

Keith Pruitt

Model Kit Report

Keith's Picks for the Month

Ancillary products that will increase the modeling experience.

AK Learning Series 3 Tracks & Wheels

AK Interactive revolutionized the authenticity of scale vehicles with its line of weathering products which includes pigments and washes, as well as guides in both book and DVD formats. *AK Tracks & Wheels*, (AK274), is the third volume in the Learning Series, by Ruben Gonzalez and Michel Perez. These two talented artists work together in the book to take the reader on a step-by-step journey from basic model parts to realistically weathered replicas.

Beginning with the most basic element, the book covers the parts preparation and assembly for wheels and tires. Crisp, clear photographs detail each step of the primary processes for preparing kit parts, or aftermarket replacements. Plastic and rubber kit parts, resin replacement parts and even replicating damaged road wheels for tracked vehicles are explained in great depth and photographic detail.

Next, the book explains the process of painting wheels and tires, as well as weathering, for paved and dirt roads, sandy desert environments, wet and muddy conditions, and snow and slush. Moving forward, the following chapter covers painting and weathering road wheels, which support and provide movement for the tracks of armored vehicles, including burnt and rusty wheels of disabled or abandoned tanks and armored fighting vehicles.

The actual tracks are covered in excellent detail during the next two chapters. Preparation and assembly of plastic and vinyl kit tracks include cleaning and gluing steps, and instructions for aftermarket



Beginning with the basic elements, Tracks & Wheels covers everything from parts preparation to replicating damaged tank tracks.



metal tracks including proper assembly steps. Once assembled, the tracks are ready for painting, as well as adding mud, rust and dust as needed for specific conditions that the model will represent.

Lastly, matching the undercarriage to the wheels and tracks include painting and weathering explanations in photographs with detailed captions for each step. The final pages are filled with reference photos of actual vehicle running gear in multiple environmental conditions that can be replicated.

Hataka Hobby USAF Vietnam War Era Paint Set

Hataka Hobby is a new company in Poland, dedicated to producing acrylic model paint with cutting-edge technology and historically true colors. Since the release of the initial five sets, the line has grown to ten sets of paint, based on the country of origin, branch of service and the time period. Each paint set contains four or six colors in 17 milliliter squeeze bottles depending on the theme, of which examples are USAF Vietnam War Era, Royal Air Force in Africa WWII, and Late US Navy 1943-1945.

The Hataka Hobby USAF Paint Set (HTK-AS09) contains six colors, five of which are for the Southeast Asia camouflage scheme. These include dark tan, dark green, medium green, camouflage gray and night black. The sixth color is

Air Defense Grey, the standard overall color for stateside USAF and Air National Guard aircraft of the era.

The paint is water based, airbrush tested, and quick drying. The bottles, which contain a small mixing ball, are clear so that the color can be identified on sight along with the name being indicated on the label. The paint contains extremely fine pigments, which provide an excellent depth of color, even when thinned for airbrushing. Hataka Hobby also offers its Acrylic Thinner, available in 100ml bottles and formulated specifically for use with the paints, which improves paint flow while airbrushing without any loss of adhesion.

MiniArt Close Combat US Tank Crew

MiniArt offers several 1/35 figure sets, suitable for use with a variety of vehicles and diorama displays, and the Close Combat US Tank Crew #35135 is an excellent example. Nothing can bring a diorama to life like adding the human figures that add a sense of action and interest to the scale scene.

The kit contains 62 molded plastic parts, enough to build five full figures in dynamic poses. The figures build



Miniarts 1/35 Close Combat U.S. Tank Crew provides extra realism by adding the human element to a display or diorama. into the commander, gunner, loader, driver, and co-driver/front machine gun operator. All of the figures are dressed in variations of the standard tanker uniform of late World War II.

Each figure consists of a torso, two legs from the waist down, two arms, and a head with a separate helmet. Two styles of helmets are included, one standard steel hel-

met and four tanker helmets. There are three .45 caliber M3 submachine guns popularly called “grease guns” and five .45 cal semi-automatic pistols. The submachine guns are used by three of the tankers, while there is one .45 pistol in hand, two more in shoulder holsters, and two in belt holsters. The commander, the only one of the figures wearing the standard steel helmet, is positioned to be firing the .50 caliber machine gun mounted on the tank turret. The other four are in various positions of searching for targets, or firing their hand weapons.

Paragrafix 1/32 Star Trek TOS Bridge Display Screens

Paragrafix offers a line of detail parts for science fiction kits including its Star Trek TOS Bridge Display Screens (PGX184). Plastic model kits based on the famous *Star Trek* television series have been around, as difficult to



A Star Trek U.S.S. Enterprise will come alive by adding the Paragrafix command bridge metal frames and display screens. believe as it might be, for almost 50 years. The original series debuted on TV in 1966 and ran for three seasons before being canceled. AMT was the first company to release kits of the U.S.S. Enterprise, the Klingon Battle Cruiser, and the Romulan Bird of Prey. In the early 70s, AMT also released a 1/32 kit of the U.S.S. Enterprise Command Bridge, complete with three figures. A couple of years ago, AMT released an updated kit, which featured additional new figures and details. Wall sections were added to build the full set, as well as parts to assemble figures from the series, including Captain Kirk, Mr. Spock, Dr. McCoy, Sulu, Chekov, Uhura and Scotty.

Paragrafix has produced detail sets for a number of kits from various manufacturers, with the detail sets being well known for accuracy and quality, and the Star Trek TOS Bridge Display Screens is a perfect example. The set combines photoetched metal frames with film screens for the displays at each station around the bridge, including a large screen for the main viewer at the front of the bridge.

The illustrated instructions provide templates for correct positioning to cut the plastic to fit the screens. The graphics on the screens are crisp and colorful, and would be spectacular if used with a lighting system for the full effect. As a bonus, three photoetched scanners are included, which will require folding for assembly. Based on the level of skill required, this set is intended for experienced modelers who are accustomed to modifying or scratchbuilding model components.

Quickboost A-37 Dragonfly Ejection Seats

Quickboost has been producing molded resin replacement and detail parts for scale models for a number of years. The injection molding process for plastic model kits has



Resin casting of parts, such as these ejection seats, allows details to be added that cannot be duplicated in molded plastic.

always had some minor limitations. Although technological advancements have greatly increased the accuracy and level of molded detail, it cannot adequately produce some of the finer, more subtle details on plastic surfaces like resin molding can. Quickboost products are an excellent option for increasing the level of detail with finely molded resin replacements for plastic parts. Most of the parts from Quickboost are kit-specific,

meaning that the parts are manufactured to fit, and are recommended for, one particular kit. While it would be possible, with some level of modification, to fit the parts into similar kits, the parts are designed to be drop-in replacements for the recommended kits.

One of Quickboost products is a set of ejection seats for the Trumpeter 1/48 A-37 Dragonfly kit. The seats in the Trumpeter kit are extremely nice and well-detailed on their own, comprised of a seat bucket with separate sides and ejection rails, and the kit includes photoetched metal should and seatbelt harnesses for added authenticity. The Quickboost replacements do not require assembly, only removal from the resin pour block, and are ready to paint

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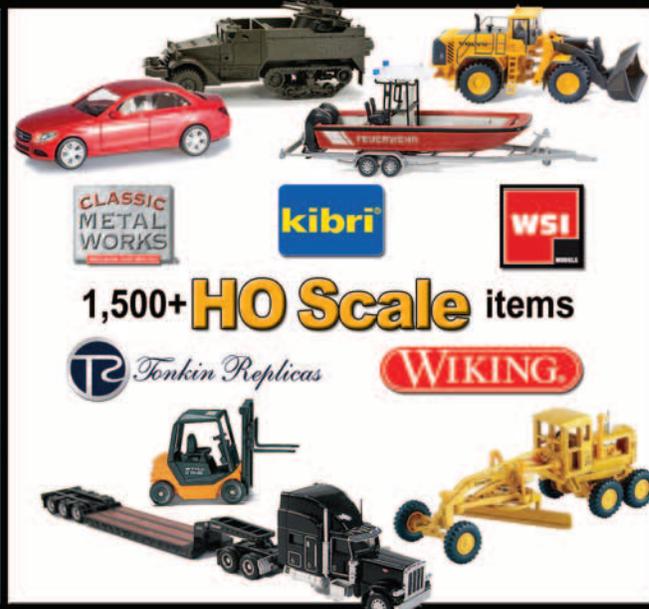




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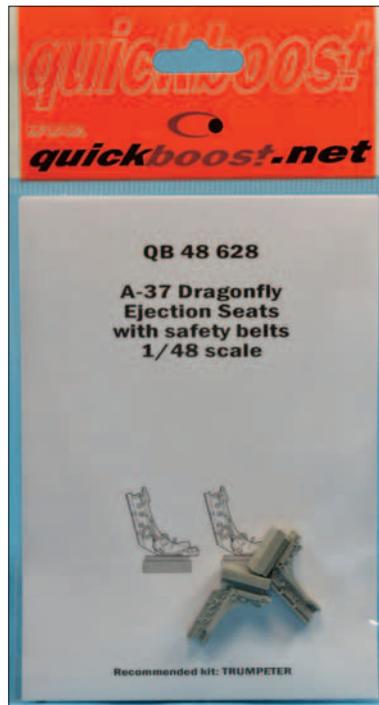
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and install. Each seat has the rails, harnesses and wiring molded into the frame, and the harnesses are molded differently so the seats are not identical. Once painted with the base colors, a quick dark wash will enhance the shadows, and a bit of drybrushing will bring out the highlights. The seats can be attached inside the cockpit with either a cyanoacrylate or epoxy-type glue, as regular plastic cement will not work on the resin. The A-37 has a large canopy which would allow the cockpit to be seen quite clearly through the glass areas, and the Quickboost Ejection Seats would add another dimension of detail for that miniature masterpiece.

Uschi Model Accessories Nose Weight Putty

Uschi Model Accessories has released its Three Green Flexible Nose Weight Putty. Since World War II, many aircraft have been designed with “tricycle” landing gear, with one wheel at the front or under the nose and two wheels in the wings or fuselage. Model aircraft, of course, are designed to be replicas of full size aircraft, and many of those have the same landing gear arrangement. Nothing is more frustrating than to install



Quickboost offers a number of resin components, but the purchaser needs to be aware they are kit specific.

the landing gear, turn the model over, and have it drop “kerplunk” into a tail-sitter. Most modelers install weights in the open areas in the front of model airplanes to insure that they sit on all three landing gear. Some aircraft just do not have room for adequate weight, particularly if the cockpit is right at the front. Weights can sometimes be added into the engine nacelles for aircraft with two engines, but it takes a lot more weight to be effective.

The Three Green name comes from pilots lingo, with “three green, no red” signifying that the landing gear indicator lights are all green, meaning the gear is down, locked and ready for landing. The malleable putty can be shaped to fit the area where it is applied, and it is adhesive, so it will stick to the plastic and remain securely in place. The substance does contain lead, so the instructions recommend wearing gloves when using it. This would likely mean that the product is more appropriate for adult modelers, but juniors should be able to use it with proper adult supervision.

The container is quite heavy, weighing 100 grams, and should provide enough putty to build approximately ten model aircraft. **HM**

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