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November 2020



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Hello Swamp Foxes, Welcome to the October 2020 Newsletter.

I hope everyone is keeping well and in good health, Hopefully still building.

My building was curtailed as October became a Nightmare, I ended up in Lex Med with internal bleeding, was found to have two Ulcers, one in lower stomach and the other is in my Esophagus, loss of so much Haemoglobin has left me well below par. One step at a time :)

I have more or less sorted out my Bench area and brought down a build from the shelf of Doom

Stay Safe, Hang in there and

Keep on Building

From the Front Office...

Howdy, all!

This month's meeting is scheduled. The 4-1-1:

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81465590355?pwd=dDJHLORqejUxZFd3TnZNdWwyd0gvQT09>

Meeting ID: 814 6559 0355 Passcode: 476448

I have contacted the library, and their meeting room bookings remain suspended until further notice. They cannot tell me when that might be, so we'll continue our monthly meetings on Zoom until such time that we can meet in person again. Thanks to all of you for replying on the subject of a June show. With the information received, the committee will do some legwork and see where we stand. Stay Tuned. The Chapter charter renewal will be going in this week.

Details on a possible Christmas Party will be forthcoming shortly, so watch your e-mails. We'll discuss this at the November Zoom meeting, so if you want to be involved, you need to tune in! Cheers!

Ralph

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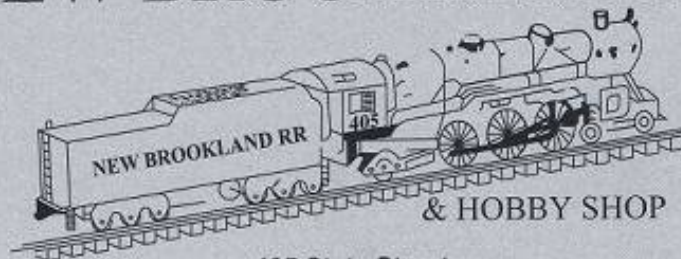


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SUPPORT THE LOCAL HOBBY STORES

Presented To You in Living Color

Howdy...

Its Wayback Machine time again. Set it for late 1982. Let's see if you remember this:

INTRODUCING A SYSTEM OF ENAMELS GUARANTEED* TO MATCH FS COLORS.

Authentic models require authentic paint schemes. To meet this need, Testor has developed a series of enamels guaranteed* to match the most frequently used Federal Standard (FS) colors; the Model Master Custom Enamel System.

How can Testor guarantee a perfect color match? Rather than using 955-A, which is only a reference and not a color matching guide, Testor chemists developed working formulas after analyzing 3" x 3" official color chips issued by the General Services Administration (GSA). "Dis-downs" (test films of each batch of paint) were exactly matched to the GSA chips for color and specific reflectance measurements before the samples were approved.

Why might Model Master colors not always match colors seen on actual equipment and vehicles? Any color fades and changes when exposed to light and the elements. If you are building models of new equipment, Model Master enamels ensure authenticity. "In service" models must be authenticated by using weathering techniques in addition to Model Master colors.

Can Model Master enamels be used in an airbrush? Yes! We have formulated a special thinner for use in airbrushing. In addition, the ten most frequently sprayed FS colors are available in convenient 3.2 ounce spray cans.

Can these paints be made flatter? Absolutely! Simply mix in common talcum powder.

Can they be made glossier? No. The reflectance can, however, be changed by overspraying with one of the Model Master Protective Finishes: gloss, semi-gloss, lustreless (flat).

Model Master Accessories: In addition to the enamels, the Model Master system includes a line of precision tools designed specifically for modeling. Included are: assorted brushes, grinding films, Hobby Knife, Precision Cementing Tips and No. 11 refile blades.

Look for the Model Master rack at your local hobby shop. All the materials in this new system reflect our commitment to quality at every stage of production.

In some cases, the paint formula requires 6 to 7 pigments. Testor only guarantees a perfect match if you stir, not shake, the paint thoroughly before use.

TESTORS

©1982 The Testor Corporation/100 Buckhorn Street, Philadelphia, Pa. 19101

*In some cases, the paint formula requires 6 to 7 pigments. Testor only guarantees a perfect match if you stir, not shake, the paint thoroughly before each use.

That was the first print advertisement for the new Testor Model Master Paint system. Before the advent of these paints, there were precious few paint lines that were specifically

formulated and guaranteed* (note the fine print in the enlargement—you had to stir, not shake the paint to be assured of an “exact match”) to match any of the established color collections, especially the modern ones--in this case, [Federal Standard 595A](#) that had been developed by the U.S. Government in the mid-1950's. It was a follow-on to the old AN/ANA classification system of colors used during World War II.

Matched Colors

Testors wasn't the first hobby paint company to attempt to match model paints to known color collections. Floquil, Pactra (in their Authentic International Colors line), and Polly-S had paints that tried to match several World War I and World War II colors, as well as some modern U.S. colors. Humbrol developed an “Authentic Color” line, too. They all tended to be hit and miss—some were close, others were not even in the same neighborhood to what they were supposed to be.

A lot of study was going into the subject of wartime colors. Several books had already been published—Thomas Hitchcock's work on German WWII colors (the Official Monogram Painting Guide to German Aircraft, 1935-1945), and the two volumes on Japanese colors (one title covered the IJA aircraft, the other handled the IJN planes) by Donald Thorpe were eagerly snapped up by “serious” scale modelers. On the armor side of the coin, Bruce Culver's three volume [Panzer Colors](#) series covered the Wehrmacht's machines from 1935 through the end of the war.

Pactra offered, at one point, their Pactra Authentic Military Color Mixing Chart, a paper slide-rule type device that showed what paints you needed to mix in order to get a specific color. I have one lying around here somewhere; it was a neat little guide—if you used Pactra paint. (I've already told the tale of how I discovered Pactra's Authentic International Colors lines of paint as it was being discontinued.)

If you used any other paint—and in my day, that usually meant Testor square bottle Pla Enamel and Pactra 'Namel, although you could also find Humbrol locally—you were either using the TLAR (That Looks About Right) method and using them off the shelf, accuracy be damned, or you were matching your paint by mixing them and comparing them to published color chips.

That, in and of itself, could be a minefield—unless you had an official set of color chips made from the paint itself, you were looking at a mass-printed reference, and colors derived from printing inks at the time could vary widely from the original. The best one could do was get it “in the ballpark” and move on—which, as we'll see later, might not be such a bad concept.

Then, in the late 1970's, Compucolour from the UK became one of the first paint manufacturers to claim their paints were out of the bottle matches (so the sales pitch went) to match to FS595A colors (they also offered WWII colors with similar claims at some point, too). I never saw them in a shop, only in magazine ads. At about the same time, a paint line out of New Jersey also promised “Matched to Specs” paint—they were called “Official Paints”, they were mostly matched to the WWII U.S. AN/ANA specifications, and they didn't last long. From there, other paint lines jumped on the train and began formulating their paint colors to match official references. Some, Aeromaster for instance, even included a “scale effect” into their paints.

(The theory of scale effect and scale color is another story for another time. We'll go there one day, but it won't be today.)

Color Standards and Color References

“So”, you ask, “what exactly *is* a ‘color standard’, anyway? And what is a ‘color collection’?”

In a nutshell, a color *standard* is how colors are quantified and/or reproduced. The two most used standards are the Munsell System and the Pantone Matching System. The former uses a system to quantify hue, chroma, and value; the latter is a color reproduction system usually used by printers. Munsell color standards were sometimes used to develop paint colors, but in and of itself modelers seldom standard to match colors for their models.

Those color matching systems we modelers think of when we're looking at colors—Federal Standard, British Standard, U.S. Army Quartermaster, RLM, RAL, ANA, etc. — are merely references, hence the phrase *color reference*. Generally speaking, the specified shades of paint are created by the originator (usually some government entity or military service who decides what is required) and applied to a collection of sample chips which are used as controls. These chips are then distributed to contractors who make the coatings—they match their paint to the standard chip. Each contractor mixes colors to match the color on the chip, usually employing spectrometers, spectrographs, and other light wavelength measuring tools to get a perfect match in a coating that meets the requirements of the contract. Of course, these days there are digital system that can replicate color much more accurately than what had been used in “the good old days”, but the principles remain the same.

Most other nations have a color reference similar to FS595. You've no doubt seen references to RLM (German WWII), RAL (modern German equipment), British Standard BS381C, BS2660, BS5252 and BS4800 (modern British equipment), U.S. Army Quartermaster (QM), and so on. Like FS595A, these color references have been used throughout the globe at various points in time.

So, if you're building an RAF Tornado or West German Leopard tank, asking “What FS colors do I need?” might not get you the answers you seek, since those subjects never wore FS colors. Know your subject, understand the auspices under which it was built and operated, and use the correct specifications and you cannot go wrong.

How FS595 works

Since the article started with a discussion on the initial Model Master colors, let's stay on that road. Federal Standard 595A—properly, FED-STD-595A, later superseded by 595B and then 595C, was the color collection in use from the mid-1950's through 2017. In 2017, the General Services Administration transferred STD-595C to SAE International (the former Society for Automotive Engineers). FED-STD-595C was, in effect, cancelled and re-designated AMS-STD-595.

Every color included in AMS-STD-595 is given a name and a code. As far as STD-595 is concerned, the name is not official. The only valid color identification under this system is that 5-digit number. You could call the color Sam or Fred, and unless you have that 5-digit

number it does not matter.

Let's look at that 5-digit number

As an example, we'll use Federal Standard color code FS36118.

The first number describes the reflectance (think "sheen") of the finish. 1=gloss, 2=semi gloss, and 3=flat, or lusterless.

The second number is an arbitrary color group that best describes the color. 0=Browns, 1=Reds, 2=Oranges, 3=Yellows, 4=Greens, 5=Blues, 6=Grays, 7=Miscellaneous (whites, blacks, metallics, etc.) and 8=Fluorescents and Day-Glo colors.

The last three digits are the individual color code, unique to each color.

From the information above, the color would be a lusterless (3) gray (6) coded 118. Simple, yes?

The name bestowed upon this color is *Gunship Gray*. The word "Gunship", by the way, is not a descriptor of the color (they could have easily called it "Dark Engine Gray"). Instead, it refers to a type of finish that was known as "Gunship quality" paint—there was also a color called *Gunship Green*, and this group of finishes was intended to be used in several tactical camouflage schemes, *European I* being perhaps the most well-known. The Gunship quality paints were polyurethane based with improved sheen and reflectance properties and increased durability, and were initially tightly controlled by the USAF.

Color Tools You Can Use

If you want to be dead-nuts, balls-on accurate, you can buy official AMS-STD-595 paint chips. A boxed version with 692 (!) individual chips in protective envelopes will set you back a mere \$895 American:

https://www.sae.org/servlets/otherProduct?PROD_TYP=RM&PROD_CD=EA-CHIPSET

Individual 3"X5" chips in protective envelopes can be had for \$35 each.

If you're not that picky about having a dead-nuts, balls-on accurate shade of paint but still want an "official" gizmo to compare your colors to so you can be close, a fan deck—consisting of what SAE International calls "representational only" colors--can be bought for the low, low price of \$210:

https://www.sae.org/servlets/otherProduct?PROD_TYP=RM&PROD_CD=EA-FANDECK

Yeah, that's a heap of change. I bought an FS595A fan deck years ago for around \$30 along with the IPMS Color Cross-Reference Guide by David Klaus. The guide was particularly helpful—it summarized several color reference systems along with an extensive listing of which hobby colors were available for most of the given colors.

With the advent of the internet, there are other ways of getting things in the ballpark. There

are several websites that show all of the colors—but there's a rub (isn't there always?). How well is your monitor calibrated to display colors? The watchword here is to remember the limitations of your equipment. And, if all you want is the ballpark, it should be good enough.

<http://www.federalstandardcolor.com/>

<http://ams-std-595-color.com/>

For other nations' color references: https://www.e-paint.co.uk/chart_options.asp

Hobby Colors and Accuracy

For as closely matched as Testors colors were, things have shifted the other way with paint over the years. Vallejo, especially, doesn't seem to pay too much attention to color references although they do print them on the labels of some colors in the form of RAL, RLM, and FS numbers—even though their paint doesn't necessarily match the spec color. Part of the answer is that they expect you to follow their “weathering” techniques (including color modulation, zenithal lighting, flood washes, pin washes, chipping, glazing, and the like), so in their mind it is of little consequence that the actual colors in the bottles don't bear any resemblance to the nominal colors they are supposed to represent. I use them frequently, and do a spray-out on a white index card. Once the paint dries for a while (at least two hours, longer is better since some pigments don't develop their full color until the paint has fully cured—PollyScale was a particular offender, especially with their blues), I'll compare it to a reference and, in those cases where the color doesn't match the reference to my liking, I'll alter the paints using those “Old School” techniques I learned back in the dark ages of the late 1970's and early 1980's.

(And I can already hear some of you asking “What's color modulation? Zenithal lighting? Huh?” Perhaps this too can be another discussion for another time.)

Tamiya, likewise, has their own color theory, and their kits often show mixing formulas to obtain the “correct” colors. Some modelers I know have compiled them into complete charts, and they are fairly easy to find on the internet. You can add GSI/Creos to that list, too—many Hasegawa and Dragon kits show paint mixes using GSI Aqueous and Mr. Color mixes. Airfix kits rely on Humbrol paint numbers. And so on.

But how do you know that the color listed is correct? Use your resources. Perhaps the two best model color resources I know of online are the following:

<https://www.paint4models.com/> has the Ultimate Paint conversion chart, and includes most, if not all, of the available paint brands. Be advised—it requires Adobe Flash, which is reaching End of Life shortly. Some browsers won't even let it load...

Michael Benolkin's Cybermodeler website has quite a color reference section, too: <https://www.cybermodeler.com/resource6.shtml> . Check it out...

Mixing paint is not as difficult as you might think it is. The most useful tool you can obtain is a \$2 color wheel from Michael's. Learn to use it, and pretty soon you'll be mixing colors like you've been doing it your whole life. You'll be able to look at a color and determine that it

needs a little more gray, or a touch of yellow. One tip I'll give you up front: Mix your color, write down the recipe (use a dropper to count drops of paint), and then do a spray-out on some white card (I use index cards) as outlined above. Let the paint dry completely before you compare it to your reference, and then adjust as needed.

That's a lot of work. Do I really need to go that far?

Like all things in our hobby, what you do and how you do it is not regulated by law. If you just want something close enough, use your best judgment and go with it. However, if you want to dig down and make a more accurate* model, these are the things you should do. It is always your call...

(*Always remember that the subject of "accurate color" is a highly subjective subject, and that IPMS and AMPS judges are specifically told NOT judge accuracy, color included!)

The next question we should ask: Just how accurate are the actual paints that the contractors supply to the Government? If I were to go by what a friend of mine (a former corrosion control technician in the Navy) says about Navy aircraft touch up paint, not very. He could requisition two cans of touch up spray paint from supply, and even two cans from the same manufacturer and same lot may or may not match each other, and they rarely matched what was on the aircraft being touched up. Why? Well, in the case of the touch up cans, how they are shaken and prepared before use can alter the color—one guy shakes his can like it owes him money and the other only treats is like a dry martini, and you have slight color differences. One guy does a better job of cleaning the area to be touched up. Add to that the fact that the existing paint on the airframe has been in use for an indeterminate time, so it has been exposed to sun, weather, erosion, and other environmental factors plus normal day-to-day maintenance tasks, and it will be subtly different than the original specs, too. This should now explain why Navy airplanes, in particular, can take on a rather tatty appearance after a cruise.

So, it all boils down to this—don't be too uptight about using an absolute "correct" color. Get something that is close enough to satisfy you. That's where paint lines like the Model Master Paints showed their utility—a modeler could simply buy a bottle of color and it would be a close match for what they were looking for. If they wanted something "more accurate", they could doctor the color from there. It saved a lot of mixing just to get common colors, and was a real boon to folks who had difficulty mixing and matching their paints.

After all that, yeah, I said it...get it close and move on.

Putting the Color Where It Belongs

I'll close with this—once you figure out what colors you need, how do you know where to put them on the model? Honestly, to me this is the more important aspect of color and camouflage. So, what's telling the paint shop how to decorate these machines?

The same way the government describes the colors, they have documents that describe the use of them. For example, if you model USAF aircraft from the Cold War to the present, the applicable document is called Technical Order 1-1-4. Follow the link for a little bit of light reading...

http://f4phantom.com/docs/TO_1-1-4.pdf

In addition to T.O. 1-1-4, the USAF has several more T.O.'s covering markings, maintenance placards, paint maintenance, paint removal, etc.

If you want to look at a few more U.S. paint scheme guides including U.S. Army and Navy/Marine Corps aviation, look here:

<https://www.daveplattmodels.com/Links/US%20Military%20Markings/Markings.htm>

For the WWII U.S. ships, the schemes (known as Measures) and colors are what [SHIPS-2](#) is all about. Of course, modern ships also have their own finish instructions that are also based on SHIPS-2, revised over the years to accommodate new types of coatings.

An example for the modern armor guys would be the MERDC (Mobility Equipment Research and Development Center), MASSTER, and NATO 3-color scheme specifications as shown in [Technical Manual \(TM\) 43-0139](#), [Technical Bulletin \(TB\) 43-0147](#) and [TB 43-209](#).

And lest you auto modelers think this is not pertinent to you, you might reconsider. If you want to build OEM-correct models, the auto manufacturers have their own paint specs—both color AND application. The colors were usually contracted out to paint manufacturers such as Sherwin Williams, Ditzler, and DuPont. When it comes to color, the best bet is to go online and search out the make, manufacturer, and model year—with a little work you'll be rewarded with sample build sheet specs that call out exterior and interior color combinations for the car in question.

Back in the day, if you wanted OEM-spec colors on your model cars and used hobby paints, you mixed color—you didn't have much of a choice unless your car was black or white. Or, you used a vial of touch-up paint from the auto parts house—if you could find an aerosol, great, but usually you had the vial of brush-on paint and nothing more. These days, more manufacturers are producing OEM-spec colors that you can use right out of the bottle or spray can—Testors themselves added automotive colors to the Model Master line in the mid-1990's (and a base coat/clear coat lacquer line in the early 2000's), and House of Kolor and Model Car World (MCW) had their own lines of colors, including NASCAR specific colors. Both lines have faded from view, but these days Tru-Color and re-formulated MCW paint lines are now available. You're always free to go with the TLAR solution, too--and I do this often when I use an off-the-shelf Tamiya spray color on a car body.

Of course, if you build customs all this is moot...

I've once again fed you a 7-course meal through a fire hose—sorry, as a Technical Writer, I live for this kind of thing. Take some time to digest all that, and we'll look at some of those other topics I've touched on here (scale color, weathering) down the road.

Cheers!

Ralph

An Introduction to Japanese Katakana in Modeling

By David Koopman

Japanese is a difficult language to read/write for Westerners. I neither speak nor write Japanese, so don't get the idea that I'm going to try to teach you Japanese in this article. The written/printed Japanese language is based on a complex system of symbols and *syllabaries* instead of an alphabet like English. A *syllabary* is a set of written characters representing syllables serving the purpose of an alphabet. Think of "Tamiya" as made up of three syllables ta-mi-ya. This word can be represented by three characters from a syllabary, one for each syllable.

There is a part of the *written* Japanese language that can be useful for a modeler to understand without knowing ANY words in the Japanese language. This is the Japanese syllabary called *Katakana* which is used to represent words borrowed from other languages, such as English, into Japanese. (There is a second Japanese syllabary called *Hiragana* which is used to represent Japanese language words, although Japanese is primarily written in a symbolic form called Kanji that includes 50,000 symbols! Learning *Kanji* is like learning to spell as opposed to learning the alphabet.) *Katakana* symbols are often found on the kit box covers, for example, of models representing subjects foreign to Japan such as American and British planes, tanks, ships, etc. English has borrowed Japanese words like *sushi*, *banzai*, and *sayonara*. We also take Japanese proper nouns (names of cities, corporations, people) into English without attempting to translate them. The same thing occurs in Japanese. They take western names such as Washington, New York, Kennedy, Mustang, Sherman, etc. into their language as is. They use *Katakana* symbols to represent these borrowed words.

As seen in the chart below, the *Katakana* syllabary consists of 48 symbols. That's a few more than our alphabet, but not nearly as bad as trying to master 50,000 *Kanji* symbols. The 48 symbols represent the five vowels (a, e, i, o, u), 42 syllables consisting of a consonant sound followed by a vowel sound (these are the "syllables"), and the stand-alone consonant, n (rarely also used for m or ng). Japanese language words nearly always end in either a vowel sound or infrequently with an "n" sound (just look at a map of Japan). Japanese words ending with "n" like *mikan*, *gamen*, and *rainen* (orange, screen, and "next year") are more the exception than the norm. With the *Katakana* chart in hand, it is possible to convert words written with *Katakana* symbols into their phonetic equivalent, i.e. to translate the symbols into something that could sound familiar to us if it was originally derived from a borrowed English language word. This will be demonstrated with several practical examples for a modeler in the text following the chart.

Katakana Chart

•	w	r	y	m	h	n	t	s	k	
ン <u>n/m</u>	ワ wa	ラ ra	ヤ ya	マ ma	ハ ha	ナ na	タ ta	サ sa	カ ka	ア a
	* wi	リ ri		ミ mi	ヒ hi	ニ ni	チ <u>chi</u>	シ <u>shi</u>	キ ki	イ i
		ル ru	ユ yu	ム mu	フ fu	ヌ nu	ツ <u>tsu</u>	ス su	ク ku	ウ u
	* we	レ re		メ me	ヘ he	ネ ne	テ te	セ se	ケ ke	エ e
	ヲ wo	ロ ro	ヨ yo	モ mo	ホ ho	ノ no	ト to	ソ so	コ ko	オ o

* the symbols for wi and we are no longer used, while the symbol for wo is normally pronounced “o” and is rarely used

Notable in the *Katakana* chart are the absence of the English alphabet letters b, c, d, g, j, l, p, q, v, and z. That does not mean that Japanese doesn’t use those sounds. In the context of syllables, hard “c” (cat) is formed from “k” syllables, and soft “c” (cesspool) is formed from “s” syllables. So, a separate symbol set isn’t needed for “c”. The English letter “l” is made from “r” syllables (this is related to how r is pronounced in Japanese; that’s a story for another day). “j” is usually represented by “g”. There is no “q”, which can be made phonetically with “k” just like hard “c”.

Two diacritical marks are used with the *Katakana* symbols to shift syllables from one consonant to another. These look like either a degree symbol, °, or a double quotation mark symbol, “. One or the other can be added after some of the symbols above to form new ones. The quotation symbol, “, (*dakuten*), resembling an open double quote, shifts k syllables to g syllables, s to z, t to d, and h to b. The following vowel in each syllable is unaffected by the “. This adds another twenty syllables to those in the table, 5 each for g, z, d, and b. The ° symbol shifts h to p, adding another five syllables. To illustrate, ha, ハ, with the mark “, ハ”, becomes ba (h to b). Similarly, ha, ハ, with the mark °, ハ°, becomes pa (h to p).

Strangely, there is no set of “f” syllables; however note that what would be the symbol for “hu” in the “H” column of the *Katakana* chart is pronounced “fu” rather than “hu”, e.g. Fu-ji-mi. That leaves the issue of how to write “hu” using Katakana open, as well as how to write “fa”, “fi”, “fe”, and “fo”.

The five single vowels each have a single sound in Japanese: “a” is like the “a” in father, “e” is like the “e” in bed, “i” is like the “e” in seat, “o” is like the “o” in rope, and “u” is like the double o in spoon. So, Tamiya should be pronounced tah-me-yah. These are also the correct five vowel sounds to use with the consonants in the *Katakana* table to say the individual symbols correctly out loud. To reproduce the pronunciation of borrowed words from languages with more vowel variety, *Katakana* uses a vowel extender mark (short bar), -. Japanese also modifies some of the symbols to create *double vowels* to make other vowel sounds (I won’t discuss the general case here, but clearly English has more than five vowel sounds).

So, what’s in it for you? Let’s do an example where we know the answer. This is from the box cover of a Tamiya Spitfire model. Because “Supermarine Spitfire” is not Japanese, it has been included on the box cover in *Katakana* symbols (in the red outline area at upper right that I enlarged):



Kat: su...u-pa...a-ma-ri-n

Eng: sū pe(r) ma rine

Kat: su-pi-tsu-(to-fu=fa)-a-i-a

Eng: spit fire

Supermarine Spitfire obviously qualifies as “borrowed words” from English when written in Japanese. Therefore, these words are written by Japanese using the *Katakana* symbols in a way to achieve a close approximation to the pronunciation of the word in English.

The enlarged *Katakana* text inside the white border is now explained symbol by symbol. The first symbol, ス, is “su” followed by a short bar. This draws out the “su” as in “soo” sound into a “su” as in “sue” sound. (There is no natural long “u” in Japanese, just the double o, so this is a subtle modification of the vowel sound.) The next symbol, パ, is “ha” modified with ° to convert it to “pa”. It is followed by a short bar to draw out the vowel sound. This leaves something like “sue-paa” or “sue-pah” to represent “super”. The pronunciation of “r” presents certain difficulties as anyone who has watched Ralphie’s goose dinner carolers in “A Christmas Story” knows.

The last three symbols in the first line are “ma”, “ri”, and “n” (マ, リ, ニ). The “a” in ma is short, so this is like the first half of mama. The “i” in “ri” is long “e”, so “ree”, and the “n” is “n”. The three combined give “mareen” which sounds the same as English “marine”. So line one is “suepahmareen” which approximates supermarine when spoken aloud.

The second line of *Katakana* starts with “su”, “hi” modified by ° to “pi” (sounds like pig without the g), and “tsu”. This gives supitsu. This set of three symbols points out two issues with Japanese. It lacks a “sp” double consonant, and nearly every Japanese syllable ends in a vowel or “n”, so there is no inherent way to end a syllable with “t”. You have to realize that the “u” in both “su” and “tsu” should be kept relatively silent, and you end up with something approaching either “spit” or “spits”.

The fourth and fifth symbols would normally be “to” and “fu” (ト, フ). The symbol that looks like “to”, when followed by “fu”, seems to equate to “fa” (as best I can tell, this is one of the missing syllables in the *Katakana* chart). This is followed by an “undersized a”, “i” and “a” (アイア) to end the sequence on line two. “ai” is a double vowel in Japanese used to represent the long “i” sound like that found in the English “my”. Again, note that Japanese isn’t designed to end a word with an “r” sound or any consonant other than “n”. I’m not 100% sure of the accuracy of my interpretation here, but I think we’re looking at something approaching “fi-ah” for “fire”. Where my “fi” is like the “fi” in Fee Fi Fo Fum, or in fine. So, “spitsfiah” for “spitfire”. You’d probably understand if you were speaking to a Japanese kit vendor who was trying to sell you one what he meant when he said spitsfiah.

Here’s an example that shows another pitfall.



(fu-tsu-do)

Sure doesn't look much like "hood". Referring back to the *Katakana* table, you'll note that the "h" syllable column lacks the "hu", which is generally used for "fu" instead. I believe the "fu-tsu" pair is used to convert the "fu" back into a "hu", so phonetically we're left with something like "hoo-doe" for Hood. Close to sounding right, but not perfect.

And a third example:



ta-i-ga I

This one is fairly straightforward. "ta" and "i" to give English "tie" sound (this is another Japanese double vowel used to give a sound different from the five basic vowel sounds), followed by a "ka" modified to a "ga" by the " symbol, above it on the right, with a short bar afterwards to draw out the "ah" sound, so "tie-gah" for Tiger. Japanese uses "ai" to make the long "i" sound needed for Tiger. (I lack the expertise to give guidance, though, on when you shouldn't attempt to combine vowel sounds like this because it sounds correct just as transcribed. Here we all know it's not tah-ih-gaa from the context.) I imagine a native of Japan knows from a good elementary school education when to merge the vowel sounds and when not to. Still, this illustrates that, lacking the Japanese education like we do, trying to convert *Katakana* to phonetic English words can be a bit bumpy. Nothing's perfect. OK, so it's no big deal if you're buying from the major injection molded kit manufacturers in Japan, because they usually include the English name of the kit subject on the box along with the *Katakana* equivalent for Japanese modelers. Many of the small Japanese resin kit producers, however, don't translate the subject name into English alphabet letters on the box cover. Now, if you can spot the *Katakana* characters (they likely won't be there if the kit subject is Japanese and doesn't have a name using "borrowed words"), then you can attempt to break down the *Katakana* and get a rough phonetic translation. This can confirm what you think you're seeing based on the picture on the box. This is useful with ship models, since there are often several sister ships that largely look alike, and breaking down the *Katakana* could help identify which particular ship of the class is the basis for the kit. I imagine there are examples in the other model genres as well.

So, at this point you should all be able to translate that アメリカ is A-me-ri-ka, pronounced Ah-may-ree-kah. (this is how Japanese write "America" using *Katakana*, not something that I came up with on my own). Once you know how the vowels are pronounced, and have the *Katakana* table, it's not that hard to attempt to make a phonetic translation of a name or short phrase from Japanese *Katakana* into English.

Members Builds and Works in Progress during Self Isolation





Norm Foote – Revell – 1/48 scale Focke Wulf FW-190.



Hub Plott – Wilde Sau – 1/48 scale P-66.





Darby Erd – Hasegawa – 1/72 scale P-47D Bubbletop with EagleCals decals.





Donnie Greenway – MPC – 1/25 scale Monopoly 33 Willy's paddy wagon van.

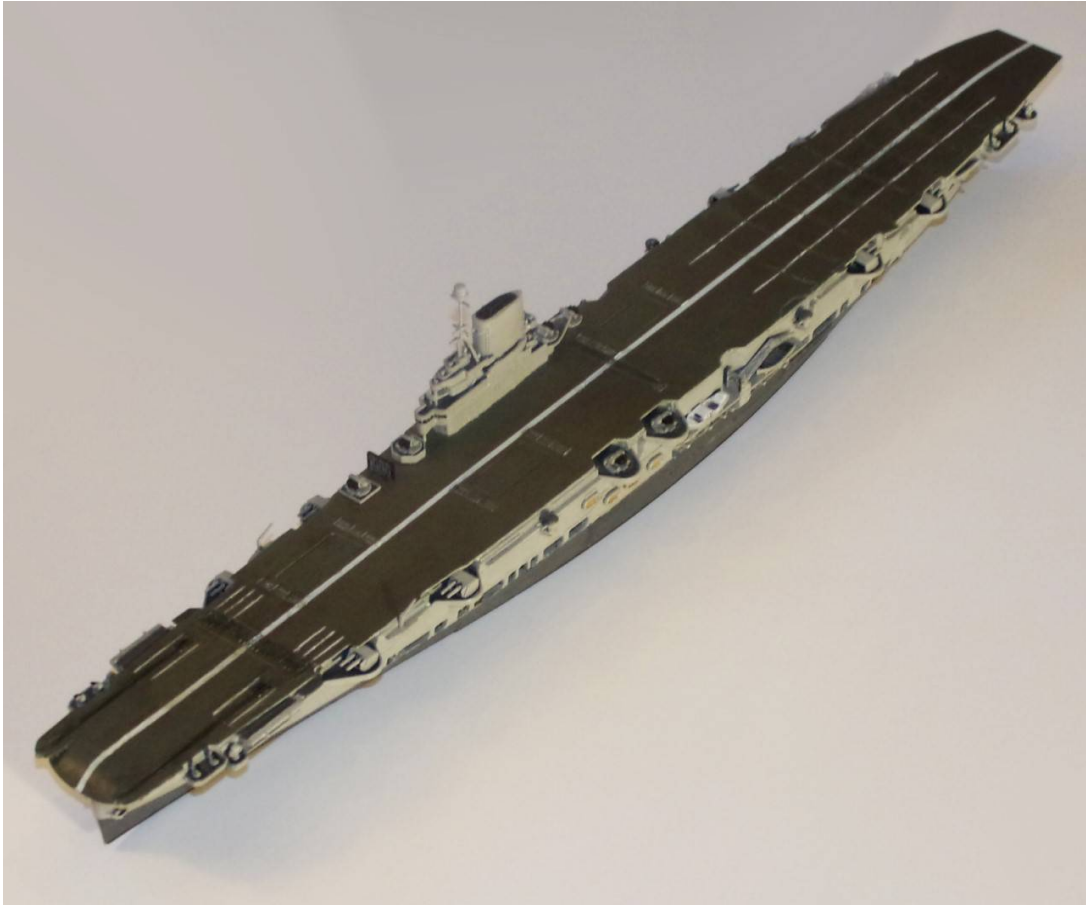


Rick Broome – Lindenburg – 1/48 scale TBF (In Progress).



David Koopman – Tamiya – 1/700 scale Gneisenau (In Progress).





David Koopman – Aoshima – 1/700 scale HMS Ark Royal (In Progress).





Michael Martucci – Revell – 1/24 scale Ford Bronco.



Michael Carra – Hasegawa – 1/72 scale P-47D Bubbletop.



Michael Carra – Hasegawa – 1/72 scale F6F Hellcat.

Peterbilt Model 359 Conventional Tractor

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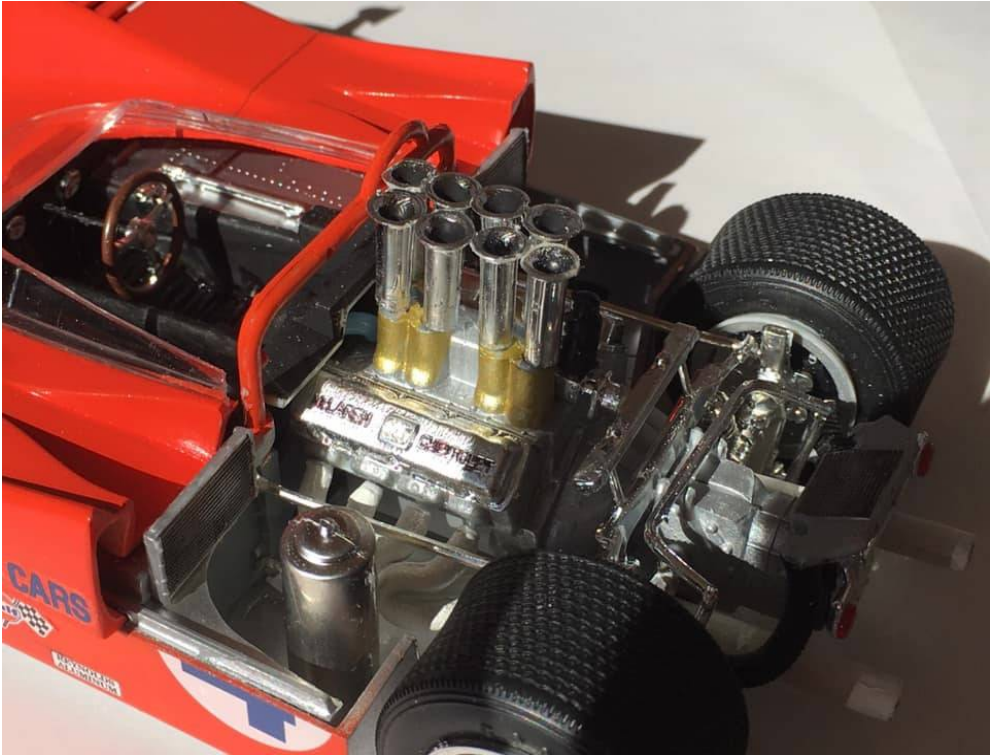
Donnie Greenway – Revell – 1/25 scale Peterbilt 359.







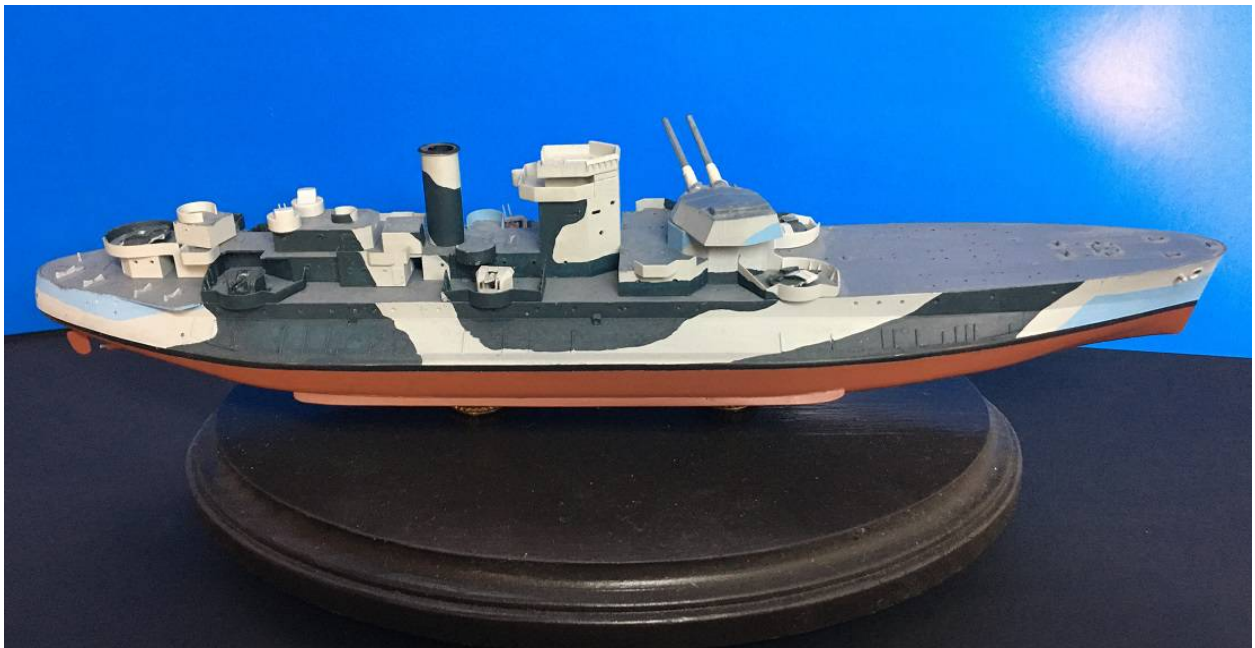
Michael Martucci – Lindberg – 1/25 scale 1935 Auburn 851 Boattail Speedster.





Michael Martucci – MPC – 1/20 scale McLaren Mk8d.





John Currie – Trumpeter – 1/350 scale HMS Roberts (In Progress down from shelf of Doom).

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Well thats all folks

John