



## Pro-Model SB2C-4 converted to -5 by Mark L. Rossmann

### Indochina Helldiver SB2C-5

by Mark L. Rossmann

#### History:

As WWII ended the colonial powers shifted their priorities to retaining territory before the war. Japanese Army and Air Force staff remained in many places as allied governments moved to reclaim their former empires, this was slow to occur as post WWII was reeling to recover from this worldwide catastrophe. The

Potsdam conference had divided Indochina along the 16<sup>th</sup> parallel, with Nationalist Chinese in charge of the north and the British in the south. Under General Gracey's 1600 man force the 60,000 man Japanese garrison took orders to maintain peace. Even the Japanese Air Force got into the act by flying over 100,000 miles and carrying over 45,000 pounds of supplies. On September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1945 Gracey's men started to release 1700 very angry French troops locked up since March of "45" by

the Japanese. Finally, French General LeClerc arrived on October 5<sup>th</sup> with a vanguard of 1000 soldiers that was soon to number 25,000. In early 1946 after French success against the Viet Minh, the Japanese were beginning to be sent home.

The air war over French Indochina represents a very interesting and unique period of modern history. A war fought with obsolete weapons, against an enemy without a single

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**TCAH Officers**

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**Secretary**, Bob Ferreria

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**Newsletter Info**

Article Submission Deadline: 22nd of each month

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**TCAH This Month**

The monthly meeting will be held October 13, at Fleming Field, South St. Paul, beginning at 12:30 pm. Vendor baiting may begin about 12:00, so come early and see.



**From the Prez**  
by Bernie Kugel

Hello Gentlemen,

As I'm writing this it has been quite a week. It is a week before NordicCon and this club has gotten some major news. Hopefully it is being addressed in this newsletter or it will be discussed at our next meeting.

At our upcoming meeting, we will be taking nominations for our club officers for 2019. The current officers have decided to run again. We will also be taking annual dues for next year. Merrill Anderson will give a talk/demo on Dioramas and the monthly theme is "Not an Airplane". So bring in your other modeling interest to the display table.

Until then,  
Model On



**Treasurer's Report**  
by Dennis Strand

The club's current account total is \$5203.30. Last month we had a good start with our 2019 membership drive. 9 members renewed at the September meeting, giving us an income of \$135.00. Please keep this up! The expenses for last month came to \$25.64 for a package of high bond, gloss paper used to print TCAH brochures for the CAF display case and Nordic Con.

Remember, you can renew by sending your dues to: Dennis Strand, 833 Manomin Ave., St. Paul, MN 55107 or bring your \$15.00 to the October meeting. See you there.



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aircraft, a situation unheard of in modern times. It was a war that paralleled the long struggle that was to occur for 30 years with French and U.S. involvement. There was extraordinary variety of aircraft that served in the conflict. From seized Japanese Oscars, Jakes and a Rufe, through French-built Ju-52's acting as bombers. British Spitfires, Mosquito's and U.S. KingCobra, C-47's, Invaders; Hellcats on through to Bearcats, the French war effort in the air had a truly broad spectrum of aircraft.

There is some information about the "Helldiver", which to some, after 12 years had its best days in battle, in the sky over Indochina.

The Helldiver was conceived over the need to replace the SBD Dauntless Dive Bomber. It was faster, heavier, but had difficult handling characteristics and less range than the SBD. It became known by various nicknames: Big-Tailed Beast, Beast, Two-Cee and Son-of-a-bitch 2<sup>nd</sup> Class. Built by Curtiss, its first flight was December 18<sup>th</sup> 1940 and introduced into service in 1943. Users were the U.S. Navy, U.S. Army (A-25), Royal Thai A. F, French A.F, Portuguese Navy, Hellenic A.F. and finally retired by the Italian A.F. in 1959. Because of its poor handling characteristics, the Royal Navy and Royal Australian A.F. cancelled their orders.

Among its major faults, the Helldiver was underpowered, had a shorter range than the SBD, was equipped with an unreliable electrical system, and was often poorly manufactured. The Curtiss-Electric propeller and the complex hydraulic system had frequent maintenance problems. One of

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## Airline Chatter

by Terry Love

United Airlines operates 4600 daily flights to 357 airports on 5 continents. In 2017, United Airlines flew 1.6 million flights carrying more than 148 million passengers.

Boeing gave a projected demand in the next 20 years for China only as follows - 128,500 airline pilots, 126,750 airline mechanics, and 147,250 cabin crew members.

Dubai Airport served 8.2 million passengers in July. Last August (2017) the airport saw 8.23 million passengers. Dubai in the summertime!!! HOT!!!

Boeing says that there is a severe pilot shortage in America and worldwide. It is possible, due to technology, that single pilot airliners may be on the horizon.

Alaska Airlines now flies Seattle to Columbus, Ohio. Also Seattle to Pittsburgh has been added.

American Airlines will retire their fleet of Boeing 767-300s by 2021 as the newer Boeing 787 Dreamliners are delivered.

American Airlines is also planning to retire all of their MD-80s next year.

Delta Airlines wants to sell a stake in their refinery that they own for making jet fuel. It has too much capacity for Delta Airlines's domestic needs.

Aeroflot, the Russian airline, has ordered 100 Sukhoi Super 100 regional jets with 87 seats. Cost is \$3 Billion.

Sun Country Airlines announced that they will begin service to Belize, and St. Kitts on December 22.



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the faults remaining with the aircraft through its operational life was poor longitudinal stability, resulting from a fuselage that was too short due to the necessity of fitting on to aircraft carrier elevators. The Helldiver's aileron response was also poor and handling suffered greatly under 100 mph airspeed; since the speed of approach to land on a carrier was supposed to be 98 mph, this proved problematic. The 880 changes demanded by the Navy and modification of the aircraft to its combat role resulted in a 42% weight increase, explaining much of the problem.

In operational experience, it was found that the U.S. Navy's Corsair and Hellcat fighters were able to carry an equally heavy bomb load against ground targets and were vastly more capable of defending themselves against enemy fighters. The Helldiver however, could still deliver ordnance with more precision against specific targets and its two-seat configuration permitted a second set of eyes. Helldiver had the advantage in range over a fighter while carrying a bombload, which is extremely important in naval operations. Air-to-ground rockets ensured it's precision attack against surface naval and land targets, while avoiding the stresses of near-vertical dives and the demanding performance requirements that they placed on dive bombers

### SB2C-5

This is the last version of the Helldiver,

In 1949, the French navy selected 110 surplus SB2C-5 Helldivers as the replacement for its elderly SBD Dauntless dive bombers, themselves WWII veterans. Two squadrons were

purchased, equipping Flottille 3F and Flottille 16F; both frontline aircraft carrier squadrons.

The Helldiver flew off three French aircraft carriers, the large British-built fleet carrier *Arromanches*, and the two WWII-veteran escort carriers, *Bois Belleau* (ex-USS *Belleau Wood* CVL-24) and *Lafayette* (ex-USS *Langley* CVL-27).

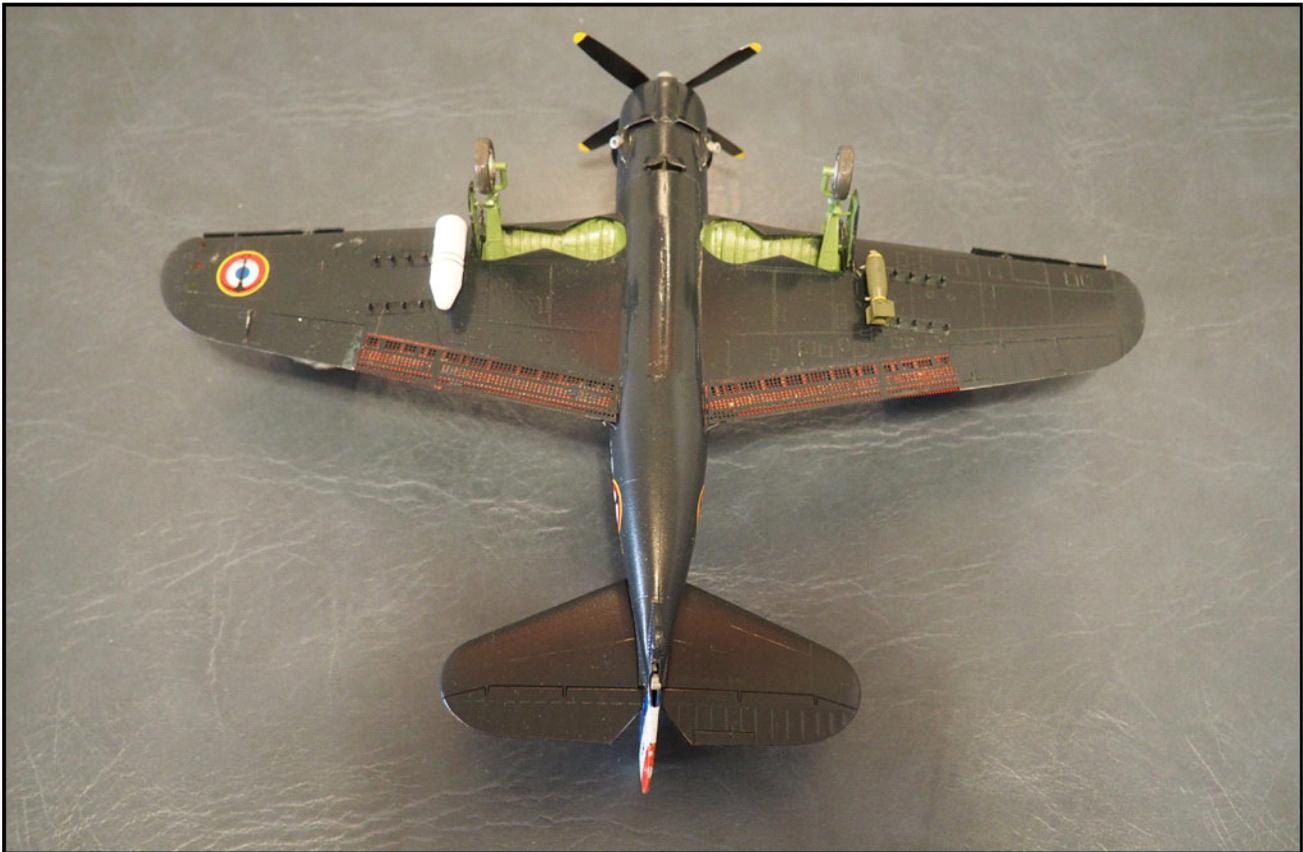
The French encountered some minor training and maintenance problems early on but quickly overcame these, and as soon as the two squadrons were ready, they immediately deployed to Asia to help in the Indochina War. The standard armament for France's Helldivers was American-made M64 500 pound bombs, or (more commonly) the HVAR "Holy Moses" unguided air-to-ground rocket. Four of these could be carried under each wing, and the weapon was extremely effective against the Vietnamese communists. A number of French Helldivers were also wired to carry the AN/APS-4 radar pod, operated by the erstwhile rear crewman.

During the period 1951-1954, the two Helldiver squadrons flew with tremendous effect in Indochina. They were extremely reliable, had good range, were very tough, and could deliver ordnance with great accuracy. In short, they were perfect for what France needed during the conflict. Although the Corsair is most often associated with France's war in Indochina, on a per-plane basis the Helldiver was possibly the most single effective type, delivering sortie after sortie with great effect.

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**Progress on Frank Cuden's B-36**



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France's war in Indochina culminated with the disastrous 1 May-7 May 1954 defeat at Dien Ben Phu, and the conflict ended that summer. The Helldiver had given excellent service in the counter-insurgency role but the planes were worn out. The two operating units transitioned to either the Corsair or the Avenger, and beginning in 1954 all serviceable Helldivers were split up between the 1st, 2nd, and 54th Flottilles, where they were used as support and test planes. France retired its last Helldivers in 1958.

#### Specifications :

	(US)	(FR)
LENGTH	36 ft 8 in	11. 20 m
WINGSPAN	49 ft 9 in	15. 20 m
HEIGHT	16 ft 11 in	5. 10m
WEIGHTS	11 000 lb (empty)/ 16	
607 lb (full)	4 990 kg (empty)/ 7	
550 kg (full)		
MAX SPEED	281 mph	452 km/ h
RANGE	1 110 nm	1 786 km
OUTPUT	1 700 hp	1 2 6 7 . 6 7

kW

#### Weapons

Two 20 mm guns.  
Two 7, 62 mm guns.  
Bombs.  
"Holy Moses" HVAR

#### Model

This is a Pro-Model SB2C-4

I picked up at an upper Midwest IPMS contest. The plastic was crisp, no flashing, but the decals were dried out, but not to be used for this model.

To convert to a -5, I had read, somewhere, that the interior cockpit was modernized to be similar to a P-47D.

So, I cracked apart an old Monogram P-47 bubble top I had made many years before;

A. I tore out the cockpit and with some modifications it was fitted into the front end of the fuselage.

B. The gunner/radioman rear interior remained the same. I didn't place the rear fifties in back as some pictures showed aircraft without them.

C. The 4 bladed prop came off the same cannibalized Monogram P-47.

D. The bomb-bay is about 2 feet longer than the -4's but I didn't modify the kit to show this.

E. Used the Ultracast U.S. Navy AN/APS-4 Radar Pod, #48007.

F. Paint: Tester rattle can Deep Sea Blue, Semi-Gloss black Propeller

G. Decals: Berna, from

France, BD 48-90 "Curtiss SB2C-5 Helldiver". It contains decals for five Helldiver's and cost was about \$18.00.

- Code 3.F-1, Flotille 3.F, Bach Mai field battle of Dien Bien Phu April 1954.(used for this model)

- Code 9.F-9, Flotille 9.F, Carrier Arromanches, Indochina November 1952.

- Code 3.F-16, Flotille 3. F, Bach Mai field battle of Dien Bien Phu April 1954.

- Code 9.F-7, Flotille 9.F, Carrier Arromanches, Indochina November 1952.

- Code 10.S-10, Flotille 10.S,Naval Airstation, Frejus-St. Raphael, 1953

Overall am satisfied with the turnout of the model

#### References:

1. Wikipedia
2. Berna Decals – BD 48-90.
3. French Fleet Air Arm site: [www.ffag.net](http://www.ffag.net)
4. WWIIafterWWII: <https://wwiiafterwwii.wordpress.com/>
5. Air War Over Indochina Website – by William Alcott



**HELP NEEDED***by Noel Allard*

Most of you TCAHers remember the museum that Buzz Kaplan created at Owatonna with the three T-38 Talons on pylons outside, displayed as a Thunderbird skyburst formation. Quite a dramatic display! Jim Hanson, the FBO at Albert Lea, was one of the museum staff who obtained those aircraft, and created the display outside, as well as the displays inside the

museum. He recently had a house fire and is rebuilding his home. He wishes to replicate the display of T-38s in model form to have in his future man-cave. He is not a modeler and is looking for one who would be willing to build the three Talon models and mount them like the original full-sized display. He would supply the kits, enough photos to help with the job and is willing to pay the modeler's asking price for the work. (He's also been known to serve steaks on the grill and

tours of his extensive wine-cellar to his friends!) He is not asking for super-detailing, Thunderbird decals come with the kits, so it is mainly a job of building the models and making the burst diorama from lucite rods or something similar. Sound interesting?

Any one of you willing to take on this project can contact either Noel Allard or contact Jim Hanson directly at: jimhanson73@me.com.



### On The Table—September 2018

Modeler	Kit	Manufacturer	Scale
Bernie Kugel	Battle of Britain Collection	Airfix/Hasegawa	1/72
Bernie Kugel	John McCain A-4E Skyhawk	Monogram	1/48
Bernie Kugel	Se.5a Hispano	Wingnut Wings	1/32
Erik Zable	Battle of Britain Collection	Airfix/Eduard/Hasegawa	1/72
Steve Erickson	Mess. Bf.109G6-AS	Eduard	1/48
Steve Erickson	Ki-100	Hasegawa	1/48
Steve Erickson	BP Defiant Mk I	Airfix	1/48
Steve Hustad	"Barbarians at the Gate" Diorama	Airfix/Prieser	1/72
Bruce McClain	Mess. Bf.109E-3	Hasegawa	1/48
Steve Jatchser	MiG-31	AMK	1/48
Dennis Strand	Hawker Hurricane Mk I	Hasegawa	1/48
Dennis Strand	Mess. Bf.109E-3	Hasegawa	1/48



## 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 parking available.

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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.

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 to the editor and address changes to the treasurer.

