

Stratocruiser Kit Review

Mark Krumrey

The Academy 1/72nd Stratocruiser has been out for a little over a year. A long awaited model, it was received with much enthusiasm in modeldom, and followed in quick succession by the military variants of the 377, the C-97, KC-97, and recently the KC-97L, having the jet assist engines on the outboard portion of the wings. These were the natural follow on variants of Academy's B-29, KB-29, and B-50 series. This review will focus on the Stratocruiser. Although I do plan on building the entire series.

I first became fascinated with the Stratocruiser as a lad of about seven, when my dad, who was a mechanic for Northwest Airlines, took me with him to get his check at the old Hangar on 35th avenue. There in the hangar was a Stratocruiser undergoing maintenance. We took a tour of the Stratocruiser. I remember going up the boarding stairs, touring the cabin, cockpit, and then going down the spiral staircase to the "Fujiyama Room" (as NWA called the lower lounge) Even as a lad, I was impressed by how small it was. The lounge exit door was in the down

door. I had to have a model of this airplane. Where would I get on position, and we left the aircraft by that e ! My mom and I were at Woolworths in Downtown Minneapolis and there was a metal Pan American Stratocruiser, so she bought it for me, we went home and put it together. It had the main fuselage, a wing assembly, and a crude tail wheel assembly, as it was tail heavy and there was no nose weight. We put the Pan American decals on and there it was roughly in 1/72nd scale. Later my grandma got me lithographed tin, made in Japan, Northwest Stratocruiser, also about 1/72nd scale, with friction motor maingear, that when you pushed it on the floor, the props turned and the beacon lights lit and rotated. I was not to have these proud models long as my younger brother got a hold of them, and the last time I saw the Northwest strat, it was flat in the middle of 42nd street and 2nd avenue in South Minneapolis.

The model is released as the Pan American Version. This version has the round cabin windows and lower deck windows. There are currently available from Aviation Graphics a B.O.A.C. final scheme, and a Northwest. The Northwest variant had the rectangular cabin and lower lounge windows .

I opted to build this S.O.B., to get a feel for the model. The fit of the parts is fairly good. Having built all of the B-29 series I was familiar with the pieces, as they give you the gun turrets, and some other parts for the B-29. I assembled the cockpit per the kit directions. Decals are provided for the instrument faces, and the flight engineer panel. There is a lot of green house on this and you can clearly see the cockpit interior. There is a lot of room for detailing, that would definitely be noticed. Some pilot figures would really be neat. One thing that puzzles me are the engine faces. There is a visticious cylinder. If they had provided the modeller with the engine faces included with the B-29, it would have looked a lot better. I used the kit supplied engine faces. The parts have nice engraved panel lines. One of the downsides to the airliner variant is all of the windows have to be placed individually. There are little dots to indicate which end is up. I debated whether to cement them in place, glue the fuselage together, sand, mask the windows and paint, or paint, put the windows in, and then glue the fuselage halves together. I opted for the later, and the results were satisfactory. I painted the fuselage halves first, masking different areas, and painting with different shades of Natural metal finishes. I used Testors Model Master Dark Anodonic Grey buffing, and Floquil brite and old silver. I used SNJ powder to buff each application. I then put weight in the nose, and glued the fuselage halves together. The cockpit glazing is a separate piece, and here is where it gets tricky. The fit isn't the greatest, and careful filling and sanding is required to make it look decent. I cemented it in place using M.E.K., (Continued on next page)

Supplements to this newsletter can be found at: <http://www.aerohistorian.com/newsletter>
Information about the Air Guard Museum can be found at: <http://www.mnangmuseum.org/>
Information about the American Wings Museum can be found at: <http://www.americanwings.org/>

TCAH This Month

August 11—TCAH Meeting. French stuff. We do have to include them occasionally.

August 25-26—MN Air Guard Museum—Open Cockpit Weekend



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TCAH Stuff

September 8- **TCAH Meeting**. Record breaking aircraft, height, speed, distance, payload, etc.

September 8—Wheels and Wings (tentative), Zenith Book Sale!!

September 15—Nordicon III at the Thunderbird Hotel

October 13—**TCAH Meeting**. WWI Aircraft. Bring your Stringbags.

November 10—**TCAH Meeting**. Club Auction. No theme. Club Elections, recounts, re-recounts.

December 8—**TCAH Meeting**. Early Jets. Heinkle, Whittle, Bell, Yak, prototypes or production.

Do you have something to include on the club calendar? Please let us know at newsletter@aerohistorian.com!



From the President

By Steve Erickson

Well July was a busy month, lots of news and happens". By now everyone should have heard that we didn't get the nod for the IPMS 2003 Nationals. I hope the club appreciates the work Ken Sallman did in preparing a very professional bid. Ken said he will write a in ept review of the proceedings for the newsletter. Oklahoma City won the day. I want to thank and commend all the TCAH members at the IPMS selection meeting for being there to promote our club and support Ken.

My special thanks to Mark Copland for coming thru with some great looking club shirts. I received numerous compliments on our shirts . Again, My compliments to Ken and Mark for all your work. In terms of awards, between TCAH, the Rochester boys and some former members Minnesota took 26 awards by my count. TCAH took 18. More than any other state or club. More on the subject of shirts .. we ordered 44. We have 8 left, all XL . They are \$25.00 each. They have been real popular. If you signed up and I missed you, my appologies. If we sell out and have a demand for more we may reorder. Nordic con is coming up and we may want to have a business meeting before our Sept. meeting. Thanks To Johannes Allert for having the summer "Bannazi" bash. There were about 15 .. (Con't. next page..)

(Stratocruiser Review Cont.)

and then used CA glue and accelerator to fill, sanding immediately. It turned out fairly well. I could have spent a little more time on it, but I was getting anxious and moved on to the next assembly. I masked the window area, and then sanded the fuselage seams. After sanding and filling, I finished painting and buffing the fuselage. I was pleased with the outcome. I also left the nose gear off for assembly later. After I had the painting done, and buffed the paint to blend in with the rest, I applied Future with a Qtip. I should have applied it around the circumference of the fuselage, vice the length. I was not as pleased with the result as if I had done it the other way. I also should have changed the Qtip more frequently as the Qtip will spread the buffing powder. This will give it a somewhat weathered look, if going around the circumference. For the rest of the model assembly was straight forward, the wings, tail, stabilizers, raffles requiring a little sanding, and good to go. I left the wings off and painted them separately, and after applying the decals to the fuselage and the wings, I used CA glue and attached the wings to the fuselage. The fit is near perfect, and this makes it so much easier to handle the model, as it is a big one.

There are inaccuracies in the kit. The engines as I had mentioned. The exhaust, and the shape of the cowls, the nose gear and the B-29 wheels. Prominent on all Stratocruisers was a horse shoe looking steering dampener. I scratch built one bending some sprue, and shaping it, adding some fine plastic rod, and then fine copper wire. Also the props are Curtiss Electric, only applicable for that particular PAN AM Airplane. Cobra company makes a nice resin set of cowlings, exhaust pipes, proper steering dampener, wheels, and white metal Hamilton Standard Props which were used on the majority of the Strats (Con't. next page..)

(Stratocruiser Review Cont.)

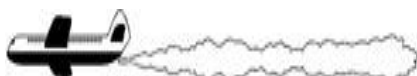
I bought the Cobra set, and will use it on my next model.

Two sets of decals are provided: the Boeing demonstrator scheme, and the Pan American delivery "Blue Ribbon" Scheme. The Boeing demonstrator was sold to Pan American and became the Clipper Nightingale. The decals go on nice, but are a little thick, and don't quite blend in, even after using Champ Decal solvent. All in all this is a very good kit, and nice representation of the Stratocruiser. For those who have been waiting a lifetime for a decent Stratocruiser model, this is it. It looks good S.O.B., but for the discriminating airline modeller, for \$24.95, the Cobra kit will make it a real contest winner.



President's Column (Con't.)

Great food, but next time pick a cooler day I couldn't tell if I was barbequeing burgers or myself. Thanks again to Ken for all the work. To those of you who made Chicago, thanks for behaving yourselves, you made me proud to be Pres. Speaking of which a lot of people knew who I was and that I was the Pres. How's that for a scary thought to close on! See ya Saturday!



"The Dates"

- 8-12-01 NIMO 8
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- 9-15-01 IPMS/TCAH
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Steve Hustad 952-949-2119
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- 10-28-2001 8th Annual Husker
IPMS/NAIM
Millard Social Hall
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Omaha
naim@qwest.net
- 10-20-01 IPMS/Glue Crew
Wausau Guard Armory
contact: Joe Drew
jdrew@powercom.net
715-842-0173
- 11-10-01 IPMS/Butch O'Hare
19th Annual Contest
Lakeview Junior High
Darien, IL
John Wendt :
jwendt001@hotmail.com
Leo Buche: 773-286-4389
- 2-16-02 IPMS/Zumbro Valley
"Rochester Contest 02
Dept of Public Safety
Rochester, MN
Contact: Barry Brown
507-281-3843
castawyaales@altavista.com
- 3-2-02 IPMS/Ft. Crook
American Legion Hall
Millard, NE
Contact: mcavel@tconl.com
- 3-23-02 IPMS Great Plains
KC CON 2002
Holiday Inn Express
Overland Park, KS
Ed Bjes Bjes@umkc.edu
- 4-13-02 IPMS/Plastic Surgeons
Contact: Greg Metge
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West Des Moines, IA
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- 5-3 thru 5-4 - 02 IPMS R5CON
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DePaul Hospital
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Mike George
Ontrak33@aol.com

Achtung Luftwaffe SIG!

Those interested in possibly forming German Sig group please give name at the August meeting to Axel Kornfurher. We will meet at Jeff Fries house for meeting and viewing of tapes and discussion of sig group as soon as best date has been decided on..

Upcoming Aviation Art Show

TCAH member Bob Arko will have a number of original acrylic paintings in a local art show during August. Bob paints aviation subjects, and paintings of planes from World War I, the Golden Age, and World War II will be on display. Paintings by six other landscape artists will also be on display, covering a wide range of subjects. So if your significant other's tastes don't run to aviation (how could that be?), there will be plenty of other art to occupy them while you ogle airplanes.

Join Bob for an Opening Reception on Sunday, August 5, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at Robbin Gallery, 4915 42nd Avenue N., Robbinsdale, MN (3 blocks east of Highway 100 on County Road 9/42nd Avenue). Gallery hours are 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Bob will be in the gallery on August 14, 21 and 29 (Tuesdays) from 7:00 to 9:00. The show runs from August 5 to August 31.

For sale from Ken Hornby: Bound volumes of "Aircraft in Profile". I still have available volumes 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 8. All were published by Doubleday & Co. c.1970. These books were selling at the IPMS Nationals for \$55-75 each. I'm selling them for \$40 each. All are complete and in good (albeit well-used) condition with dust jackets. I need the money to finish my hobby room! What do you say guys? Any interested parties can reach me at home evenings at 651-552-0888, through e-mail at KHornby@IKON.com <mailto:KHornby@IKON.com> or you can tell me how cheap I am to my face at the next meeting.

HEY, DON'T SQUEEZE THE CHARMIN!

Tom Norrbohm

In Hajo Herrmann's autobiography 'Eagle's Wings', Kommandeur and JU-88 pilot Hajo Herrmann describes a defensive technique used by his crews to ward off enemy fighters that approached their plane from astern. Each plane carried several rolls of toilet paper, and when an enemy fighter got on their tail, a roll or two of toilet paper was thrown out. This of course would catch in the slipstream, unfurl and fly back towards the unsuspecting fighter pilot. Seeing this the enemy pilot always violently banked his plane away, not knowing what the hell was coming at him.

Apparently this trick never failed. Just another way to keep your butt clean!

J-News
By Dave Pluth

Hello and welcome to the inaugural J-news column! This column will be dedicated to what's new in the world of all things Japanese.

Monogram: Japanese Aircraft Interiors 1940-1945 by Robert Mikesh. By now most folks know Bob Mikesh as the Father of Japanese aviation research. If you've picked up a book on Japanese Aircraft, you've probably read one of his books. This volume (\$53 from Roll Models) is the latest in his Long line. Back in the 70's Mikesh worked on a Cockpits volume for the Monogram Close-up series. This book is a complete re-write of the original series, including a copious number of new photos from the aircraft at the Garber storage facility of the NASM. This is an excellent book and the only disappointing factor is the large number of typos and grammatical errors, which we all know are not uncommon in Monogram volumes. (next column)

J-News con't.

1/48th Hasegawa A6M5c Zero. This kit is the latest in the Hasegawa Zero series. Basically this kit is a rework of Hasegawa's A6M5 with one additional part tree. There is a new wing that had the outer gun of the 5c as well as some additional wing detail. There is also a new rear bulkhead that has an armor plate on it and a couple other little things. Decals are for the 303rd fighter squadron and the 302nd Naval air group. This is A very nice kit and I highly recommend it if you just want to build Something Japanese as a change of pace.

1/72nd Hasegawa Ki-48-II Lily. This "new" kit from Hasegawa is basically a rip-off. This is exactly the same as the Ki-48-I kit with instructions that tell you to turn the cowlings over and redrill a couple of holes. The only upside to this kit is you get a new decal sheet with some -II decal options.

Craftworks 1/32nd scale A5M4 Claude. I got a chance to see this kit at Nats. It is an excellent kit, but at \$125 is really pricey. The kit itself is beautifully molded and has a mix of white metal, some photoetch and some huge chunks of resin. The only obvious problem with the kit was the floor of the cockpit. Everything was basically solid and will take some routing out to get to look right. There is also a fair amount of pitting, but that is to be expected with a piece this large. The kit is now shipping and can be ordered from Craftworks directly.

1/32nd Tamiya A6M5 Zero. In a word this kit is "awesome". This kit is probably the single best plastic model ever produced and its detail Level even surpasses anything Accurate Miniatures ever thought of. From rumors and appearances, every panel that opened on the real Zero will open on This kit and will have full detail under it. (con't. next column..)

J-News con't

The kits motorized option was dropped due to some maintenance concerns. The kit will retail in the US for \$99. Hobbylink Japan will have them for about \$68 including shipping (depending on the exchange rate of the day) and I think Roll Models will have them for around \$74.

That's all for this month. If you have a question or a comment that you would like included, drop me a line at dave@j-aircraft.com.

Websites of The Month Terry Love

www.flyarmyair.com
This is a great site for Army Aviation with lots of photographs and history by units in Vietnam. Well worth a visit.

www.ipmsusa.org
This site is the home for our IPMS national organization. It has lots of photos of the recent convention in Chicago. It is a good site that you ought to visit occasionally, even if you are not a modeler.

www.rollmodels.com
This is the home page of our very own Roll Models. It flows very easily, and you can navigate through it very easily also. This is not an plug for Roll Models, but it is praise and support for a club member, and worthy of our support.

www.boeing.com
This is the home page for the Boeing Company. It is very large and it has lots of areas to browse in.

Free Russian SIGnals

George Mellinger

Last month there was a small problem. The opening paragraph got crushed as if it were the Russian economy. The opening sentence should have said that Stepanenko was one of the USSR's leading fighter aces with an official total of 33 individual and 8 shared victories. But privately, he claimed 70 individual and 13 shared victories, including kills not recognized by the authorities.

This month we finish the Aeromaster decal sheet by considering Boris Aleksandrovich Loginov, whose last fighter was inscribed "Vakhtangovets". He was not one of those notable aces, whose complete life story is recorded. He completed flight school in 1942, probably getting only a couple dozen hours in the air. However, instead of being hustled to the front the moment he mastered the art of circling the field, as so often happened earlier in 1942 and in 1941, he seems to have been sent to a replacement regiment where he could gain some acquaintance with a fighter. Some time during the course of 1943 he was finally sent to a combat unit, in this case the 29 Guard IAP, where he was assigned to the 2nd squadron. This regiment flew the entire war in the Leningrad area, beginning as the 154 IAP, equipped with the I-153, I-16 and MiG-3. In 1942 it became one of the first regiments to fly the Tomahawk and Kittyhawk, and was one of the most successful units operating that type. However, by the time Loginov arrived, they had re-equipped with the Yak-7 and Yak-9. Loginov first flew a Yak-9 "White 42", distinguished only by a yellow rudder. It is unclear when he flew his first sortie, but he scored his first victory only in the fall of 1943.

(Con't. Next column)

Russian SIG (con't.)

All his remaining victories were scored between March and July of 1944 flying over southern Finland. From June he flew the Yak-9D, White 94, again with a yellow rudder, and a yellow spinner. During these few Months Loginov scored a total of 12 individual and 6 shared victories, though four of his victories he gave away to his wingman. These included 6 FW-190, 1 BF-109, 4 Ju-87, and 1 Ju-88. His last victory, on July 16, 1944 was the FW-190 of Oblt. Paul Rudolf Derterra, commander of 11 St. IV./JG54. In early 1945 he received one of four Yak-9Us presented to the regiment by the performers of Leningrad's Vakhtangov Theater. The Vakhtangov was (and is) the city's premier ballet troupe, a close second in prestige only to Moscow's Bolshoi Ballet. The inscription "Vakhtangovets" is a Russian form meaning an adherent, member, or follower of Vakhtangov, as in "Stalinets" or "Leninets". However, Loginov never actually fought in this attractive aircraft. By 1945 Finland had left the war, and there was no real opportunity to see what this powerful upgrade of the Yak could do. By the end of the war Loginov completed 172 sorties, including 9 ground attack and 17 reconnaissance missions, and fought 32 air combats.

Certainly, if you were looking for materials about Russian aviators, you would not automatically think of checking the Japanese Aircraft Homepage. And so you'd be missing out. For several months now, I have been translating a series of magazine articles about the Russian volunteer pilots who flew with the Chinese Air Force between 1937 and 1940. Since this relates directly to the Japanese war, Dave Pluth has been posting my translations on his site. To my surprise, these articles have given not only information about the Japanese, (Con't. next column)

Russian SIG (con't.)

and the Russians, but also much previously unknown information about the Chinese air force, gathered by Anatolii Demin, an outstanding Russian historian, who seems to have accessed the aviation archives of both Chinese governments, as well as Japanese and Russian sources. I'm really proud to be making Mr. Demin's significant work available to the non-Russian world. I have finished five of the six articles in his series, and will finish the last one, plus a separate article he wrote about the Chinese Air Force 1941-1945 during the coming months. Go to Dave's web site at <http://www.j-aircraft.com/> to find them. later this month I will be in Russia - celebrating Air Forces Day (Yes, an official holiday!), and attending the Moscow Air Show. So next month there will be a special surprise, prepared in advance for this column.



Johannes Allert's Brewster Buffalo in Finnish Markings

There were no reports submitted by the Treasurer or Secretary this month..

My New Found Hobby by Gary Chambers

COLOR & VARIETY, my photography has been severely short of both lately. Since the military camouflage started drifting towards the "Kodak neutral gray" scheme, I could have switched to a monochrome film. The standard flightline now is limited to F-14, F-15, F-16, and F-18. Essentially, one tailor two. Gone are the days of the century series fighters, F-4 Phantom II's, and B-57 cartridge starts.

My acquired interest in airline photography gives investors reason to buy stock in Kodak and Fuji Film. I'm not a stranger to civil aircraft photography since two of my favorite planes are the DC-3 and Beechcraft Model 18. I just never followed airliners much until this past August when I had a 25-day trip to Germany with the Air National Guard. There were a few hours to kill waiting for the shuttle from Frankfurt-Main airport to Ramstein Air Base. The *beswcherstrasse* seemed to be the best place to pass the time. Entry to the visitors deck was 5 DM or about \$3.00 and you could stay till dark.

There were over 40 other aviation enthusiasts present with territory staked out and telescopes and reference material at hand. I pulled out my camera to shoot some shots from elevated vantagepoint. I felt like I had committed my first *faux pas* of the journey. I could translate most of the comments directed my way when I started shooting a poorly lighted subject taxiing by. A working rapport was soon established and I was able to get registration numbers for some of the airliners I couldn't discern on my own. I ended up spending five days on the observation deck. I returned on three of my off days and got to the airport early to spend a few hours shooting on the way back to the U. S.

(Continued next column)

Frankfurt-Main is a great place to enjoy aviation. The visitor area is two outdoor levels and very busy with aviation enthusiasts and people bidding passengers bon voyage. Unfortunately, the terminal is on the north side of east-west runways and most photo angles are backlit. A sunny shot can sometimes be achieved when the airliner turns onto a taxiway connector or down an alley between concourses to the gate, providing you have sun. In this vein, the oftencloudy weather of central Europe diffuses the light enough to get a good exposure without harsh shadows. Rail, bus, and autobahn serve the airport.

Frankfurt-Main is often called the crossroads of Europe. Lufthansa is the predominant user and uses Frankfurt for a major domestic and international hub. The ramp is packed with jumbo jets from all continents. The Boeing 747 was the predominant wide body jet. Airbus A320s and Boeing 737s were the main short haul airliners. I only saw two Boeing 727's the whole time I was there. An added treat was to see the Lufthansa Historical Flight JU52 fly amongst the jets on two occasions. My prime interest was airliners from Eastern Europe and Russia. These were easy to spot from a distance due to their propensity to smoke.

Sorting and classifying my subjects was done primarily via a CD-ROM I got two years ago from JP Airline Guide for DC-3 research. Newer airliners were researched in the Internet through the database at www.landings.com Another helpful web site I've found is <http://surf.to/spotter>. This is dedicated to aviation spotters with a good selection of links. Airliners magazine had a timely article, *Mourning Me Cheat Line*, last summer. I was able to see most of the examples in the article from Frankfurt's viewing area.

(Continued next column..)

I catalog my photo trips using Microsoft Excel. Each trip uses a generic eight-column spreadsheet to record registration, type, construction number, operator, remarks, location, ICAO airport identifier, and photographer. The last four columns are the same as my military subjects so there is compatibility between sheets. I then cut and paste from Excel into a master database record in Microsoft Access. I will be glad to email my airliner record from Frankfurt to anyone interested. Send requests to garywchamb@aol.com.

I had some problems shooting airliners. Framing a Boeing 747 or MD-11 may make the registration to small to read. Parts of airliners may be blurred by exhaust of others taxiing. Long telephoto shots are hampered by heat rising from around the concrete apron. Frankfurt-Main has a friendly policy towards visitors though a thorough security screening is done of person and bags before access the viewing area is granted. Civilian airline shots may be more *difficult to* acquire than military subjects are with security measures in place at some airports.

Sage Flying Advice

"Keep the aeroplane in such an attitude that the air pressure is directly in the pilot's face."

- Horatio C. Barber, 1916

"When a flight is proceeding incredibly well, something was forgotten"

-Robert Livingston

"The only time an aircraft has too much fuel on board is when it is on fire."

- Sir Charles Kingsford Smith, sometime before his death in the 1920's



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The group is open to aviation enthusiasts from teenagers on up who are interested in aviation modeling, photography, collecting, art and writing. For more information contact Steve Erickson at (763) 521-9948

The Twin Cities Aero Historians (TCAH) meet the second Saturday of every month at 1:30pm.

Meetings are held at the Minnesota Air National Guard Museum, a half mile south of Hwys. 55 and 62 on Minnehaha Avenue. Phone (612) 713-2523.

Mail Newsletter material and address changes to the editor.

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