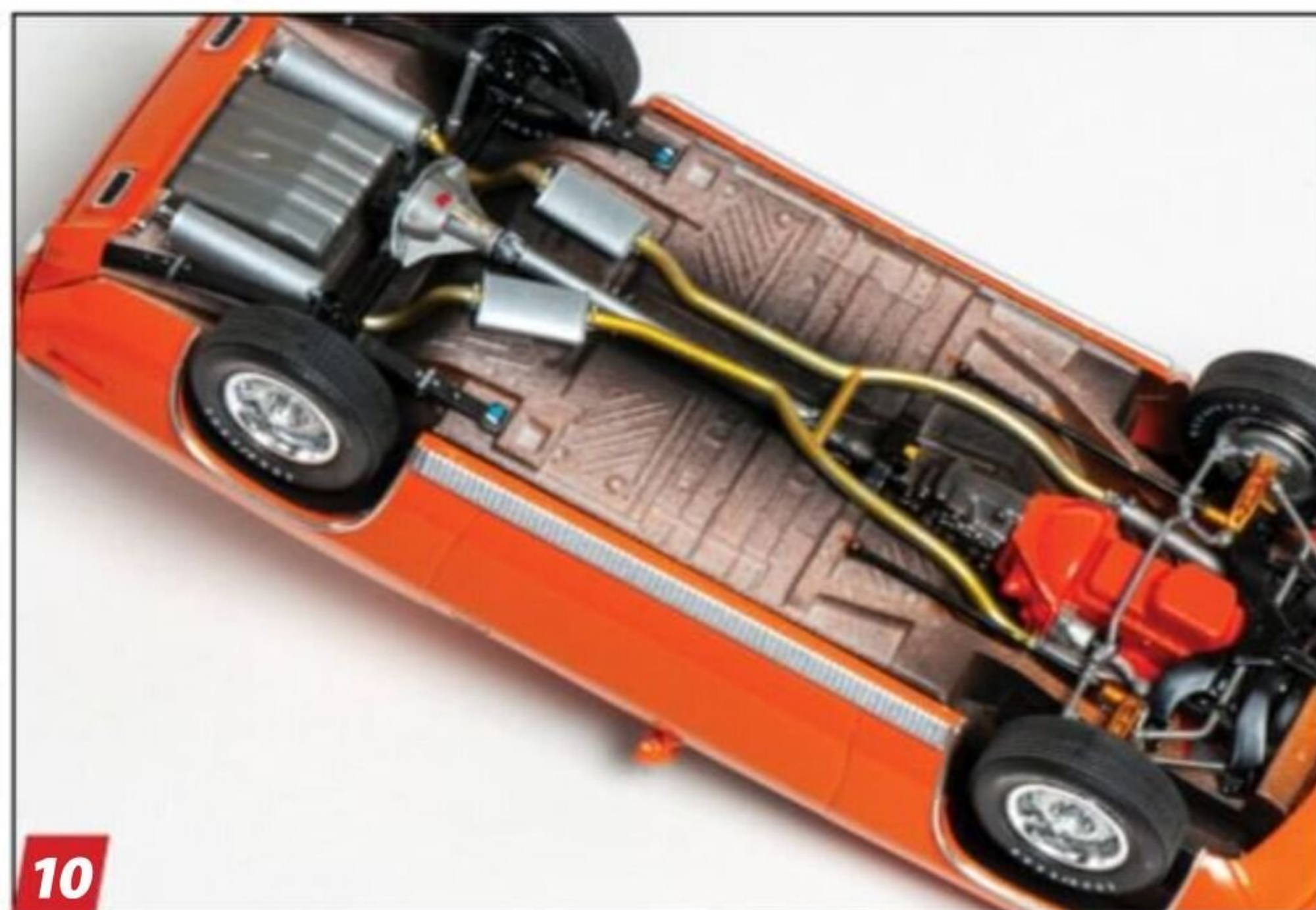
7 Chrysler's mid-century cars used leaf springs and solid rear axles. Restorers debate whether leaf springs should show metallic gray, Cosmoline coating, or black. Axles were usually gloss or semigloss black, and differentials were either black or metallic gray.



8 Exhaust systems can be finished with metallic grays or silvers. Some builders add a light overspray of rust-colored primer. Mufflers should be painted a slightly different shade, or you can add Matte Aluminum Bare-Metal Foil (No. 011) to them as seen on the right.



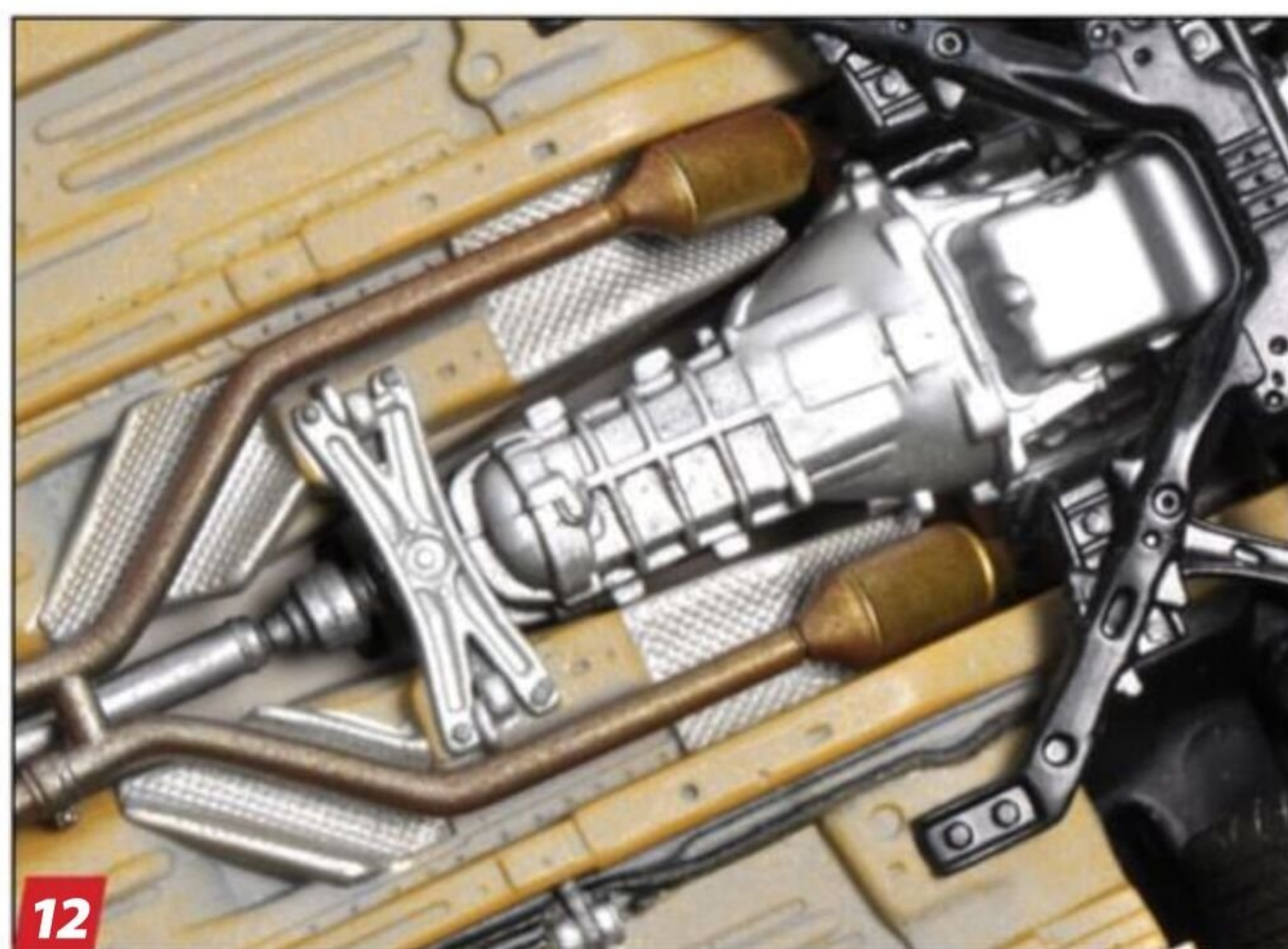
9 The finished chassis assembly of this 1968 Dodge Charger R/T kit shows how careful detail painting creates a realistic underbody appearance. Rather than this clean showroom appearance, you can add light or heavy weathering as a last step to make your model look used.



10 Here, the optional factory undercoating — a dull black — has been airbrushed along the transmission tunnel and rear axle well. Note the discoloration of the exhaust and the addition of factory assembly paint splotches on the torsion bar ends, leaf spring ends, and differential.



11 Contemporary subjects like this S197 generation Mustang GT benefit from careful chassis painting and modelers of 21st-century cars have myriad online images to research correct colors. The builder-added the wishbone-shaped underbody brace from .030-inch styrene sheet.



12 Catalytic converters on modern cars and trucks give off considerable heat, so reflective heat insulation is often fitted to the floorboards above them. Use silver paint, as seen here, or satin foil to replicate this. Note the discolored exhaust painted with Tamiya Clear Orange (No. X-26).



13 Even the simplified one-piece chassis found in most kits tooled in the 1960s and early '70s benefit from selective component painting. Here I've applied some of the techniques to an AMT 1964 Olds Cutlass 442.



14 Mostly comprising the frame and crossmembers, this street-machine pickup chassis also includes portions of the front suspension and the power brake booster components. Start the paint detailing process with several coats of gloss black from a spray can.



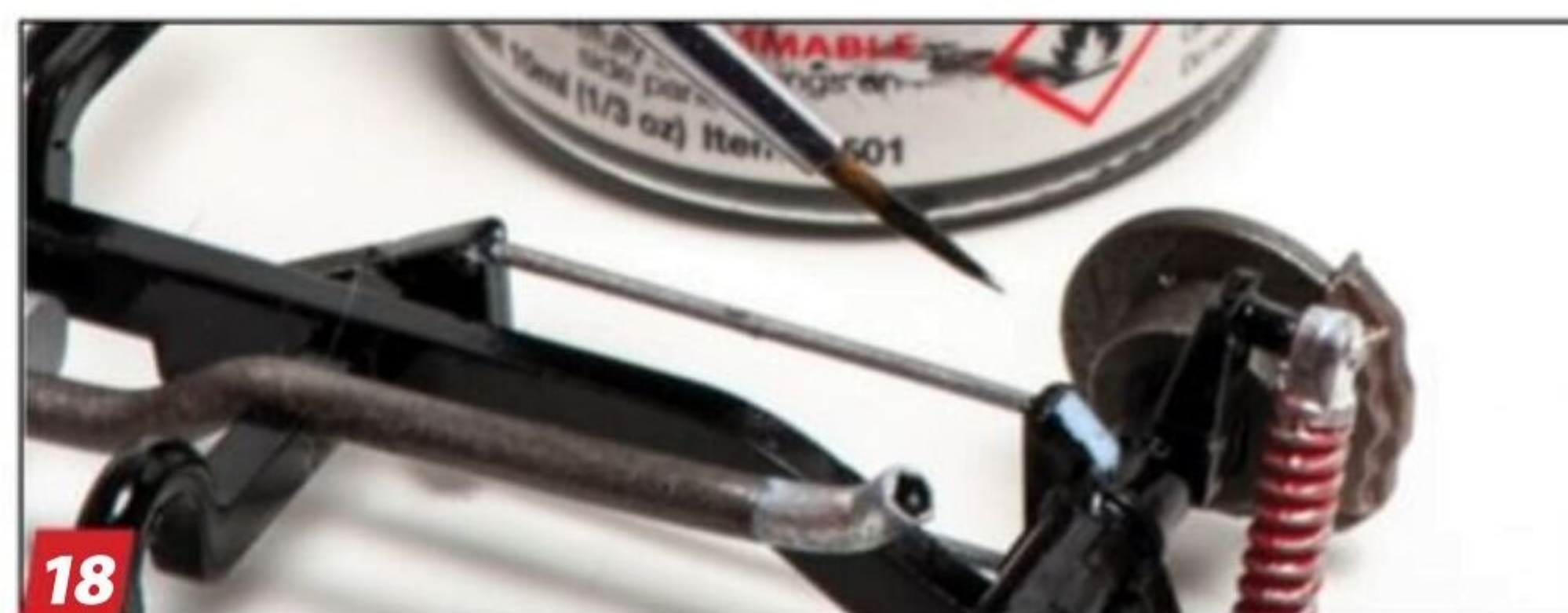
15 In the street-machine kit, the front suspension upper A-arms are molded with the frame, so I brushed them silver to visually delineate these parts. On the separately molded front crossmember, the lower A-arms are also painted silver following the molded demarcations.



16 The rack and pinion steering is molded as one part, but it comprises a frame mount, rubber-like boot seals, and tie-rod ends. Each portion should be painted separately: gloss black for the mount, flat black for the seals, and metallic gray for the tie-rod ends.



17 On hot-rod and street-machine kits, suspension parts like these radius rods are molded together with their mounting brackets. Paint the brackets the frame color; the radius rods should be different. A dry-brushed contrasting color brings out the coil spring detail.



18 Carefully inspect your project for any unfinished surfaces, like this rear axle radius rod bracket and touch up these areas as needed. Most projects will have a few places that will require last-minute refinements and a fine paintbrush will be invaluable.

FINAL THOUGHTS

ADDING PAINT DETAILING as shown here is not only fun and relaxing but will add immensely to the authenticity of your soon-to-be-completed next modeling project. **FSM**

Dream a **LITTLE**

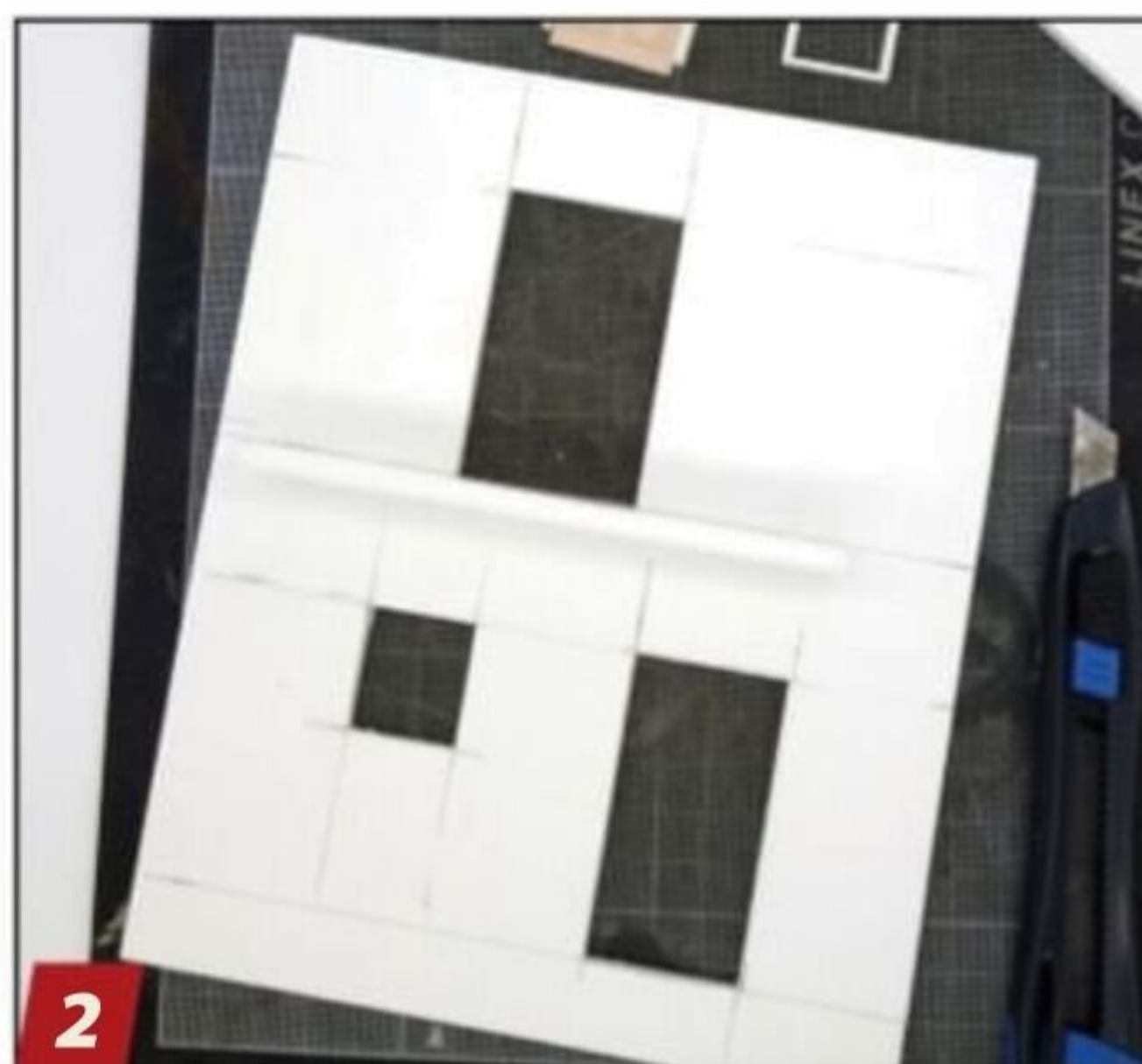
Pay attention to your surroundings and put what you see in your dioramas

BY KOSTAS GEORGIOU

You never know when inspiration for a diorama or scene will strike. During a walk to a nearby grocery store, I spotted a beautiful but rundown house with many flowerpots and various items in the front yard. Trees obstructed the view of the whole building, and this gave me an idea of how to artistically fill gaps in a contained scene with vegetation. Where there might be a bare wall, a climbing vine would emerge. An awkward, empty space could be made pleasing with a bush or tree. With my head full of ideas, I returned to my workbench and began modeling.



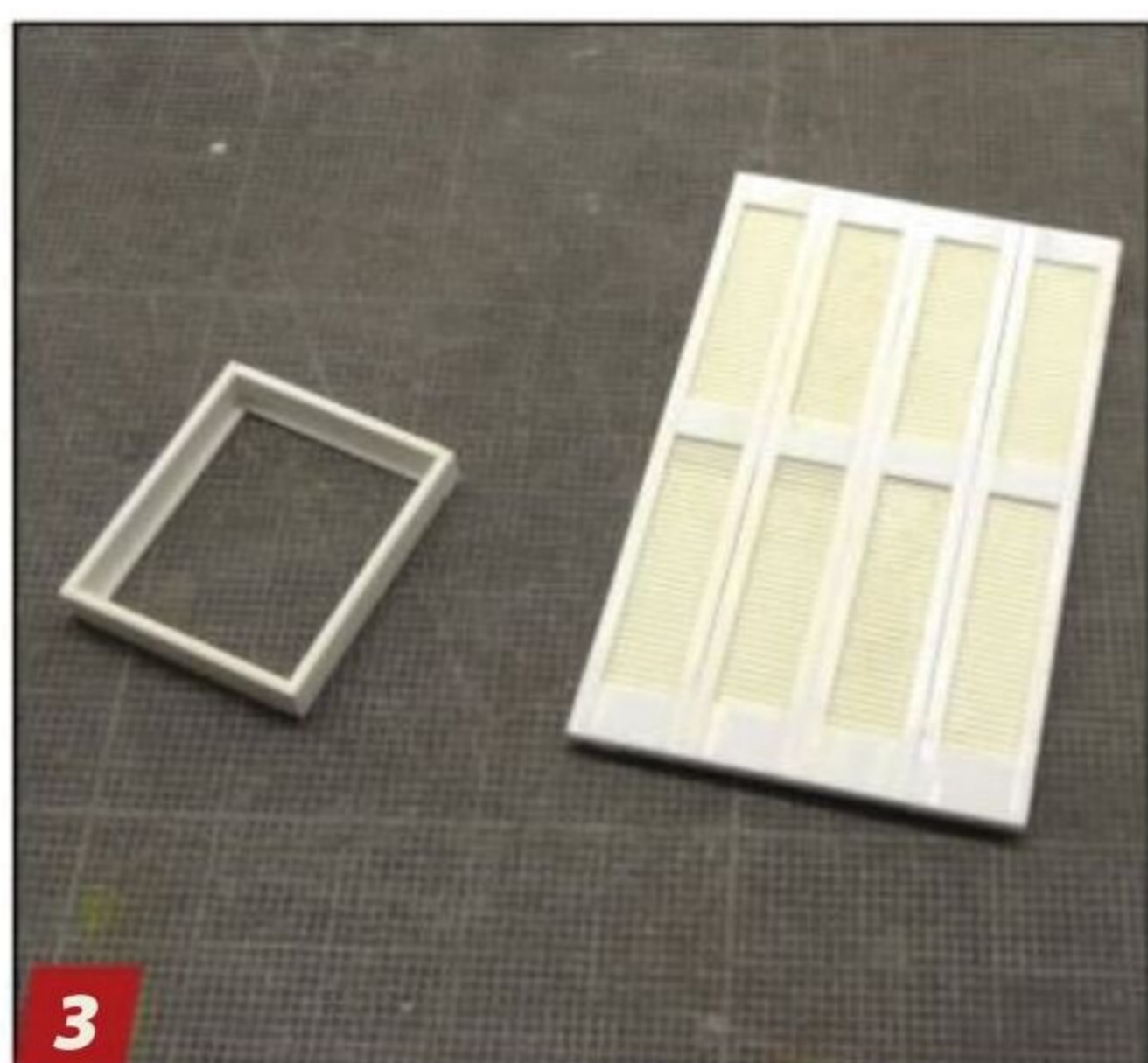
1 For a base, I chose a small, plastic picture frame. I covered the top with a flat sheet of cork trimmed to the frame's outer dimensions. The cork's texture would be ideal for modeling concrete.



2 After determining how much of the base the building would occupy, I set to building the walls from 5mm foam board. I sketched where I wanted openings for doors and a window and cut them out with a utility knife.

SCENE





Because the window and door sizes were custom, I scratchbuilt the window and door frames from Evergreen plastic clapboard siding and strips. The doors are 3D-printed from an online vendor.



The building I was constructing had a plaster façade. To begin modeling wear and damage, I scraped the foam board with a utility knife, focusing mainly on corners.



Wood putty dabbed and spread over the foam board with an old paintbrush was allowed to dry. Then I sanded the wall's surface with a coarse sanding stick. This created a believable plaster texture and had the added benefit of filling any gaps in my construction.



I fashioned stair risers from balsa wood and cut the treads from cork and applied the same wood-putty texture to them as I had to the front of the house.



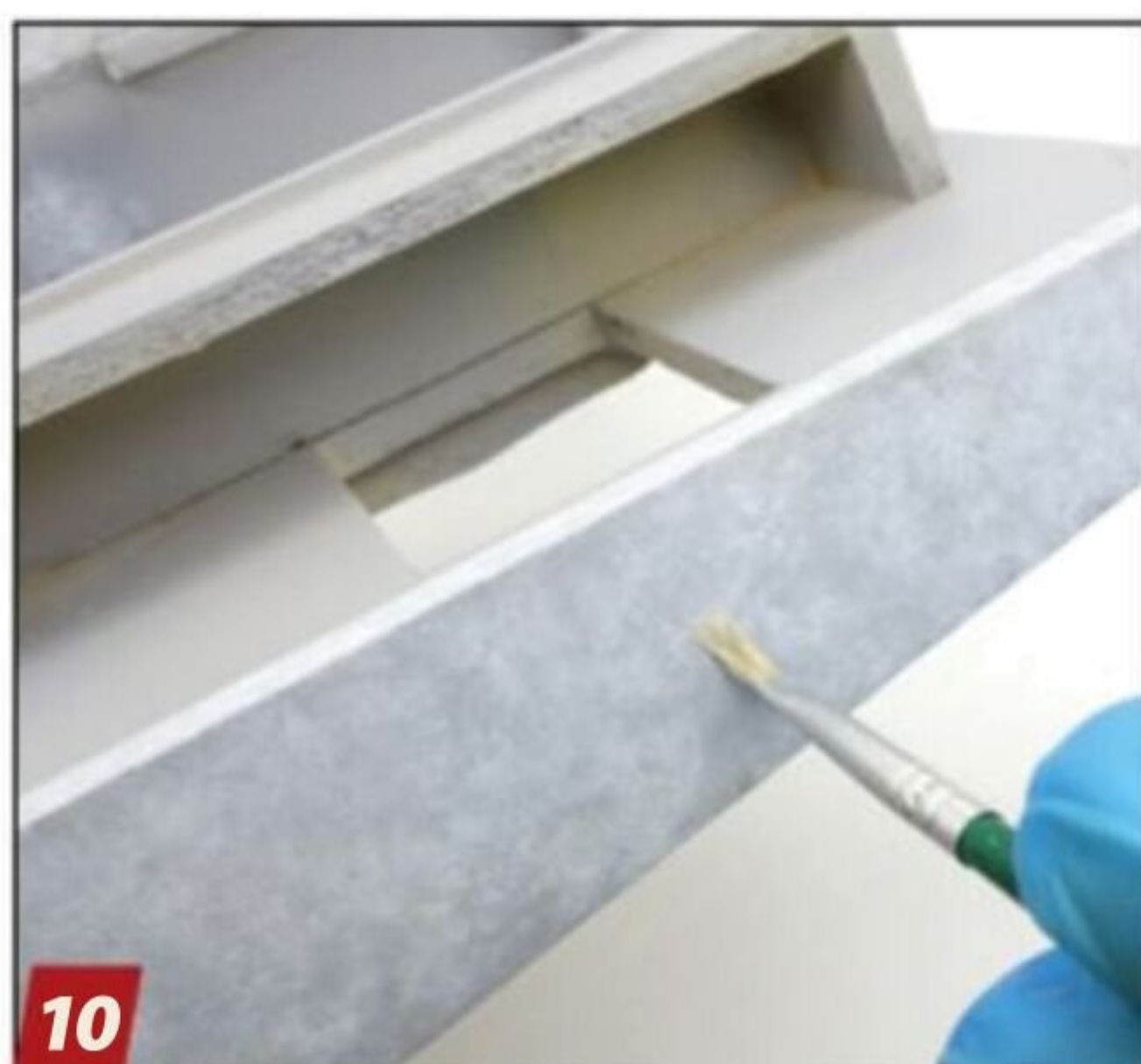
I cut bricks from balsa wood strip and glued them to the base edge to make a landscaping feature. I covered the bricks and the area in front of them with wood putty and mocked up the scene to make sure it all worked together.



I primed the building gray and the base and ground black directly from the spray can. Any gaps or imperfections were filled and sanded. Better to do it now than later in the process.



I made the floor-tile pattern in Photoshop (you could easily find a pattern online), printed them, and glued them to thin cardboard. After carefully scribing the joins, I cut a couple of tiles to imitate chipping and further textured the exposed areas beneath with wood putty.



However, more had to be done before gluing in the tiles. Bare concrete naturally has color variations. To replicate that, I mixed washes of Vallejo Model Color White (No. 70.951) in various consistencies and dabbed and brushed it on the roof.



After airbrushing two coats of AK Interactive Worn Effects Acrylic Fluid (No. AK088) over the gray, I airbrushed the top half of the exterior wall Real Colors British Sand Yellow (No. RC093), masked a horizontal line and sprayed the lower half Tamiya Flat White (No. XF-2).



12 Letting the acrylic paint dry to the touch, but not fully, I wet the surface with water and started chipping the paint with an old toothbrush. This exposed the gray primer beneath to create the appearance of old paint.



13 To fade the ochre color, I stippled the British Sand Yellow with titanium white artist oil paint. On the white half of the wall, the paint was discolored with yellow ochre oil paint and stippled in select areas. Both oil paints were used unthinned, directly from the tube.



14 After coating my work with satin clear, raw umber artists oils, both undiluted and as washes, provided a contrast to the fading. Think of it as accumulated dirt applied in layers on the walls, roof, and tiles where water would have accumulated and left a stain behind.



15 I airbrushed dark gray under the balcony to further enhance the effects of dirt from years of exposure — not only moisture but other environmental effects, like vehicle exhaust, maybe an outdoor grill, or years of smoking on the porch. Ask, "What's happened here?"



16 Thinned AK Interactive Streaking Grime (No. AK012) enamel wash flowed into the corners at the bottom of the wall adds that added bit of dirt and shadow and lends depth to the scene overall.



17 Places where I'd gouged and damaged the wall received touches of Vallejo White Gray (No. 70.993). This makes those spots stand out and look like chipped plaster.



18 The balcony rail, porch wall, and steps were to be capped with thin marble slabs. First, I cut strips of Evergreen styrene to size and sprayed them with gray primer. Then each strip was painted with a different ratio of Tamiya Flat White and Real Colors Cream White (No. RC022). I applied washes of raw umber and black artist oils and then made the swirls with a fine-tipped brush. This simple technique can provide quite realistic results.



19 I wanted an olive tree in front of the house. For the trunk, I glued together lengths of sprue with liquid cement. I was able to bend and shape the softened plastic while the glue was drying.



20 I made the tree branches from thin metal wire twisted together and shaped into a realistic pose. When I was happy with the appearance, the wire received a coat of Mr. Metal Primer-R.



21 AK Interactive Terrains Light Earth (No. AK8021) brushed on the branches made a believable bark texture.



22 After the bark texture had dried, I coated select areas with diluted white glue and sprinkled on 1.2mm and .6mm static grass to serve as finer branches and twigs. When they had dried, I sprayed the whole thing flat black from a can.



23 I added the branches to the top of the trunk I made earlier and stippled wood putty onto the trunk to simulate bark and fill any gap between it and the branches. I also added Noch Leaf Foliage (No. 7167) to the branches, attaching the leaves with white glue.



24 The trunk was painted mainly with acrylic washes of Vallejo Dark Grey (No. 70.994) and Sunny Skin Tone (No. 70.845) and dry-brushed with raw umber and burnt sienna artist oils. If overdone, I turned back to the acrylic washes to correct those areas.



25 For a spot of color, I used the same method I had for the tree branches to make a bush and trimmed it with flowers made from tiny chunks of a pink kitchen sponge. The flowers were painted Tamiya Flat Red (No. XF-7).



26 Dioramas need scene dressing to look correct. I 3D-printed many items and built others from styrene sheet and strips. Most items I primed gray; those primed black are supposed to be metal and will show rust.



27 I sprayed the wooden door, door frame, and shutters Real Colors Brown (No. RC052) and then faded it with a highly thinned coat of Sand Yellow (No. RC093).



28

After a couple of coats of chipping fluid, I airbrushed the parts yellow lightened a bit with flat white. Then I chipped the paint as I did earlier and picked out corners and crevices with a brown wash.



29

The metal items received a base coat of Tamiya Hull Red (No. XF-9) followed by Real Colors Luminous Orange (No. RC207) for tonal variation. Then, as with the parts in Step 28, I airbrushed chipping fluid followed by the top coat and then chipped it with a damp brush.



30

Using various leaf products from Noch, I composed a small garden around the base of the olive tree. It was a matter of mixing and matching elements until I was happy with the appearance.

FINAL THOUGHTS

THE LAST THING TO DO

WAS grind up dried leaves, sift them through a fine mesh, and scatter them over the scene. This touch adds just the extra elevation of realism. You can achieve these results in any scale, creating an atmospheric scene all on its own or a background building for a diorama. Be open to the scenes around you in everyday life — notice how leaves gather around buildings, the tilt of a porch, or the discoloration of house paint. These things are what you catalog and draw from to charge your scenes with interest. **FSM**



ASSEMBLE, PAINT, AND WEATHER

a 1/72 scale resin diorama kit



Enamels and pastel powders bring a classic movie scene to life

BY PHIL GORE

The groundbreaking, 1968 sci-fi movie *The Planet of the Apes* introduced the world to the sleek ANSA (American National Space Administration) spaceship that accidentally propelled American astronauts 2,000 years into Earth's future where apes dominate over humans. Called *Liberty 1* (later nicknamed *Icarus* by the movie's fan base), the ship crash-lands in a lake and sinks.

In *Beneath the Planet of the Apes*, the 1970 sequel, a second, identical rescue ship travels on the same trajectory into the future. This ship lands tail-first on the ground, but an explosion in

the drive section causes it to topple over, burning up the rear half of the vehicle. The shot showing the spaceship after the fire is one of the most iconic from any of the original *Planet of the Apes* movies.

Long on my list of scenes to model, I was pleased when resin manufacturer Skyhook Models (skyhookmodels.com) produced a resin 1/72 scale *Beneath the Planet of the Apes* Crash Site diorama kit. The kit includes only fourteen parts and measures a little over 14 inches long when assembled, so it would make a good introduction to modeling resin.



1 After cleaning and sanding, I test-fitted the kit's large parts. Most of the wreckage details were molded as part of the base, which were going to require a good deal of fine-brush painting and staged airbrushing.



2 I mixed Model Master Flat Military brown (No. 1701) and Testors Flat Black (No. 1168) enamels 7:3 for a dark chocolate color and airbrushed it over the entire base.



3 Then I dry-brushed the landscape with Testors Flat Light Tan (No.1170).



4 Lastly, Model Master Radome Tan (No. 1709) was dry-brushed on the base in select areas for the top highlights. Using these three colors gave the base a realistic and dramatic appearance.



5 I masked the area around the movie title and accented it with dry-brushed Testors Flat White (No. 1168).



6 Several burnt sections of the spaceship on the base were masked around and airbrushed flat black. Doing this made controlling the final color much easier and reduced the number of items that had to be hand painted.



I painted all the small, burnt items in the debris field flat black using a fine brush.



After powdering black and dark gray pastels with a bit of sandpaper, I applied the colors with a soft brush to vary the appearance of the blackened items in the debris field. It also gave the debris a realistic, charred appearance.



Black pastel powder was applied with a stiff brush around the entire rear section of the base to represent discolored sand and soil burned by the explosion and subsequent fire.



To give the lower section pieces the look of burnt metal, they were first painted with Alclad II Stainless Steel (No. ALC-115) then airbrushed with highly thinned Flat Black. Sharp edges were dry-brushed Stainless Steel.



After completing weathering on the base, I added the landing gear and engine nozzle.



For the spaceship (*Liberty 2*, I suppose, though it wasn't called that in the movie), I first airbrushed Model Master Primer (No. 2737) and followed with multiple coats of flat white. Many masking sessions led to flat black windows, an Alclad II Stainless Steel crew hatch, and Model Master Field Green (No. 1712) antiglare panels.



13

The kit included decals for the fuselage stripes, but I was already masking, so why not paint them instead? I found Testors Flat Cobalt Blue (No. 1106) and Flat Red (No. 1150) were good color matches.



15

I airbrushed the rear end flat black where the scorching would have been most intense. Next, I made a random, wavy line farther up the fuselage with cotton swabs and black pastel powder. More swabs and pastels filled in the white gaps and blend the scorching toward the rear.



14

With the nose painted Alclad II Pale Gold (No. ALC-108), the clean and pristine spaceship was ready for heavy weathering from atmospheric re-entry and that fire after landing.



16

Black pastel powder applied with cotton swabs showed burn marks on the gold nose, too. Lighter scorching on the white fuselage sections were made with brown pastel powders, mostly in a streaking pattern by repeatedly and lightly dragging a cotton swab front to rear. When this was done my dream diorama was a reality! **FSM**



Dora Wings Vultee Vengeance

Developed as a dive-bomber by Vultee, the Vengeance entered Royal Air Force service in October 1942. Deemed unsuitable for the European theater, the aircraft ended up in Burma performing close-support strikes.

Dora Wings released a Mk.II version of the Vengeance in 1/48 scale a couple of years ago and, comparing the instructions, it appears that the new 1/72 scale Vultee Vengeance Mk.I/IA is almost a direct, piece-for-piece, scaled-down copy of its larger sibling. With 259 parts, the detail is outstanding. Molded in gray, the parts feature finely recessed panel lines and some rivet detail. The kit includes four marking options and a die-cut sheet of masks for the extensive canopy.

If you don't have a magnifier and super-fine tweezers, get both before tackling this kit. I recommend a good razor saw, too.



The large cockpit occupies 19 steps in the instructions and a significant portion of the parts. Some part breakdowns seem unnecessarily complicated to me. For example, each seat builds from four pieces when one would have probably worked. Parts like the photo-etched metal (PE) levers and switches are so tiny they are difficult to handle. But they do look cool if you manage to get them in place.

Parts fit is generally excellent. However, finding proper locations can be challenging because locator pins or recesses are exceedingly small or shallow and don't offer a positive join. Proceed cautiously and the results will be worth the effort.

You have the option to display the bomb bay open. I intended to do so and built it including the door actuators and other fragile details. If I were to do it again, I would leave these parts off until the final assembly because I broke off most of them during the build. As a result, the bomb-bay doors are closed.

I only had to use a little filler in a couple of spots on the long fuselage join.

The wings feature detailed wheel wells and separate control surfaces. The rudder and elevators build from two pieces and the join crosses a panel requiring the join to be filled and sanded. The wings butt-join with the fuselage and fit quite well. The PE dive brakes can be posed deployed, but the brass is thin and soft, so I don't know how long they would hold up to handling.

The kit-supplied, pre-cut masks were a tad too big for the canopy panes and the material didn't adhere well to curved sur-

faces. So, I masked the big canopy with masking tape and painted the RAF camouflage with Testors enamels. The decals went on flawlessly over a layer of clear gloss.

The Dora Wings 1/72 scale Vultee Vengeance Mk.I/IA scales perfectly with the dimensions on Wikipedia. I spent more time building it than I would typically spend on a 1/72 scale kit, but it is probably the most detailed kit I've finished in this scale. Because of its complexity and fragility, it's best left to experienced modelers. Work slowly and carefully and the results are worth the effort!

— Mike Klessig



Kit No.: 72038 **Scale:** 1/72 **Mfr.:** Dora Wings, dorawings.com (Sample courtesy of mfr.) **Price:** \$67.99

Comments: Injection-molded plastic (gray, clear); 259 parts (80 photo-etched metal); decals; masks **Pros:** Extremely well detailed; good fits; crisp moldings **Cons:** Unnecessarily complicated; tiny and fragile parts



Italeri Macchi C.202

The all-new Italeri 1/32 scale Macchi MC.202 Folgore is loaded with extras and details. The kit's design is straightforward, and the parts include the slightly longer port wing built into the full-size fighter to counteract the propeller's torque. Some surface features, like the control surface ribs, are a bit exaggerated. The kit provides two sets of stabilizers and elevators, but the "early" version are not used. The instructions point out optional parts, so you'll need to decide on a scheme up front.

Italeri included a full R.A.1000 R.C.41-I Monzone, a licensed copy of the German DB601 V12 built in Italy by Alfa Romeo. The landing gear bay and cockpit brim with detail, and you'll find no shortage of photo-etched metal (PE) items, some of which provide extremely petite fasteners for the many access covers — think teeny soda can tabs. Two sizes of vinyl hose and thin copper wire detail round out the parts, while the instrument panel comes as a series of 3D decals. Speaking of decals, there are eight marking options, along with a huge sheet of decals depicting the so-called Italian "smoke ring" camouflage.

Decide early in the build if you don't want to display the engine, as this will save you work. The engine and the fully detailed firewall and wing spar assembly went together well, but the largest of the two vinyl tubes was stiff, so I left off most.

Italeri has you build the main landing gear and install it next. Try as I might, I could not work around this early mounting, which complicates masking for paint. I was surprised by the imprecision of the gear bay liner fit (Part 17b). Overall, the alignment aides employed by Italeri are a bit vague for some parts. Test-fitting will solve this prob-

lem. Interestingly, Italeri has you install the "gun shelf" (Part 4b) hanging in mid-air off the back of the firewall, when they have molded perfectly acceptable guides into the fuselage halves. I added the assembly after installing the fuselage and firewall.

After much airframe work, assembling the cockpit begins with the instrument panel. I was excited to see 3D decals employed for added detail. Unfortunately, they all curled and ultimately fell off forcing me to glue them in place. Apart from that, the cockpit went together well. The fit inside the fuselage is perfect. The wing-to-fuselage join is reasonable, leaving a gap to fill behind the wing root. The wings and tail surfaces have multiple PE fittings. Photo-etched parts also supply radiator and oil cooler detail. I left these off for painting.

The lower cowl molding is "soft" and, consequently, does not fit well. I had to trim the join between the cowl and fuselage to improve fit. All the cowl panels have ejector-pin marks that need to be filled.

Pay attention to the tail parts. The early version is on the main Sprue D and the latter is supposed to be on a small Sprue F, but that sprue has a molded "D" as well.

All of the gear doors were assembled and painted separately. Be careful because the second rib from the top of the main-gear door must be mounted as shown in the instructions or it will prevent the door from mounting to the gear leg. The separate exhaust stacks were problematic. I could not get them to slot in place without them dropping into the cowl, and I finally gave up, gluing them to each other with both resting on the slot in the fuselage.

Painting the 202 is simplified by the included smoke ring decals for my chosen scheme. I carefully followed the excellent

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- Dora Wings 1/48 scale Morane-Saulnier MS.406.C1
- Academy 1/72 scale Leclerc ▼



instructions provided by Italeri to apply the smoke rings over a gloss coat. Although they appear blue-grey on the sheet, applied over tan they turn the perfect shade of dark green. Well done, Italeri! The scheme I chose was for a Series XIII airframe, according to my references, not a Series IX. An easy swap of a decal from Version G solved the issue.

After painting and decaling, the final pieces were installed, and I made the antenna with EZ-Line instead of the included copper wire. I spent just under 44 hours on this kit, almost seven of which were placing decals. While it has some issues, the Italeri Folgore can be built into a sleek, stylish Italian thoroughbred.

— Chuck Davis



Kit No.: 2518 **Scale:** 1/32 **Mfr.:** Italeri, italeri.com (Sample courtesy of Model Rectifier Corp, modelrectifier.com)

Price: \$178.99 **Comments:** Injection-molded plastic (gray, clear); 362 parts (148 photo-etched metal, 3 vinyl); decals **Pros:** High level of detail; good markings choices; "smoke ring" decals included **Cons:** Photo-etched metal surface details; vinyl hoses are out of scale and difficult to work with

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By Tim Boyd

Monogram 1/24 scale Olds Aerotech

More detail and complex assembly in the race for the adult market

Previously, I've referenced the role of Fujimi's 1/24 scale Enthusiast Series kits from the late 1980s and the competitive response from other kit makers, including Revell Germany's Precision Series, in establishing the market for advanced, adult-oriented model car kits. Enter Monogram's High Performance Series.

The Monogram 1/24 scale Olds Aerotech kit remains a good example of High Performance Series offerings. Historically, the auto industry's most effective concept vehicles have always had a purpose beyond a mere exercise in styling. The Aerotech was intended to showcase and create awareness for Oldsmobile's new Quad Four dual-overhead cam, four-cylinder engine that was slated to soon enter production.

The Aerotech's streamlined body was attributed to GM designer Ed Welburn, who eventually became GM's most revered Design Vice President since Bill Mitchell.

The chassis was largely derived from a March Engineering design that won the 1985 Indy 500. The Aerotech was developed with both short and long tail body sections respectively paired with either a single or dual turbocharged, competition-tweaked Quad Four. The long tail version, driven by four-time Indy 500 winner A. J. Foyt, set a top-speed record of 267 mph at a test track in Texas.

Monogram's kit included both the body and powertrain parts to build either the short or long tail configurations. Far from a typical, somewhat simplified "2 in 1" kit, after the first 11 assembly steps, the remaining 16 (short tail) or 23 (long tail) steps were unique to each version, with each step incorporating several operations as was typical of Monogram kit instructions at the time.

Assembly started with mating the lower front body pan to rear body pans unique to the short and long tail versions. Further indicative of the specialized nature of each

MONOGRAM OLDS AEROTECH

Kit No.: 2901

First Introduced: 1989; reissued 1991

Current Value: \$35

version, the engine block sides, induction systems and turbocharger(s), exhaust plumbing, and engine accessories were specific to each body configuration.

The kit exhibited remnants of Monogram's simplified, mid-century kit design philosophy. The basic engine block/transaxle would have been more realistic if molded separately, but the additional parts largely disguised this. Other kit parts represented multiple components of the real car, largely without compromising scale authenticity if appropriately detail painted.

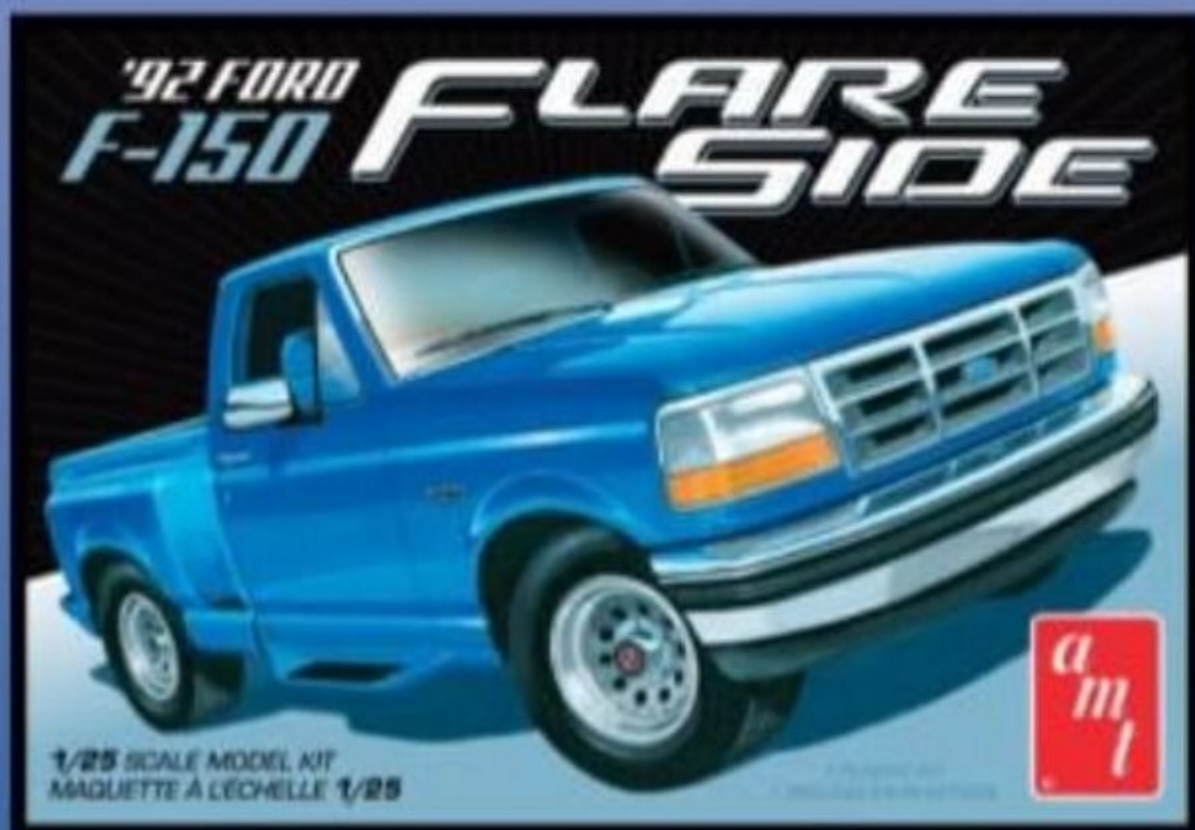
The kit included solid vinyl tires with Goodyear Eagle lettering, and the rears appeared ever so slightly wider than the fronts. Moon discs resided inside the tires. Red spark-plug wires and black hoses were also included. A diminutive decal sheet provided red pinstriping (fitted for both body designs) and Aerotech, Quad 4, and Oldsmobile markings. All this was contained inside a distinctive, long, rectangular box with a blue grid background and retro-futuristic digital fonts.

Reissued at least once more with different box art, the kit and its 1/1 subject are largely forgotten today, making it yet another fascinating artifact from the six-decade history of the modern model car kit hobby. **FSM**





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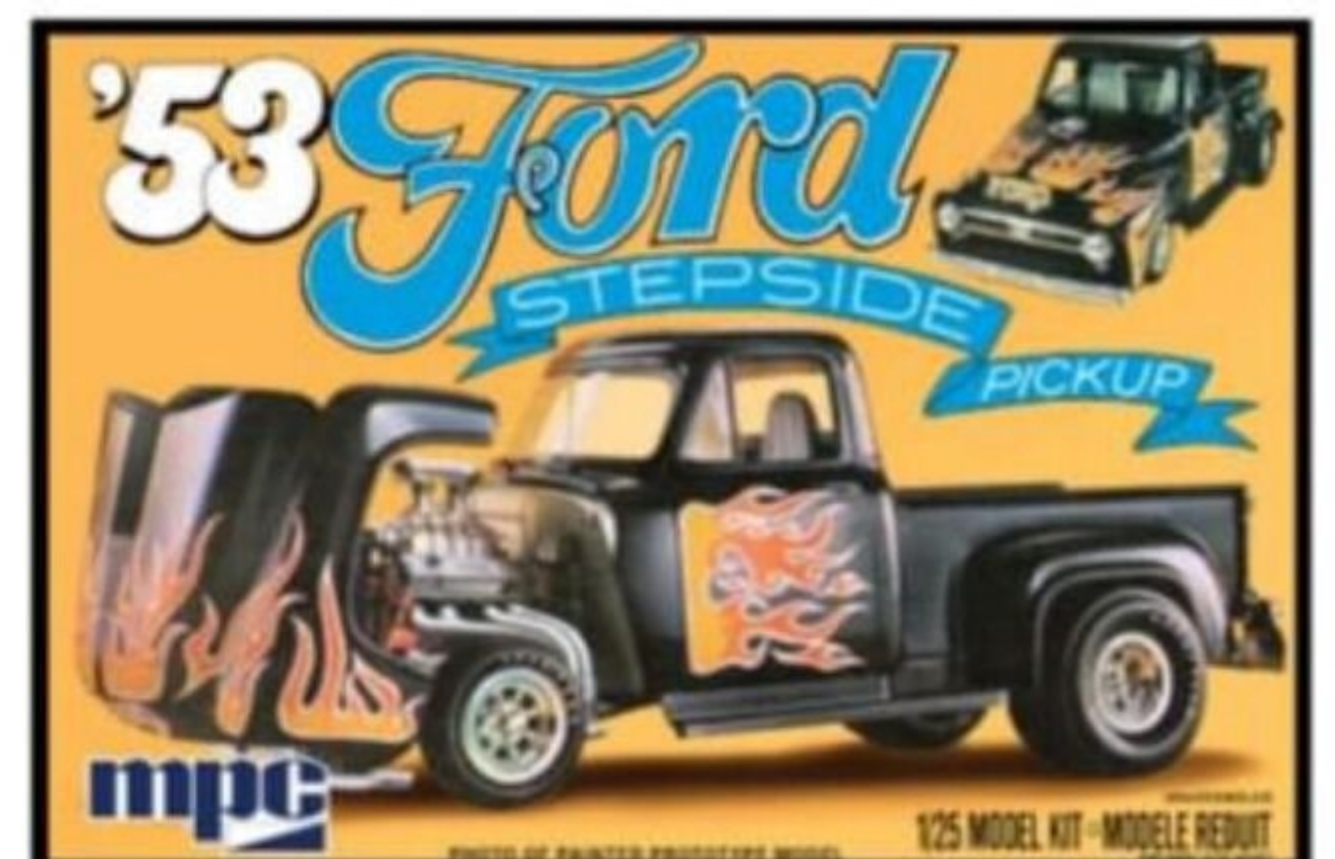
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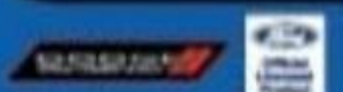
1960 CHEVY APACHE PICKUP TRUCK
#AMT1444M (1:25 SCALE)



1971 DODGE CHARGER
#AMT1442M (1:25 SCALE)



'53 FORD STEPSIDE PICKUP
#MPC1007W (1:25 SCALE)



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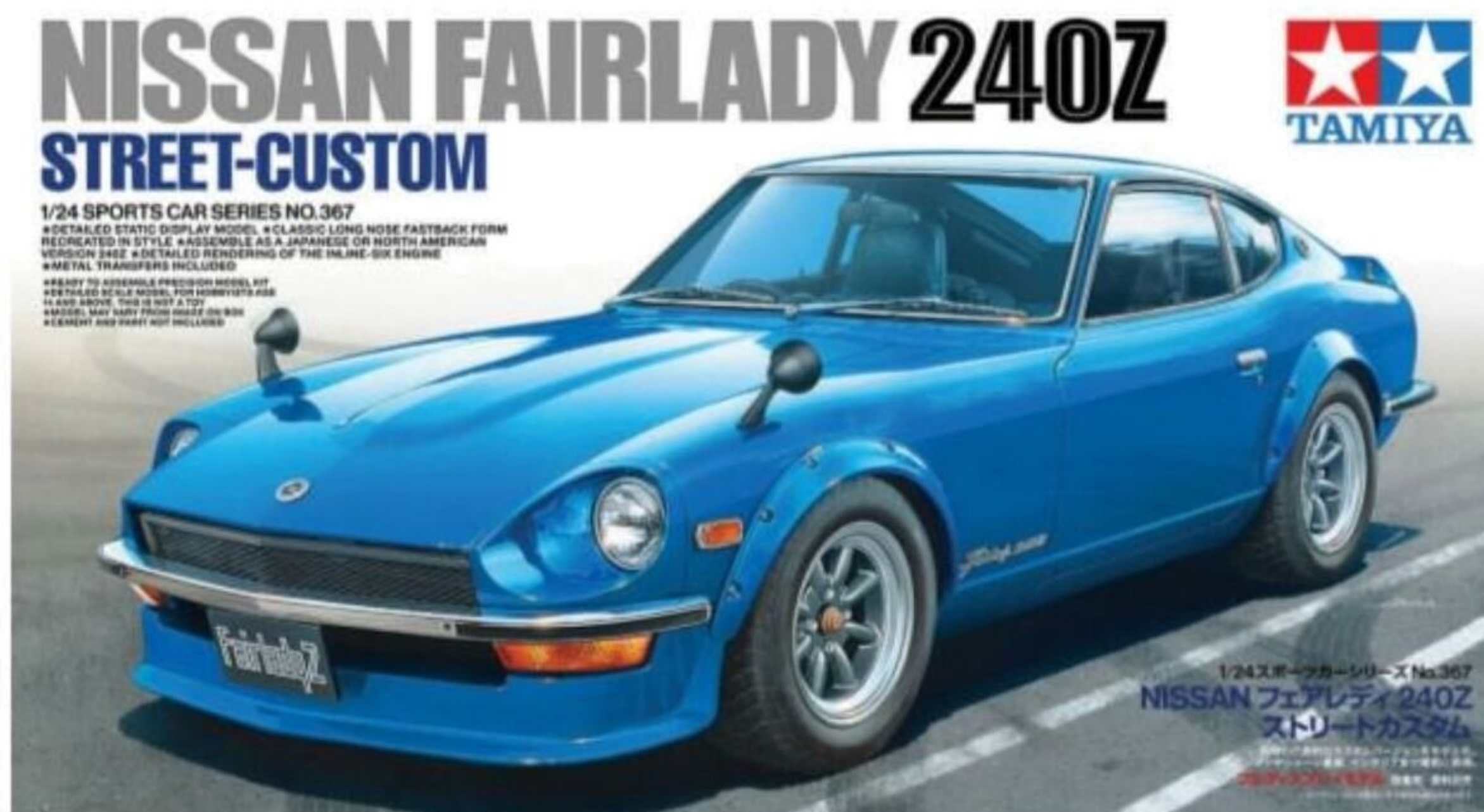
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About the Model

- The 240Z is recreated with popular customizations from its heyday.
- Its 2,393cc inline-6 SOHC engine and triple carburetors are rendered realistically and can be viewed under the opening hood.
- The car is depicted with lowered suspension.
- New decals and metal transfers are included.
- RS Watanabe 8-spoke wheels are a 2-part design for an easier painting process.
- Choose between Japanese version (right-hand drive) and North American Datsun version (left-hand drive).

