

The Aero Historian



Volume 56 Number 3

Website: <http://www.aerohistorians.org>

March 2023



Eduard Limited Edition VLR 1/48 P-51D
by **Mark L. Rossmann**

Iwo Jima VLR Mustangs by Mark L. Rossmann

History

The "Sun Setters", were the VLR Mustang pilots of the 15th, 21st and 506th Fighter groups, VII Fighter Command. Based on the volcanic island, Iwo Jima in the Pacific Ocean, they flew 650-mile missions to Tokyo and back, if

you made it, you were a member of the "Tokyo Club". VII Fighter Command flew 51 Very Long-Range missions to Japan from April 7 to August 14, 1945, initially flying B-29 escort missions, ground attack missions followed including 140 strikes against targets in the Bonin Islands. Final accounting of the Sun Setters was 225 confirmed aerial kills and 219 ground kills,

while 131 P-51's and 99 pilots were lost to all causes.

The 21st FG arrived shortly after the 15th FG, making their home at Central Field (Airfield 2), being declared operational on March 24th. Two days later the 549th NFS, the 21st FG and an Army African-American labor unit bore the brunt of a Banzai attack

(Continued on page 3)

TCAH Officers

President, Mark Copeland

Vice-President, Steve Hustad

Secretary, Bob Maderich

Treasurer, Dennis Strand

Historian, Merrill Anderson

Newsletter Info

Article Submission Deadline: 22nd of each month

Editor

Bob Arko

6417 Rice Court

Lino Lakes, MN 55014

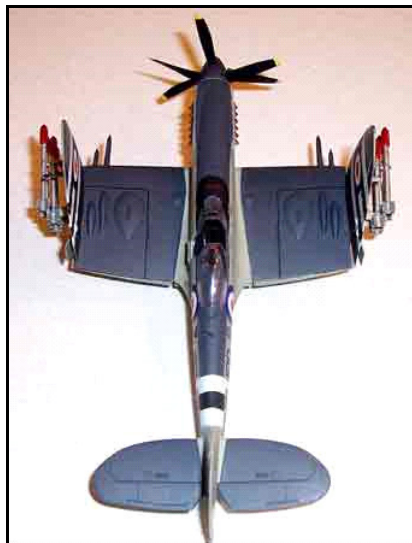
651-481-8887

boba@arkokraft.com

Send Change of Address Notice to:
Dennis Strand

TCAH This Month

The monthly meeting will be held Saturday March 11, at Fleming Field, South St. Paul, beginning at 1:00 pm. Come early.



President's Address

by Mark Copeland

I hope everyone is thawing out from this tough winter we've all experienced. I am ready to welcome the spring weather with open arms. And with springtime, comes the beginning of the *model show season!!*

The first one of the year was Madison and the annual **Mad-City Modelers** show which was held on March 4th at the Alliant Energy Center. Per usual, the guys in the Wisconsin capital did a bang up job!! The facility also will be the sight for the upcoming 2024 IPMS USA National Convention. It's an awesome venue and will be very welcome to the convention attendees. I will certainly be one of them!!!

In our region, there are some more great events coming up in the near future.

April 1, 2023

IPMS Plastic Surgeons

SurgiCon 27

Samuel H. Bridge American Legion Post #396

315 2nd Street NW,
Bondurant, IA, 50035

9:00am to 05:00pm

April 15, 2023

IPMS Alexander Lippisch Chapter

FleaCon 19

Monticello Berndes Center

766 North Maple Street

Monticello, Iowa 52310

May 6, 2023

IPMS Fort Crook
OmaCon 23
Omaha Police Officers Association

13445 Cryer Ave.

Omaha, NE 68114-2500

May 20, 2023

IPMS Northwoods Scale Model Phanatics

IPMS Region 5 Convention 2023

Eagle River Derby Convention Hall

1311 North Railroad Street

Eagle River, Wisconsin 54521

It looks like an active beginning to the model show season!! Get out and enjoy!!

As for other items of interest, we should have a new and up-to-date club roster available at the March meeting. A big thanks goes out to Bob Ferreira and his very lovely wife Jill for all their help in making our current roster!!

Our March theme is **Helicopters**, so bring your rotors to the next meeting!!

Our April meeting will be our annual club auction!! This is always a fun event and a great chance to help out the club coffers!! All proceeds will benefit the club, so look through your stash, your bookshelves and other aviation/modeling related items and bring them to the auction to help out the club. We ask that you don't bring any models for display in April, because the auction will not only fill up our table display space, but in the interest of our tight timetable.

The traveling exhibit, **Vietnam Memorial – The Wall That Heals** will be making a stop here in the Twin Cities at St. Thomas Academy, May 26th to 29th, 2023. This powerful and moving exhibit is a replication of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington D.C. It displays the over 58,000 names of the men

(Continued on page 3)

<p>and women that paid the ultimate sacrifice during the Vietnam War. I encourage you to take the time to see it, you won't regret it.</p> <p>It looks like a wonderful start to 2023 for the Twin City Aero Historians!! See you all at the March meeting!!</p> 	<p><i>(Continued from page 1)</i></p> <p>of around 300 Japanese. The 21st FG had 14 killed and 50 wounded. Total casualties were 44 killed and 88 wounded. This proved to be the closing action of the ground campaign on Iwo except for small pockets to be rooted out by the Army. The 147th infantry was then stationed on Airfield 2 for perimeter guard duty. Major Booth was sent to Hawaii to recover from his wounds with Col Powell taking over as CO, as did Maj. John S. (Sam) Hudson of the 531st.</p>	<p>prevented all Mustangs in every squadron to have them. This allowed a max of 3 '5' inch rockets under each wing with a 165 gallon drop tank.</p> <p>Another unique item, code named "Josephine" was the droppable rescue kit in a modified 110 gallon drop tank. It consisted of a survival radio, an A-3 life raft, rations and visual signal equipment. This was initially constructed by Cpt James Tapp and Cpt Vic Mollan, of the 78th FS, 15th FG.</p>
<p>Treasurer's Report <i>by Dennis Strand</i></p> <p>Hello everyone. As I write this report, there have been no expenses or revenues in the past 30 days. The club balance remains at \$3812.84. Keep in mind that our club auction is coming up in April this year. It is not too early to dig through your unbuilt collection and see what you might have to offer in the club event. Don't forget books, decals, after market accessories, etc. This is a primary source of TCAH's annual income.</p> 	<p>On March 30, the first 21st FG flying casualty occurred when 2nd Lt Albert J Tondora was killed in a crash on Iwo. There first mission was a bombing mission against a radar site on Chichi-Jima.</p> <p>Black Friday, June 1, occurred when a large weather front was entered by all 3 Fighter groups, 15th, 21st and 506th. As a result, 27 planes and 24 pilots were lost, on that day's mission no plane was lost to fighters or ground fire. Among the 21st FG losses were formation lead Maj Chapin.</p>	<p>"Uncle Dog" homing beacon, was the innovative modification of twin AN/ANA-8 VHF homing adapters. These were installed on the spine of P-51, moving the AN-104-A radio mast mounting between the front wheel wells. A "Mother Hen" B-29 would send out a homing beacon to and from Japan, which was picked up and converted to an audio signal. This was the international Morse Code letters of "U" or "D". The transponder beacon allowed the pilots to navigate the plane until a steady tone was heard in the headset to indicate they were on course.</p>
<p>Monthly Themes 2023 March 2023 - Helicopters April 2023 – Annual Club Auction May - Axis June 2023 - Carrier Aircraft/ Carriers July 2023 – Sci Fi Aug 2023 - 1/32 Scale September 2023 – Korea/ Viet Nam October – Ukrainian War November – Interwar Years December – White Elephant – Christmas Event</p> 	<p>The P-51's carried 110 gallon drop tanks for the VLR missions and 165-gallon tanks when carrying rockets for an attack mission or Air Sea rescue top cover sorties. Sway braces were fashioned out of scrap plywood for the larger tanks for extra support. But the wood warped or bent causing the tanks to release improperly. Scrap metal was then collected, by the engineering sections, and fashioned for the bracing which solved the problem.</p> <p>Rocket kits became available in May and a few squadrons were installing them. However, the lack of kit availability</p>	<p>A signal was also transmitted from Mt. Suribachi to aid navigation to the island. "Uncle Dog" was installed on the last P-51's in mid-June.</p> <p>Another obstacle was the new K-14A gunsight. Pilots had no training for them and the gunsights and parts were not in supply until late summer.</p> <p>Note: Models 1 and 3 were built from 2007 to 2009. At the time I felt the Tamiya was the best out there. It has now taken second place, in my opinion, to the Eduard Mustang. Great building instructions, fine rivets</p> <p><i>(Continued on page 6)</i></p>





(Continued from page 3)

and panel lines. Well planned front windscreen, clear to the front of it, giving an excellent interpretation of how it should look.

I used parts from the Eduard kit to redo several items in the existing models, I will note in the descriptions.

Aircraft

Unit: 46th F.S.

Aircraft numbers assigned were 200 to 249 and were commanded in the following order;

Maj. Fred A Shirley - 11/20/44 to 05/45

Maj. Benjamin C Warren - 5/45 to 6/45

Maj. Robert L. McDonald - 7/45 to EOW

Aircraft: #227 "Mary Alyce" / "My Miss Moe", P-51D-20 SN 44-63451 - Unknown disposition

Pilot: Lt. Robert J. Louwers / Lt. John E. Montgomery.

Model: Tamiya 1/48th - AeroMaster 48-797

Notes: This model depicts a July 1945 time frame. The unit used a blue tail band, blue nose and blue wing tips bordered by black and a black nose band. Louwers was also the photography officer. Pin-ups were rare for 46th machines, "Mary Alyce" was named after his wife, it is not known if the picture is his wife. Aircraft has 14 mission markings.

Eduard: The right-side name of "My Miss Moe" was not provided with the AeroMaster decals, obtained from the Eduard decal sheet.

Unit: 72nd F.S.

Aircraft numbers assigned were 250 to 299 and were

commanded in the following order;

Maj. Paul W. Imig - 1944 to 05/45

Maj. James C. Van Nada - 05/45 to EOW

Aircraft: #250 "Dede Lou", P-51D-20 SN 44-63733 - Unknown disposition

Pilot: Maj. Paul W. Imig till May 1945.

Model: Eduard Limited Edition VLR 1/48th - Kit Decal

Notes: Imig was an old timer, originally with the 333rd FS, with their P-39's, were sent to Canton Island in late 1942. Then he posted to Australia, offering to take a demotion, if the 5th A.F. would assign him to combat. Upon rejection of offer, he was sent to Hawaii to command the 72nd FS. Leading the unit to Iwo Jima, Imig completed several combat missions over Japan posting no kills. He returned to the U.S. in mid-May of '45', after being overseas for more than 3 years. "Dede Lou" was his then girlfriend, whom he married. The Mustang completed 26 missions from airfield #2, by various pilots, with only 1 abort for a radio problem.

Notes: This model depicts a June of 1945 time frame, after Imig left. The unit used a yellow tail band, yellow nose and yellow wing tips bordered by black and a black nose band.

Eduard: This is an all-Eduard build, including decals. It is depicted with the 110-gallon drop-tank with the wooden sway bars. I dirtied this one up, as Iwo kept the maintenance crews busy with the messy black volcanic sands. The twin UHF antennas were actually made out of wood which were included in the kit as plastic, the other 2 planes I used toothpicks to fashion the antenna.

Unit: 531st F.S.

Aircraft numbers assigned were 300 to 349 and were commanded in the following order;

Maj. John S. (Sam) Hudson - 04/15/44 to 03/26/45 (WIA)

Maj. Harry C. Crim Jr. - 03/26/45 to EOW

Aircraft: #300 "My Achin!" P-51D-25 SN 44-73623 - Disposition reassigned to Theo Gruici in August '45'. Plane moved to Guam after the war, renumbering to 3623.

Pilot: Lt. Maj. Harry Crim

Model: Hasegawa 1/48th - AeroMaster 48-794

Notes: Crim had completed his first tour of duty flying P-38's in the MTO, with no kills.

He joined the 21st FG/72nd F.S. in August of 1944 as Operations Officer. He became CO of the 531st FG when Major Hudson was wounded in the Banzai attack and sent to Pearl.

Crim was an aggressive combat leader and scored 6 kills, the first and second were a Ki-45 and Ki-61. Also 6 more aircraft destroyed on the ground, 18 VLR mission markers and 6 fighter sweep markers adorn his P-51. This was one of three -25 replacements delivered from Guam.

Notes: This model depicts a July 1945 time frame. With the 165 gallon drop tanks and metal sway bars along with a full load of rockets. The unit used a white tail band, white nose and white wing tips bordered by black and a black nose band. Pin-up girl is on the port landing gear door.

Eduard: Removed the original drop tanks and used the

(Continued on page 8)

On The Table—February 2023

Modeler's name	Title of Subject	Manufacturer	Scale
Mark Copeland	P-47D Thunderbolt	Tamiya	1/72
Steve Hustad	Albatross W.4 (early)	Roden	1/72
	Hansa Brandenburg C.I.	Sierra Scale	1/72
Dennis Strand	Grunau Baby IIb	Planet Models	1/48
	Stummel Habicht	Kovozavodi	1/48
Dave Gatts	F4C Phantom II	Hasegawa	1/72
	F4E Phantom II	Hasegawa	1/72
Erik Zabel	Apollo-Soyuz	Dragon	1/72
	KI-43 'Oscar'	Fine Molds	1/48
Bob Maderich	Wilys Jeep (in progress)	Hasegawa	1/25
	Laird Turner Meteor	Dekno	1/72
	1927 Miller 91 Indy car	SMTS	1/43
Don Stauffer	Mercury Atlas	Atlantis	
	Aereane Heavy		
	Titan III	MPC	1/144
	Hubble telescope		
John Gamlin	USS Donaldson DE44	Iron shipwrights	1/350
Rob Zielinski	ME-262 A1-A	Hobby Boss	1/48
Dave Prettyman	RAF Hurricane	Pegasus	1/48
Ed Vigilante	Gemini Spacecraft	Revell	1/24
Bill Read	Model T ambulance	ICM	1/35
Josh Barney	Mercury Friendship 7	Atlantis	1/110
	Eagle Lunar Lander	Revell	1/48
	Albatross DIII	Revell	1/48
Steve Jantscher	F-35 (in progress)	Tamiya	1/48
	And some great cutting mats and guides		
Paul Dial	1978 GMC truck	AMT	1/25
	German Tiger III	Meng	1/35
	Warhammer Predator	Citadel	1/35
Doug Hollingsworth	T-62 on a truck	Dragon	1/35
	Destroyer	MPC	1/24
	Nova II	Revell	1/24
	Rat Rod	'Parts kit'	1/24

(Continued from page 6)

165 gallon drop tank and metal sway bars from Eduard kit. All other parts are from the Hasegawa kit.

Epilogue:

The 21st FG flew its last combat mission 14 August 1945. The group received the Distinguished Unit Citation on 13 November 1945 specifically for its outstanding conduct during the earlier raid on Nakajima.

The last two weeks of August 1945, flying was restricted to the local area around Iwo Jima, waiting to hear of actual signing of the peace agreement. On August 31, the 'Sun Setters' were assigned a final VLR mission to Japan - a 'Display of Power' flight over Japan, led by Col Harper of the 506th FG. Few wanted to risk another long haul over the Pacific, and an incident did

happen, 1Lt William S Hetland of the 457th FS, experienced engine trouble over the target area. Fortunately, he made a safe landing at Atsugi Airfield and returned to Iwo aboard a C-46.

On 2 September, Brig Gen 'Mickey' Moore boarded an LB-30 Liberator transport with orders reassigning him to the Pentagon. Most veteran pilots and ground personnel, with in the week, began getting their tickets home. VII Fighter Command began shrinking rapidly, and in October pre-separation lectures were instituted for the men.

Late in the year, the headquarters was moved to Guam and re-designated the 20th FW. The 506th FG was deactivated in mid-November and its remaining personnel transferred to the 21st FG. The 21st FG finally transferred to

Saipan in the final weeks of 1945 and then moved to Guam, where it was re-designated the 23rd FG in October 1946.

These are among the last USAAF Mustang units to be activated for combat. If you would like to know more about the VII Fighter command, the Banzai attack and the storm of June 1, you will enjoy reading the following:

References: Osprey Aviation Elite Units – Very Long Range Mustang Units of the Pacific War – Author: Carl Molesworth.

Decals: AeroMaster 48-794 through 797 and SuperScale 48-1152.

Web Site: [https://7thfighter.com/21stfg/index.htm#:~:text=The%2021st%20Fighter%20Group%20\(FG,%2C%20the%20P%2D39Q%20Airacobra.](https://7thfighter.com/21stfg/index.htm#:~:text=The%2021st%20Fighter%20Group%20(FG,%2C%20the%20P%2D39Q%20Airacobra.)



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.



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.

