



Tamiya 1/48 F4U-1D

By Mark L. Rossmann

Block Island Corsair by Mark L. Rossmann

USS Block Island

Departing San Diego, California in May 1943, *Block Island* steamed to Norfolk, Virginia, to join the Atlantic Fleet, where she operated as part of a hunter-killer group. During her four anti-submarine cruises, *Block Island's* planes sank two submarines: *U-220* on 28 October 1943 and *U-1059* on 19 March 1944. She shared credit with destroyer *Corry* and destroyer escort *Bronstein* for the sinking of *U-801* on

17 March 1944 and with *Buckley* for *U-66* sunk on 6 May 1944.

Block Island was torpedoed off the Canary Islands at 20:13 on May 29, 1944. *U-549* had slipped undetected through her screen. The submarine put three torpedoes into the carrier before being sunk herself. The carrier lost 6 men in the attack; the remaining 951 were picked up by the escort screen.

The new *USS Block Island* (CVE-106) was a *Commencement Bay* class escort carrier of the United States Navy. She was

the second ship to carry her name, done in honor of the first one.

Being launched 12 days after the original was sunk, June 10, 1944 as *Sunset Bay* by Todd-Pacific Shipyards, Inc. Tacoma, Washington; she was sponsored by Mrs. E. J. (Grace) Hallenbeck (mother of Major Pappy Boyington, then a Prisoner of War of the Japanese). She was commissioned as *Block Island* on 30 December 1944, with Captain F. M. Hughes in command.

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TCAH Officers

President, John R. Ross

Vice-President, Robert Maderich II

Secretary, Marty Agather

Treasurer, Dennis Strand

Historian, Tom Norrbohm

Newsletter Info

Article Submission Deadline: 22nd of each month

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Dennis Strand

TCAH This Month

The monthly meeting will be held Saturday February 13, at Fleming Field, South St. Paul, beginning at 1:00 pm. Vendor baiting will begin about 12:00, so come early.



From the Prez

by John R. Ross

It's February, and while it's the shortest month of the year, it's full of activity for us. First let me thank everyone for their participation in the annual club contest. We had 62 entries and a lot of great work. It's always great to see the work everyone's been doing throughout the year and share some of the tips and tricks they used to accomplish their results. I need to apologize for the mix up on the balloting and to let you know that this won't happen next year. Bernie has promised a smoother contest for next year!

Also during last month's meeting we took nominations for club awards that we will be voting on during the February meeting. I believe that you will find the nominee's listed in the Secretary's notes of the newsletter so take a few moments to see if the person you think best deserves an award is listed and if not we will have time before the votes to add them to the nominees. One thing we may need to decide before the voting is whether we have a Historian of the Year and separate Newsletter Article of the year or combine them as we've done in the past. There seems to be a lot of overlap for the nominees and their work.

March brings our annual club auction which is usually our largest fund raiser of the year. Please take a few moments to go through your SSR (Strategic Styrene Reserve) or as some call it, the closet of doom, and see what gems you would like to donate to the club. We had a huge auction last year and I can only hope that we can build on that momentum for this year.

February 6th is the Hope it Don't Snow show held annually by our fellow IPMS chapter in Rochester. Please put this on your calendar and spend some time going to the show and representing our club and support them with their event. They are a great support of our NordicCon event and they always have a great show. The tables are usually heaping with great work, lots of vendors and fellow modelers to talk with.

Finally, I'm looking for a few people to help step up. This year we're trying to hold a theme of inspiration, what inspires or motivates you. I shared some of mine in January and Bob is doing his this month. Take a few moments and write a short article to share what motivates or inspires you with the rest of the club. I am hoping to have at least one article per month. Please let me know if you're interested and willing. Also we are looking to fill our presentations for the year, so please let Bob or I know if you'd like to present something, or have an idea for a presentation. We have a lot of experience out in those chairs and I know I enjoy learning something every month.

Have a great month and see you at the club meeting!



Airline Chatter

by Terry Love

BOC - Bank of China, a leasing company - via the Chinese Communist Government, ordered 30 Airbus A320s valued at \$3 Billion. They will be built in China at the new Airbus factory.

Air China, based on Taiwan, ordered six Boeing 777-300ERs valued at \$2 Billion.

United Air Lines' new CEO, Oscar Munoz, just had a heart transplant.

Boeing delivered 742 airliners in 2015 valued at \$113 Billion. Value of backlog order is an amazing \$1.38 Trillion. Here are the details -

Type	Net Orders	Delivered	On Backorder
737	588	495	4392
747	2	18	20
767	49	16	80
777	58	98	524
787	71	135	779
Total	768	762	5795

Airbus received 1036 orders for airliners in 2015. Airbus delivered 635 airliners. 650 deliveries were scheduled for 2015. Backlog of orders is 6787 airliners worth \$996.3 Billion.

Type	Net orders	Delivered
A-320	897	491
A-330	100	103
A-350	29	14
A-380	10	27
Total	1036	635

Price of Airbus airliners is as follows -

Type	Cost
A-319	89.6

A-320	98
A-321	114.6
A-330-200	231.5
A-330-300	256.4
A-350	308.1
A-380	432.6

American Airlines has written off more than half a Billion dollars "stuck" in Venezuela because of "currency controls".

Virgin Atlantic ordered 12 Airbus A-350s on January 11, 2016. First order for Airbus in 2016. Cost for the order is \$3.7 Billion.



Treasurer's Report

by Dennis Strand

Together with several renewing members, a new member, Jeff Campbell from Eden Prairie joined TCAH last month. Welcome aboard Jeff!

Our membership, including "life" members, now stands at 69. We had no expenses during January. The income of \$150.00 was comprised entirely of annual dues paid to the club. Our total, as of 1/14/2016, is \$5127.45

Start raiding your inventory and gathering kits, books and assorted modeler friendly items to bring to the club auction that will be held in March. I am anticipating a huge sell off of quality items. Remember, other than annual dues, this event is the major opportunity to build up our club revenue.



Why I Build and What Inspires Me

by Bob Maderich II

Like most of us, I began making models at an early age. I remember my Dad's workbench in the basement, where I could go to create my own world in miniature. I also have fond memories of summers at my Aunt's house in Michigan. She would slip me a twenty, and I would tear off to the local Woolworths and come home with an armful of models.

I built all the old Monogram Navy planes, heck they were already blue, who needs paint!

All the realism, i.e. the folding wings, retractable gear, dropping bombs, in those kits totally fascinated this 10 year old.

As a teenager, I became enthralled with auto racing, so I started building race cars and constructing a scale replica of Monza for my slot cars.

Then of course, real life intervened. After marriages, kids, music jobs, etc I finally returned to the hobby in my mid forties. WOW, was it a different ballgame. PE, resin, and all the great new kits. I joined RPM and began car modeling in earnest. I credit Mr. Kugel with re-inspiring me to get back into airplane modeling. Joining TCAH in early 2004, I found another 'home' to share my builds and to learn from great builders in the club.

So enough of my personal modeling history, let's get to the point here: what inspires me to do this anyway. Ummm, let me list a few things that feed the styrene beast.

1) I love things in miniature, always have, always will. Can't

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explain it and really don't want to.

2) I've always been inspired by the heroic exploits of pilots, daredevils, and auto racers.

Let's face it, doing the historical research is half the fun of building! Getting the facts about this pilot, tanker, or driver really enhances the whole experience for me.

3) I like being in control of the creative process. As a composer and a musician, you are always in collaboration with others to get a good result. Modeling lets me make or break the project, so to speak.

4) Finally, it's a wonderful, relaxing hobby that I can enjoy in blissful solitude and then turn around and share it with modeling buddies. What can be better than that!!



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Block Island got underway for Pearl Harbor on 20 March 1945. Upon arrival she underwent a period of provisioning and training in preparation for the invasion of Okinawa. On 17 April, *Block Island* left Hawaii and steamed toward Okinawa, via Ulithi.

History

The vast Central Pacific was the main battlefield for carriers and the SW Pacific was well suited for land based aircraft. The Navy was very nervous about stationing a Corsair unit on an aircraft carrier, even though the Brits had already proved it could be done. VF-17 first demonstrated the suitability of Corsairs for carrier operations before it made its final deployment as a land based unit. They had worked extensively

with Vought's technicians to help improve the shortcomings this aircraft had. The results convinced the Bureau of Aeronautics to approve the Corsair for carrier use in April of "44". However, by that time the Hellcat was in widespread use by the fast carrier fleet, instead of the F4U.

By mid-1944 aerial opposition over the Solomons-Rabaul area dwindled and there was no more useful purpose to maintaining large amounts of interceptor Corsairs. However, a new role was found, that of the fighter-bomber. The war was moving north to the Philippines,

Mariana's and ultimately Japan, but to get there the Corsair had to go afloat.

The Navy finally cleared the Corsair for shipboard use, and ironically it was a Marine unit to first deploy on a carrier. Operationally the Corsair was a better aircraft than the Hellcat. It was faster, could lift heavier war loads, carry 8 HVAR's compared to 6 for the Hellcat, and could take more punishment. As the war was now truly carrier based, fifteen land based USMC Corsair squadrons were decommissioned.

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By late '44' the Japanese had long lost air supremacy and were now training kamikaze pilots. In the end these suicide units sank more shipping than the three previous years of war. To combat this the Navy decided to reduce dive and torpedo units on carriers and increase the Hellcats. One catch, though, there weren't enough fighter pilots. The thought was to retrain the torpedo and dive bomber pilots, but it was taking too long. It was then suggested to use the USMC squadrons

already trained on the Corsair to fill the fighter gap.

Training commenced at Hawaii on the USS Bataan, Makassar Strait and Commencement Class CVE's. In the first month of operations USMC F4U-1D's flew 658 sorties and claimed 10 Japanese aircraft in the air and 16 on the ground. Only 1 pilot and two planes were lost in combat while 7 pilots and 15 planes were lost operationally. Both Essex-based USMC Corsair units took part in the Iwo Jima invasion with ground attack missions. This was

the first and only time in WWII that Marine ground units got support from Carrier-based USMC squadrons.

As initial USMC Corsair squadrons finished their tours around March of '45" they were being replaced by Navy Corsair squadrons.

A fresh group of Marine Corsair units joined the Okinawa invasion including those of the USS Block Island. Marine Fighting Squadron 511 (VMF-511) was activated on January 1,

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1944, at Marine Corps Auxiliary Air Field Oak Grove, North Carolina. They were a part of Marine Aircraft Group 51 (MAG-51) and their original mission was to take part in Operation Crossbow (Project Danny), an ill-conceived plan to have Marine squadrons aboard escort carriers hunt down V-1 flying bomb launch sites in eastern France. After that operation was canceled, the new mission for MAG-51 and VMF-511 was to train for deployment aboard Navy carriers in the Pacific.

On May 10, 1945, the squadron saw its first combat during the Battle of Okinawa when it attacked Japanese mortar positions. For the next month they provided close air support for Marines and soldiers on the ground during the battle. The squadron was also a part of the



effort to reduce Shuri Castle and interdict small water craft. During this time the squadron lost its commanding officer, Major Robert Maze, when his F4U Corsair was hit by flak from Ishigaki Island and crashed into the East China Sea. In mid-June, the USS *Block Island* was relieved from duty off

the coast of Okinawa and ordered to Leyte in the Philippines. From there, they supported the early stages of the Australian 7th Division's invasion of Balikpapan. They returned to Leyte on July 4, 1945, and did not see combat for the rest of
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the war. Still aboard the USS *Block Island* when WWII ended, VMF (CVS)-511's final missions were flown in support of the Japanese surrender of Formosa.

The Corsair ended the war with a total of thirteen units on board carriers, 7 USN and 6 USMC. It proved to be the best fighter aircraft in inventory of both services. In the end, Corsair units downed 2,146 planes for the loss of only 189 Corsairs.

Model

This is the Tamiya 1/48 F4U-1D. Not much more needs to be said. It allows for open canopy, folded wings and lowered flaps and offers 3 decal variants. I chose to have the wings folded as many pictures show corsairs ready for combat on the decks of carriers. This is from VMF-511 from with the geometric design of the white block with an imbedded black "1", for USS *Block Island*. The old decals (MicroScale 48-290) went on just fine with a little extra soaking and coaxing with Micro Sol. I used Testors paint

for interior colors and Testors Deep Sea Blue rattle can for the exterior, and finished with Testors Dullcoat.

References:

1. Wikipedia
2. WarPaint Series No. 70 "Vought F4U CORSAIR" by Charles Stafrace
3. Microscale Decals #48-290



Directions to the Club Meeting Location

Where: South St. Paul Municipal Airport, a.k.a. Fleming Field, located on the southern extremity of South St. Paul, south of 1-494, west of Concord Street and East of Highway 52.

If coming from the western Twin Cities going east on 494:

- Exit at the 7th and 5th Avenue exit (Exit No.65)
- Turn right (South) on 7th Ave and go approximately .6 miles to a 4-way Stop sign. This is South Street W. To your left there will be a McDonald's; to your right front there will be a Walgreen's.
- Turn left (East) at the 4-way Stop onto
- South Street W and go approximately .6 miles. Along the way you will encounter three more Stop signs—the third Stop sign (Henry Avenue) will be a "T" intersection. At the "T" intersection on your left will be homes and on your right softball fields.
- Turn right (south) onto Henry Ave. and go approximately .2

- miles toward the Fleming Field airport terminal building.

If coming from east Twin Cities on westbound 494:

- Exit at the 7th and 5th Avenue exit (Exit No.65)
- Turn left (South) on 7th Ave and go approximately .6 miles to a 4-way Stop sign. This is South Street W. To your left front there will be a small strip mall; to your right there will be an Amoco station.
- Turn left (East) at the 4-way Stop onto
- South Street W and go approximately .4 miles. Along the way you will encounter two more Stop signs—the third Stop sign (Henry Avenue) will be a "T" intersection. At the "T" intersection on your left will be homes and on your right softball fields.
- Turn right (south) onto Henry Ave. and go approximately .2 miles toward the Fleming Field airport terminal building

The terminal is on the right with

Twin City Aero Historian
Rick Schmierer
1852 E. 39 Street
Minneapolis, MN 55407

Return address requested

The Aero Historian is published monthly by the Twin City Aero Historians, Inc., a joint chapter of the American Aviation Historical Society and International Plastic Modelers Society/USA, for members and readers as part of their annual dues or fees.

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 Larry Donovan at 651-501-4755.

The Twin Cities Aero Historians (TCAH) meet the second Saturday of every month at 1:00pm.

See above for the new meeting locations and directions.

Mail Newsletter material and address changes to the treasurer.



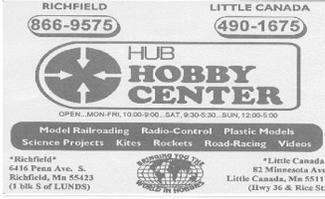
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