Keith Pruitt

Model Kit Report

New Products and Tools

New kits, and a new airbrush manufacturer enters the market.

Hasegawa 1/72 F-4B/N Phantom II

Hasegawa has just released its 1/72 F-4B/N Phantom II kit. The McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantom II is a tandem two-seat, twin-engine, all-weather, long-range supersonic jet interceptor fighter/fighter-bomber aircraft. Originally entering service in 1960 with the U.S. Navy, it was also quickly adopted for use by the Marines and Air Force. The F-4 was the principal air superiority fighter for both the Navy and Air Force during the Vietnam War, along with serving in ground attack and photo reconnaissance missions. It served as recently as the 1991 Gulf War, finally being retired in 1996. The U.S. Navy's VF-151 and U.S. Marine Corps' VMFA-115 were among the first squadrons to be equipped with F-4B in 1964. VF-111 transitioned to the upgraded F-4N in the mid-1970s.

The Hasegawa 1/72 F-4B/N Phantom II kit features a detailed cockpit, with nicely molded ejection seats and

Hasegawa has just released a 1/72 McDonald Douglas F-4B/N Phantom II that contains a host of build options.

consoles, as well as open-or-closed canopies, optional-position slatted stabilizers and inboard ordnance pylons with missile rails. While the kit comes with instructions and decal markings for three aircraft, this could be a perfect opportunity for dealers to increase add-on sales by

Trumpeter now includes the 1/700 Italian Battleship RN Roma 1943 *in its lineup. The model is likely to be in high demand.*

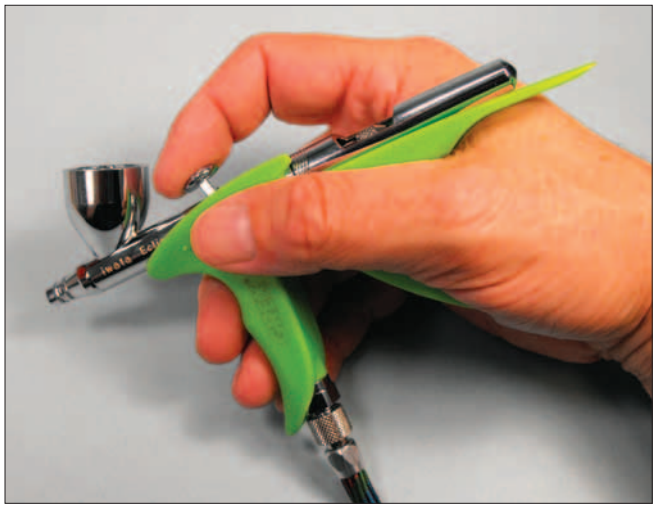
recommending the Hasegawa weapons set, as missiles are not included in this kit. With the beautiful markings in this kit and historical importance of the F-4B/N, many aircraft modelers would be delighted to have the chance to build this model. Hasegawa products are available from Hasegawa USA through Great Planes.

Trumpeter 1/700 Italian Navy Battleship RN Roma *1943*

Trumpeter recently released its 1/700 Italian Navy Battleship RN *Roma* 1943. The Battleship *Roma*, much like a character in an Italian opera, lived a short and tragic life. Built as part of the 35,000 ton "Vittorio Venet" ship class, it was the last and greatest design of an Italian battleship. When the news broke of Italy signing an armistice with the Allies in September 1943, the *Roma*, along with other capital ships of the Italian Navy, went to sea on the pretext of attacking Allied fleet units approaching Italy. In reality, they were heading for Malta to comply with terms of the armistice to surrender at an Allied port. Unfortunately for the RN *Roma*, the Germans were not fooled and attacked their former ally as they attempted to defect. The ship was sunk with great loss of life, including the Italian admiral who was leading the fleet to surrender.

The Trumpeter 1/700 *Roma* kit comes with the option of building the ship as a waterline version, which would be ideal for a diorama, or as a full hull version, complete with a display stand. The kit features a multi-

tude of outstanding details, including 20 life rafts that can be attached to the top of the gun turrets (just as the Italians stored them), positionable gun barrels, seven types of cutters, launches, other boats kept on board, floatplanes to go along with the large stern catapult and photo-etched detail parts, including funnel gratings and the delicate bridge window frames. The kit also includes fully illustrated instructions and decals. With the distinctive red-and-white striped foredeck and a multitude of fine details, the Trumpeter RN *Roma* 1943 kit will delight and amaze ship modelers and is likely to be in high demand. Trumpeter products are available from Stevens International and Squadron Products.



The Grex Grip Set adds a pistol grip to any traditional style airbrush. When installed, it provides a comfortable hand position with an ergonomic benefit for long periods of airbrush use.

The Grex TG comes with three interchangeable top-mounted paint cups and features a non-traditional trigger control.

Grex Airbrush

Grex Airbrush offers a variety of airbrushes and accessories that will benefit scale modelers, diorama builders and general hobbyists of virtually every genre. Almost every model kit, except perhaps a few pre-painted snap-together kits, have something printed on the box similar to "paint and glue not included." With the number of high-quality kits, aftermarket details and diorama materials, an airbrush is often the best possible way to detail an accurate and realistic miniature vehicle, structure or scene. Rather than use a central distribution agency, Grex

Airbrush deals directly with hobby dealers to sell its products. Sales and Marketing Director Raymond Wong says, "We at Grex prefer the personal contact with the hobby dealers as this gives us a chance to have a better working relationship with each dealer on an individual basis."

Grex Airbrush has a somewhat unique series of double-action airbrushes, the Tritium series, which includes the Tritium.TS side-feed and the Tritium.TG gravity-feed versions. Other than the paint feed, the two versions have identical mechanical attributes and features. Both the TS and the TG have a pistol-grip style body that includes a two-stage trigger controlling both air flow and paint spray. The ergonomically designed hand grip is textured for a more secure grip while staying soft and comfortable in the hand. The 3-series is the standard model, with a 0.3 mm nozzle and needle combination in the TS3 and TG3, but other versions are offered with a .02mm and .05mm combinations. For the convenience of dealers and hobbyists, Grex Airbrush also offers the Nozzle Conversion Sets separately. This allows a hobbyist to purchase a standard airbrush for general-purpose painting but to conveniently convert the tool for broad coverage or fine detail work by changing the needle/nozzle combination as needed.

Painting with the TG is a different experience from using a traditional double-action airbrush. But the TG is also user friendly and somewhat intuitive to use.

The Grex Tritium.TG comes with three interchangeable top mounted paint cups in incremental sizes. On the review sample the O-ring seal around the threads disappeared at some point but wasn't noticed. The tolerances engineered into the airbrush are such that losing the seal did not affect the body-cup connection at all, as the cup screwed into the body tightly and no leakage occurred. For extremely fine detail painting applications, when using the 0.2mm tip and needle, the color cup can be left off completely and a small amount of paint used in the open reservoir of the airbrush body.

The patented Quick-Fit needle caps, both the standard cap and the crown-style detail cap, are magnetized to attach firmly to the front of the airbrush for spraying. Each can be conveniently stored on the back of the handle when the other is in use. However, the magnetic needle cap should be removed if an airbrush cleaning station is used as the cap can come off when the airbrush is inserted in the cleaning spray port and become lodged inside (yes, this did happen). Along with the airbrush, interchangeable

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color cups, regular and crown needle caps and paint tip wrench, the set also includes two airhose adapters for use with an alternate manufacturer's compressor and an outstanding owner's manual.

The manual is of special note, as it is almost an instruction book on airbrushing in general. It is filled not only with important product information but also with extremely thorough cleaning procedures as well as tips and techniques to improve a user's airbrushing skills. The set comes packaged in a plastic storage case with a foam liner to hold everything securely in place.

All Grex airbrushes come packaged in a simple but functional box designed to prevent damage.

Painting with the Tritium.TG is a different experience from using a traditional double action airbrush. While pistol grip sprayers have been used for decades in a variety of industries, they are not yet common in the hobby industry. There is a short learning curve for a modeler who is accustomed to a traditional airbrush. However, the Tritium is very user friendly and somewhat intuitive to use. As the trigger is pulled back, the air valve is opened and air begins to flow through the nozzle. At approximately the halfway point, the needle is engaged and paint flow begins. The process is very solid and controlled, allowing a user to easily gauge the exact point when paint begins to flow. As the trigger is released, paint flow stops while air flow continues until the trigger reaches the stop point. There are a couple of distinct advantages to this design. It should eliminate any residual paint remaining on the needle or tip to potentially spatter during the next painting pass, which can happen with inexperienced users. And for those who use acrylic paint, this design will likely to help reduce "tip dry," when excess paint dries on the tip and blocks paint flow. With a variety of nice features and the ease of use and maintenance, the Grex Airbrush Tritium.TG is an outstanding tool of exceptional value.

Grex Airbrush also makes a Grex Airbrush Grip Set, which adds a pistol grip to the traditional style airbrush. When installed, it provides a comfortable hand position with an ergonomic benefit for long periods of airbrush use. The Airbrush Grip Set is designed to fit several different manufacturers' airbrushes, making it a potentially great-selling product. **HM**