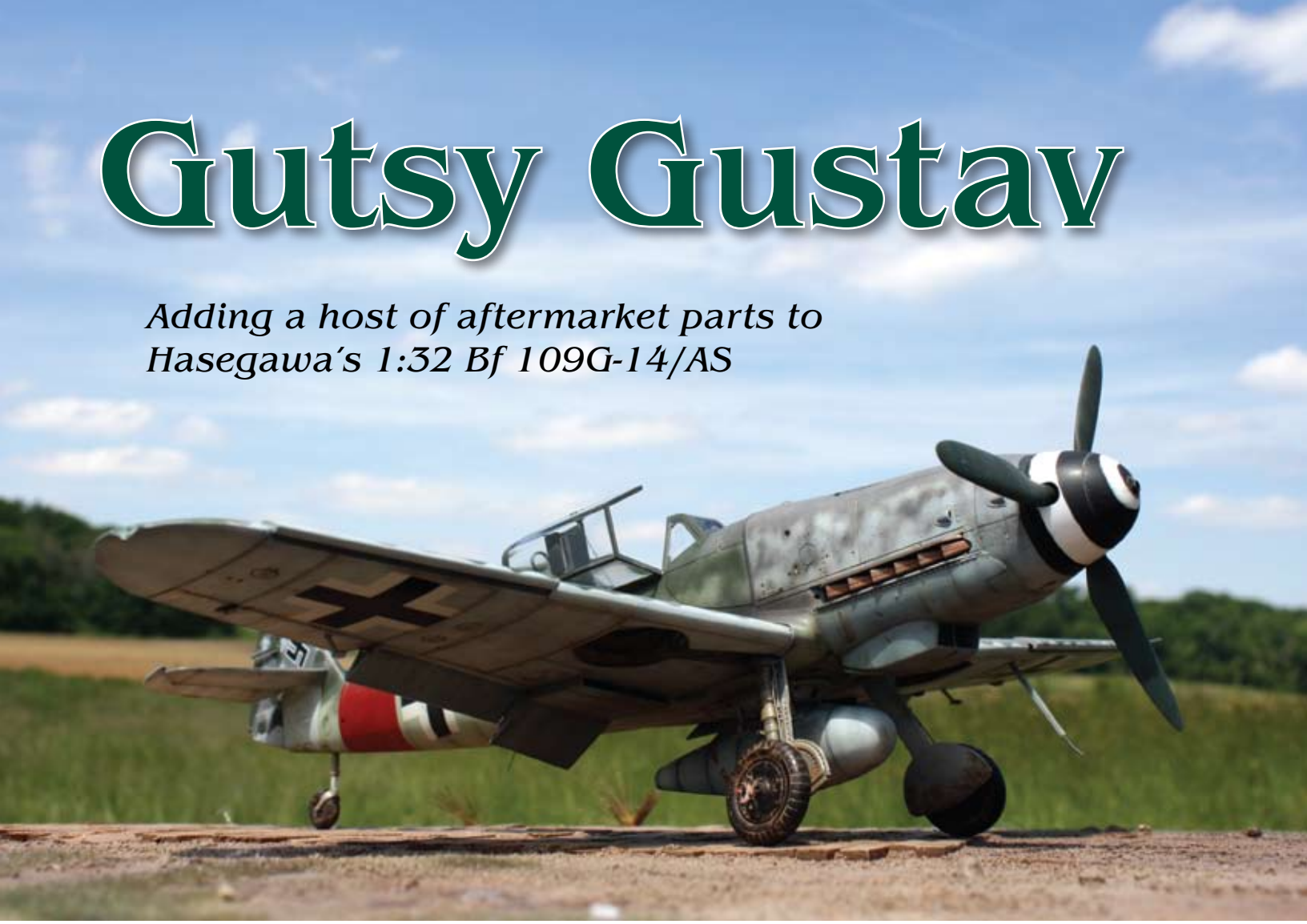
Gutsy Gustav

Adding a host of aftermarket parts to Hasegawa's 1:32 Bf 109G-14/AS



by Floyd Werner

By the summer of 1944, the Bf 109 airframe was almost out of room for improvement – but not quite. Daimler-Benz engineers mated the large supercharger of the DB 603 engine with the standard powerplant of the Bf 109G, the DB 605 A, to create the DB 605 AS. Putting this new engine into the Bf 109G required a reshaped engine cowling and broad-chord VDM 9-12159 propeller, along with some other small changes. Adding the DB 605 AS also added the suffix "AS" to the aircraft designation. About 700 Bf 109G-6/AS and 1000 Bf 109G-14/AS were delivered to the Luftwaffe.

Hasegawa has set the benchmark for the Bf 109 in 1:32 scale. Their kits are accurate, simple and easy to build. They build nicely out of the box, but are a little on the simple side. There is plenty of room for improvement. Enter the resin aftermarket people and for this build, in particular, Master Details. It's produced five simply marvelous upgrades for the Hasegawa kit, taking the whole kit through a metamorphosis with details that touch the entire model from nose to tail. There isn't a part of the kit that isn't addressed, but do they fit? We'll soon find out.

Like other Bf 109 variants, Hasegawa's Bf 109G-14/AS is packaged in a sturdy box with five sprues of flash-free light gray plastic. Also included is one clear sprue. The decals are typical Hasegawa decals, a little thick looking on the decal sheet but printed in perfect register. Decal options for two JG 300 machines are included.

Having built previous Hasegawa 1:32 scale 109s while filming the original Master Class video, I have plenty of experience with these kits. There are no big issues with construction, but there are some tips that will make it an easier time.

Prior to adding the cockpit, I partially assembled the fuselage. The fuselage halves were put together by joining the front and aft portions of each fuselage half. This allowed each half to be assembled with no need for filler. I used this time to fill the panel lines that were required and to open up the required openings. This is all explained completely in the instructions. I planned to use the Parts-R-Parts forward cowling with its lower oil filler access panel and aligned scoops, so I had to cut the forward upper cowling off. I also cut the rudder off to add the Loon Models tail later. It is easier to do this before the fuselage halves are joined.

Now that I had two fuselage halves, it was time to work the

cockpit into the halves. The kit cockpit is simple and OK out of the box, but I used the Master Details cockpit. It contains a unique feature that isn't found on other aftermarket sets – the parachute pack. This nice feature adds some needed color to the otherwise bland cockpit.

This set is designed for the G-6 kit, and since the engineering of the G-10 kit is completely different there was going to be some modeling involved. First off, the G-14/AS which I'm building would have had the battery box cover in the cockpit. How to address this and still use the Master Details cockpit? I could use the kit part but why do that when there is the beautiful Eagle Parts battery box?

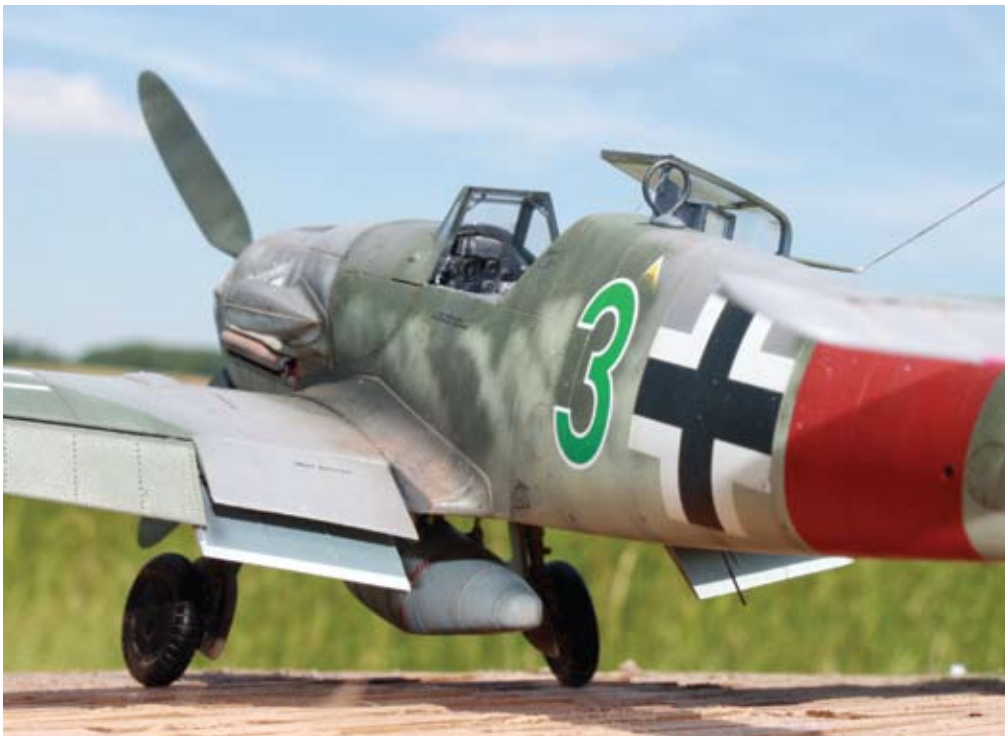
First, I used a micro-chisel and opened the molded-on cover from the Master Detail part. Once this was done, the rest was relatively easy. I did not add the battery box at this time because I had to fair the cockpit into the opening.

I followed the instructions for the cockpit area and thinned the side walls. One thing I noticed on the Master Detail parts prior to assembly was the lack of huge pour blocks, making clean-up a snap. I assembled the fuselage halves at this time. This was required to test-fit the cockpit, which showed that I had removed too much material. The back deck had to be removed and because of the engineering of the G-10 fuselage plug, that was pretty substantial. The G-6 kit would require less work. I had to cut the plug from the fuselage, but this was easy.

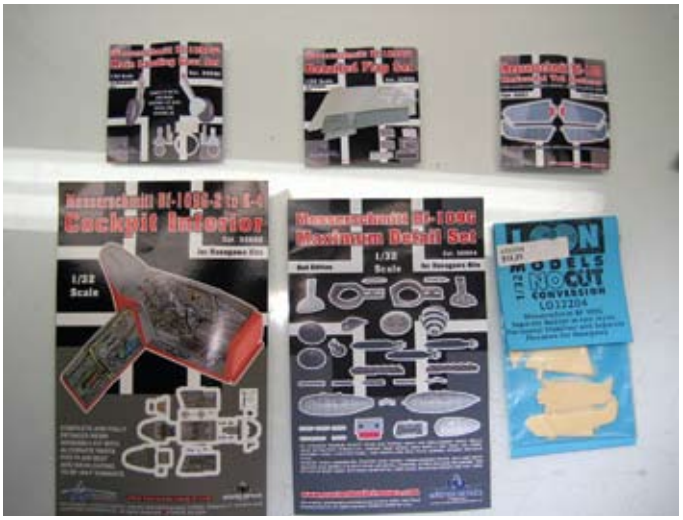
Assembly of the actual cockpit was very straightforward. I used cyanoacrylate (CA) glue to add the cockpit to the fuselage halves. The fit was not great (again, because it wasn't designed for this kit) and there were large gaps on the sides. I used some CA glue added from the bottom and used accelerator to set it in place. This filled the gap, but not completely. From the top, I used Apoxy Sculpt to fill the remaining area. This made the whole sanding operation easy. Once sanded smooth, I added the battery box and the other Eagle Parts canopy release mechanism pieces.

"Hasegawa has set the benchmark for the Bf 109 in 1:32, but there is always room for improvement."

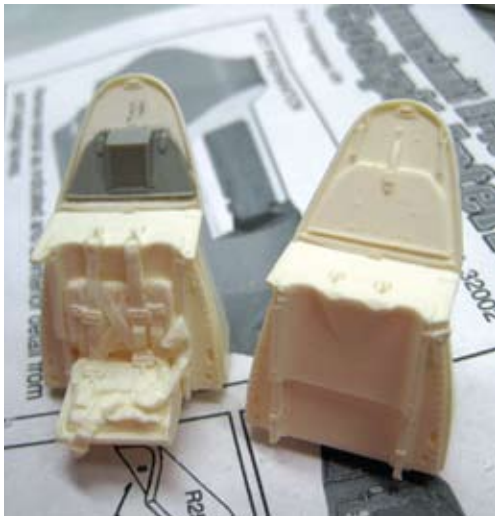
Painting started by a pre-shading of flat black. This was followed up with Tamiya dark gray. I added some white to the mix and hit the highlights with the lightened mixture. A turpenoid-thinned wash of black artists' oils added some additional shadows. Once this was all dried, I dry-brushed some RLM 02 and silver to get some wear and ultra-highlights. Some Apple Barrel artists' acrylic paints were used for the colors of various components. Silver pencil and a sponge dipped in Model Master aluminum paint added random wear. Mig Pigments were added to the floor to dirty it up. The final thing for the cockpit was a drop of Micro Kleer in the instrument faces to



Dropped flaps, a new tank and a new tail and horizontal stabilizers are among the aftermarket additions to this Bf 109G-14/AS.



Aftermarket, anyone? Here's a collection of resin bits that found a home on Floyd's Bf 109. At right, the Eagle Parts battery box after being added to the Master Parts cockpit rear bulkhead and seat (with parachute pack).

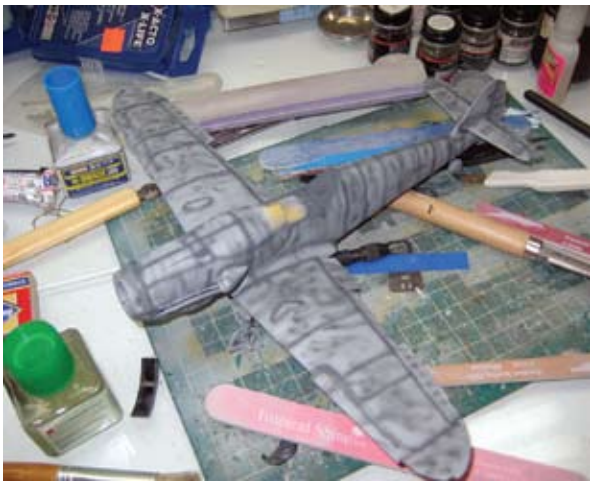


replicate the glass.

Another thing that I added was the kit's Revi-16 gunsight. This required a scratch-built mount as the Revi-16 actually rotated out of the way. It was stored rotated 90 degrees and closer to the instrument panel.

The fuselage upper cowling was added now. The fit was good, but like normal I sanded too much, so I ended up having to fill some with Apoxy Sculpt. I also added the Master Detail guns to the upper cowling prior to adding it. This just made it easier to add and align.

Before assembly of the wings it is important to open up the appropriate holes and fill the panel lines as the instructions show. This includes squaring off the wheel wells. This was good time to open up the holes in the belly panel for the drop tank mount before I forgot.



Floyd started the weathering process by pre-shading all the panel lines with RLM 66.

By far the most daunting task was the thinning of the area around the wheel wells. Master Details provides a unique filled-in wheel well that is far superior to the kit offering. I used saws and nippers to remove the big parts, then used a coarse sanding stick to make everything level. I used 400-grit sanding sticks to get the angle that was called for in the instructions. It sounded difficult but was actually easier than I thought. The wheel wells fit well and looked fabulous. I filled whatever gaps were left with Apoxy Sculpt. A smart modeler would have added the retraction mechanism on the inside of the parts now before he forgot them. I completely forgot the retraction struts. Oh, well – they are hardly noticeable.

I added the bulges for the wheels in the upper wing so I could fill the small holes in the wheel wells. It is much easier to do this now with the upper and lower wings separate.

Assembly of the wings was straightforward. I

After-Market:

Master Details

- Messerschmitt Bf-109G Cockpit
  Item No. 32002
  MSRP: $24.95
- Messerschmitt Bf-109G Maximum Detail Set
  Item No. 32004
  MSRP: $29.95
- Messerschmitt Bf-109F, G Detailed Flap Set
  Item No. 32005
  MSRP: $9.95
- Messerschmitt Bf-109F, G Main Landing Gear Set
  Item No. 32006
  MSRP: $12.95
- Messerschmitt Bf-109 Horizontal Tail Surface
  Item No. 32021
  MSRP: $9.95

EagleParts

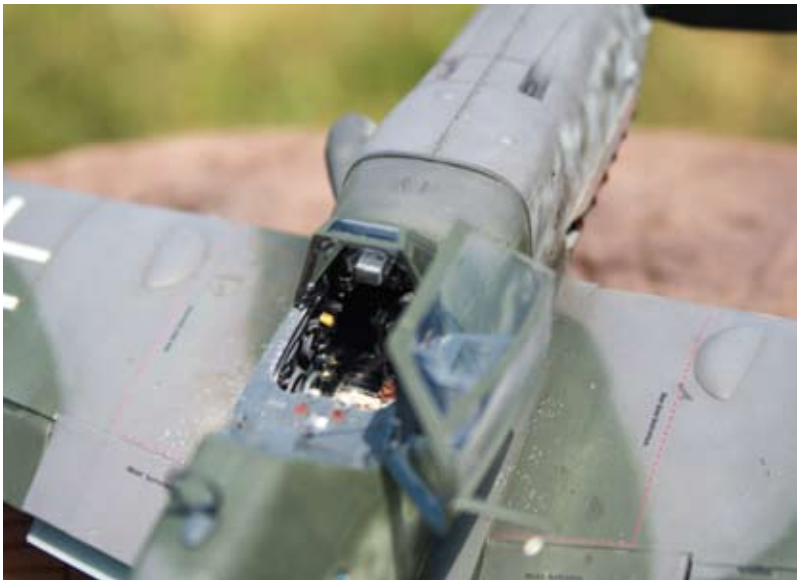
- Messerschmitt Bf-109G-6, G-10, G-14 Battery Box
  Item No. EP#22-32
  MSRP- $10.00

Parts-R-Parts

- Me-109G Nose Fix
  Item No. PRP#20
  MSRP: $6.00

Loon Models

- Messerschmitt Bf-109K-4 Detail set
  Item No. LO32203
  MSRP: $16.00



A scratch-built mount for the Revi-16 gunsight allowed it to be displayed in the stowed position.

added some actuators to the front of the radiators before mating the wings to the fuselage. The belly panel must be added at this point. Don't forget to open the holes for the drop tank mount if you plan on using it.

I added the wing truss to the belly panel. I've built plenty of the G-6 kits and have never had an issue with the truss assembly. This kit was different. I added some .005 styrene to the aft end of the panel to align the parts at this point and then added the truss to the panel. Fitting the panel to the fuselage proved that everything fit nicely – until I tried to add the wings. The wings would not line up at all. I had to sand the bottom of the truss assembly to allow the wings to be moved into place. It was nothing too bad, but I had never experienced this problem before.

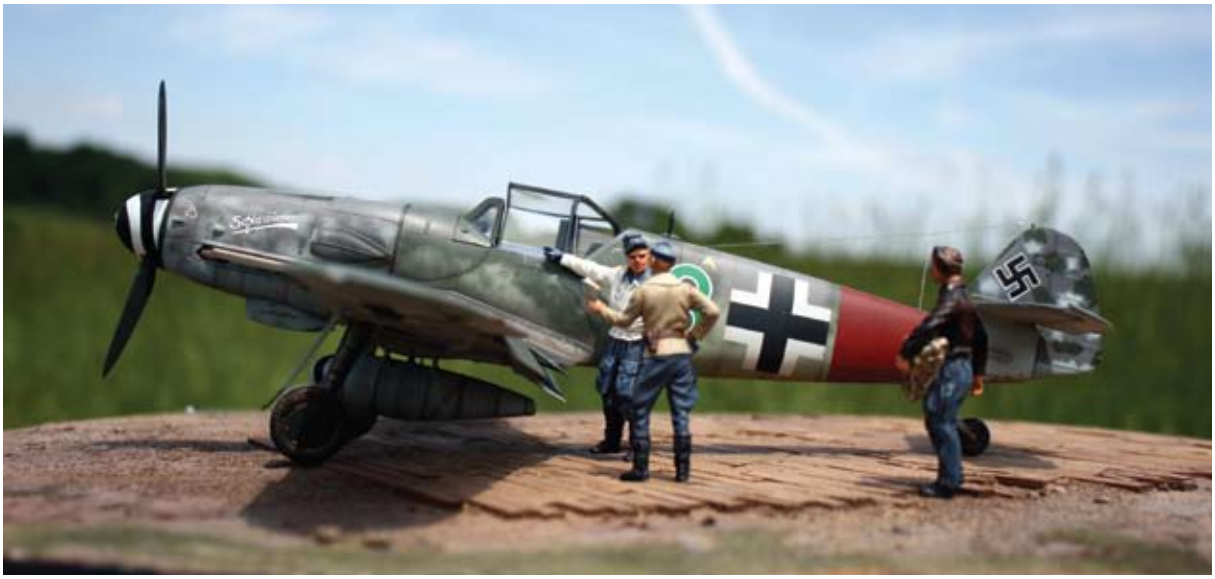
Once they were dry I added the Master Details flight controls. These little gems have a large amount of detail that isn't included on the kit parts and some very fine rivet patterns as well. They required no special mounting and simply replaced the kit parts.

I scratch-built a camera window on the left wing leading edge with a couple of pieces of styrene punched out with a Waldron Punch set.

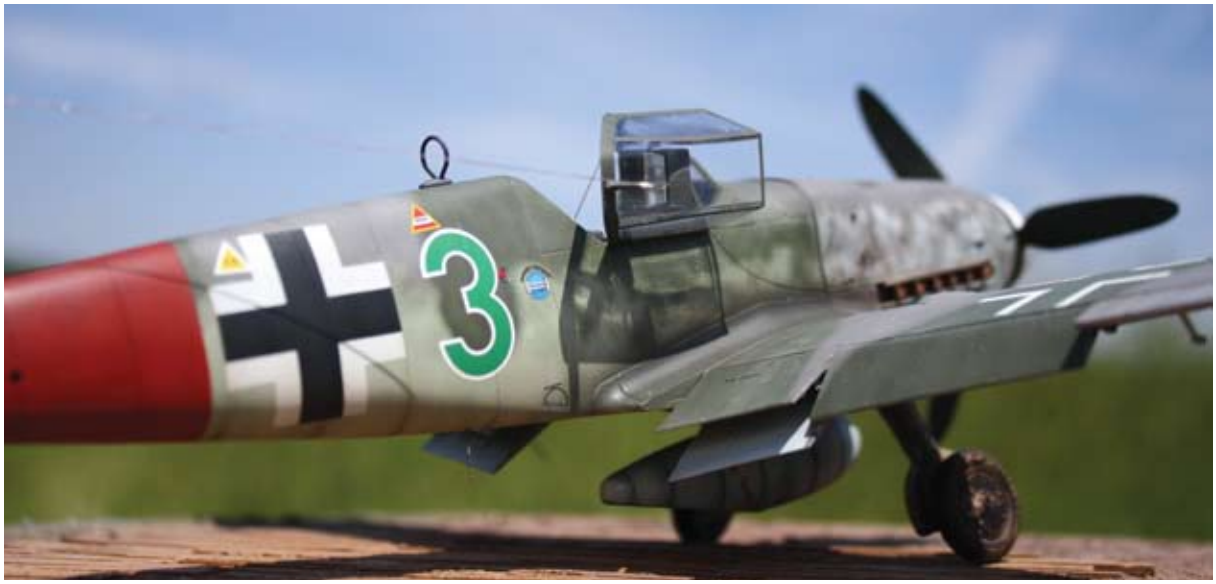
Now was a good time to add the tail surfaces. Master Details replaces the horizontal stabilizers and elevators in its set. They fit great and are very easy to use. The same can be said for the Loon Models tail, which looks more like an AS tail than the kit and fits very nicely. I did have to sand off the protruding trim tabs on the rudder, but that was easy. The Master Detail shell ejector port panel on the belly was really nice. I had to drill the panel on the kit out, but it was very easy.

I needed to add the landing gear now as I had the resin flaps hanging down and wanted to protect them. Master Details offers a separate landing gear set, but also inside the maximum detail set is a set of wheels and landing gear doors. Do you need both? That is up to you. The landing gear set comes with a new strut and other smaller pieces that I thought looked great and fit better than the kit parts. There is a bending jig for making the brake lines, but I was never able to figure it out so I just did it the way I always do it around a rod. The white metal struts were added with five-minute epoxy to allow me to align them.

Now it was off to the sink to wash the model prior to paint-



Figures add a lot to Floyd's presentation of the model. Here, two pilots argue over which one will be shot down today.



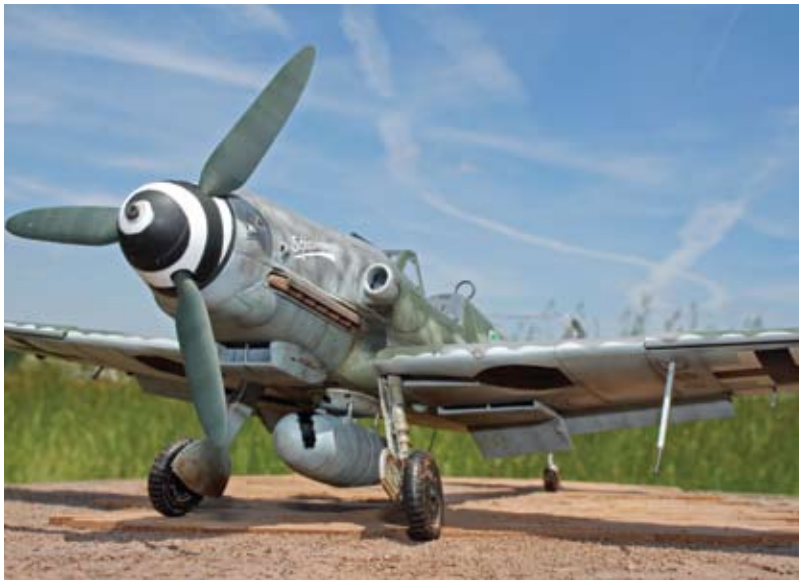
The exhaust stain was applied gradually, with earth brown going on first and moving toward black with each new application.

ing. I wash all my models with grease-cutting dish detergent. It was allowed to dry and then the model was wiped down with Polly-S Plastic Prep.

After masking off the cockpit with an old Black Magic mask set and Tamiya tape, I sprayed RLM 66 on the canopy area and then primed the entire model with Alclad gray primer and microfiller. I love this primer; it is the best primer for all sorts of modeling mediums. There were areas that needed some rescribing and refilling but nothing out of the ordinary. After fixing these areas, the model was reprimed.

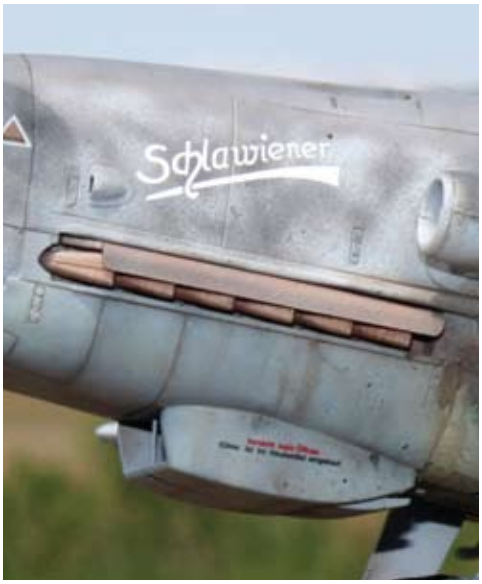
I started out by pre-shading the entire airframe with RLM 66. This is the very first part of the weathering. The sky color (sometimes called RLM 84) was the first color down. I thinned it down so that the pigments were not as opaque as they normally are. This allowed the pre-shading to come through. After waiting a day, I masked off the areas that needed to be protected, then used some mixed Tamiya paint for RLM 76. I added some white to the RLM 76 and thinned it out even more and reapplied it in a splotchy pattern. I also painted the flight control surfaces to lighten them up even more. This gave me a good base coat for the camouflage.

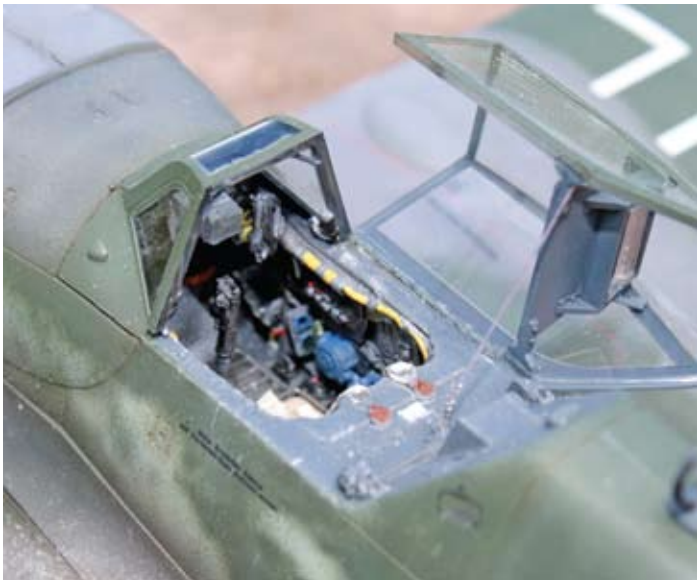
"I love to weather my models, and after looking at photos of the real thing, I couldn't have found a better subject."



The Parts-R-Parts nose makes Hasegawa's kit into a true G-14/AS, and only required some careful cutting and fitting.

I used an old set of Cutting Edge masks for the wing leading edge pattern and then painted Gunze RLM 75 and RLM 83 dark green where necessary, and then white was added as with the RLM 76. After the RLM 75 had dried, I blew up some drawings from an old Monogram Close Up on the K-4 and cut out the "spots" on the tail and painted the dark green. The cowling in front of the windscreen was painted RLM 74. I looked at the photos of the actual aircraft and elected to paint the oil cooler panel RLM 65, not the sky color that Hasegawa and Eagle Editions recommend. Some small





The Master Details set includes things like the flare pistol and grab handles which help give the cockpit a busy look.

details here and there were painted and touched up. The RLM 76 was oversprayed over the tail surface to break up the camouflaged hard edges.

A coat of Alclad gloss base was added to the model to prepare it for the decals.

Many people do not like Hasegawa decals. I have no idea why. Sure, they look thick on the sheet, but have you ever used them? I tried three different methods and, in practice, they are very good. How do they compare to Eagle Editions, which also does this same aircraft? The Eagle Editions decals have slightly more finesse, but the Hasegawa decals are very good and don't cost you anything extra.

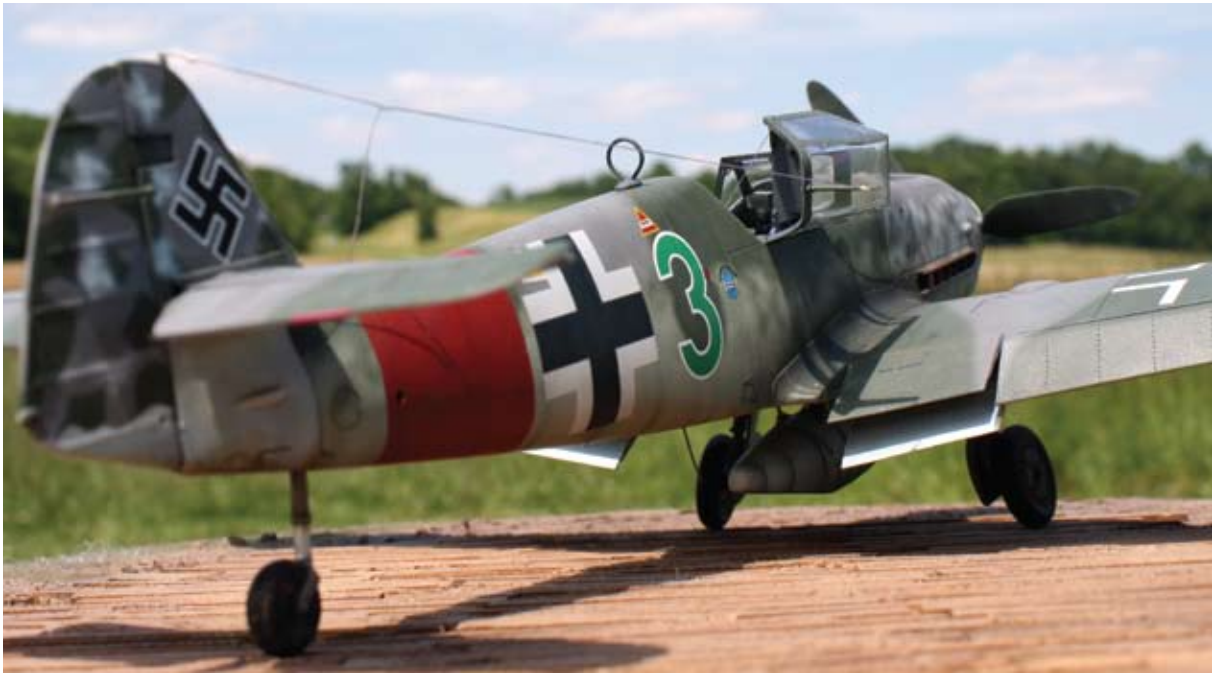
A really nice touch is that Hasegawa offers the access panels that make a G-14/AS – the lower oil cooler access and the cold weather starter – as decals for those of you who don't want to rescribe those panel lines.

The underwing crosses are incorrectly positioned on the Eagle Editions instructions, but Hasegawa got it correct, according to the photos in Eagle Editions' JG 300 book.

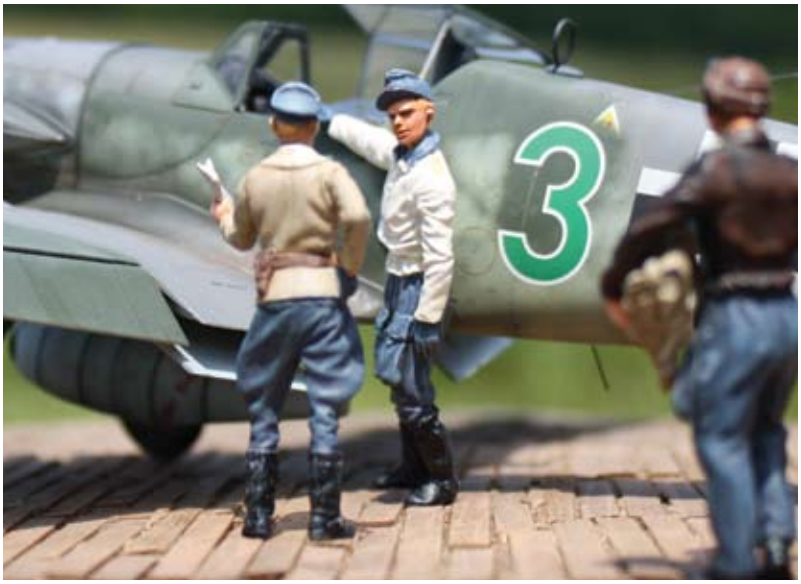
I first tested with Microsol and Microset and had no issues. Then I tried Solvaset and again had no issues. Then I tried Mr. Mark Softer and had no issues. The clear film actually is very thin in practice despite how it looks on the sheet.

I normally apply a coat of gloss over the decals and then follow it up with a flat coat. This time, since I was testing out the decals, I just added a flat coat and the clear film disappeared.

I love to weather my models and after looking at the photos



The mottling on the tail was given an overspray of thinned RLM 84 to blend the various colors together.



The dropped flaps provide a view of the streaking Floyd applied as part of the weathering process.

of the real thing, I couldn't find a better subject. It was well used and dirty.

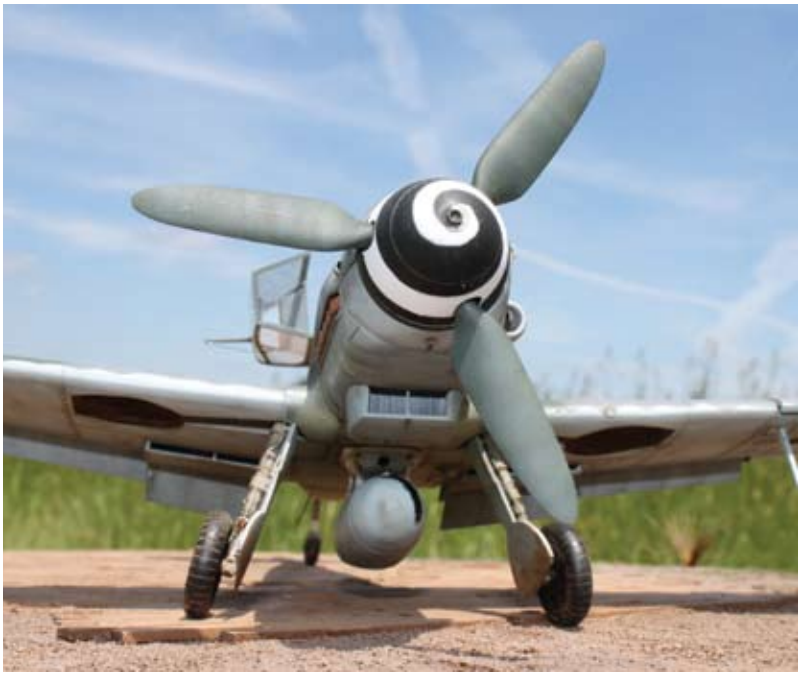
I elected to start with a wash of burnt umber artists' oil thinned with turpenoid. I flowed it into the panel lines and then I used the artists' oils to add some visual interest by flicking my brush over select areas where maintenance men would work. This added a worn look to the model. Then, using a #11 X-Acto blade, I added very tiny drops here and there and then used a dry, thick brush and pulled it back in the direction of airflow. These gave me the oil stains I wanted.

The next phase was to add some chipped paint. I wanted to experiment with a new silver method. I borrowed my wife's silver Stampin-Up Color Box pigment stamp pad. It helps that she is a dealer for this stuff. I never know what she has that I can "borrow." I used a sponge on the pad and then applied it to the model. The stamp pad lasted much longer than normal model paint and it gave me a lot of control. I used a #2 and a silver pencil to add some other random chips. I also used the sponge method with some Model Master aluminum for selected high-traffic areas and wing leading edges.

I wasn't going to add a filter, but I changed my mind. I used Sin Filters' gray for panzer yellow, which muted the colors a little and imparted a nice effect. The Sin Filters also helped in an area that I was never happy with before, mud splatter. I put some filter, in this case brown for panzer yellow, on a thin liner brush and used my airbrush to blow back mud splatters on the lower surface. The results were phenomenal and exceeded my expectations.

Some Mig Pigments were added to the wheels, landing gear doors and wing roots. I used European dirt and dried mud. I set them with the Mig thinner. This stuff is very convincing.

The only thing left to do was add the exhaust stains. I used thinned Tamiya earth brown



The late-style drop tank and squared-off wheel wells both came from Master Details, although they were in different sets.

References:

- *The Messerschmitt Bf-109 Part 2: 'F' to 'K' Variants-Modellers Datafile 10*, Lynn Ritger, SAM Publications, 2007, ISBN 0-9551858-1-5
- *Messerschmitt Bf-109 F, G, &K Series*, Jochen Prien & Peter Rodeike, Schiffer Publications, 1993, ISBN 0-88740-424-3 *(If I was stranded on a desert island and could only take one 109 book with me this would be the one. Lynn's book would be a close second)*
- *Jagdgeschwader 300- "Wilde Sau"- Volume Two September 1944-May 1945*, Jean-Yves Lorant & Richard Goyat, Eagle Editions, 2007, ISBN 0-9761034-2-7
- *Walk Around Messerschmitt Bf 109G, Hans-Heiri Stapfer*, Squadron/Signal Publications, 2006, ISBN 0-89747-503-8

and flat black, starting with more earth brown and building up the black progressively. This was streaked loosely along the airflow. An additional drop of flat black was added and sprayed in the center of the exhaust streaks. A final touch of some orange-red pastel chalk was added just aft of the exhausts.

I took another look at the model and decided that I needed some additional chipping and mud on the wing root.

The final bit of weathering was a thin application of Tamiya buff streaked fore to aft on the wings and vertically on the fuselage. Finally, I pulled back a little bit and added more buff to the top of the fuselage and wings. This mutes the colors nicely and "attaches" the model to the ground.

Since I like to add as much stuff as possible prior to painting, a technique I learned from my tank friends, there wasn't a lot left to add. The biggest piece was the unique-looking drop tank from Master Detail. I've never seen it in any sets or kits before, plus it is the style of tank that was on the real thing. Its fit was good but it did require some work to get it perfect.

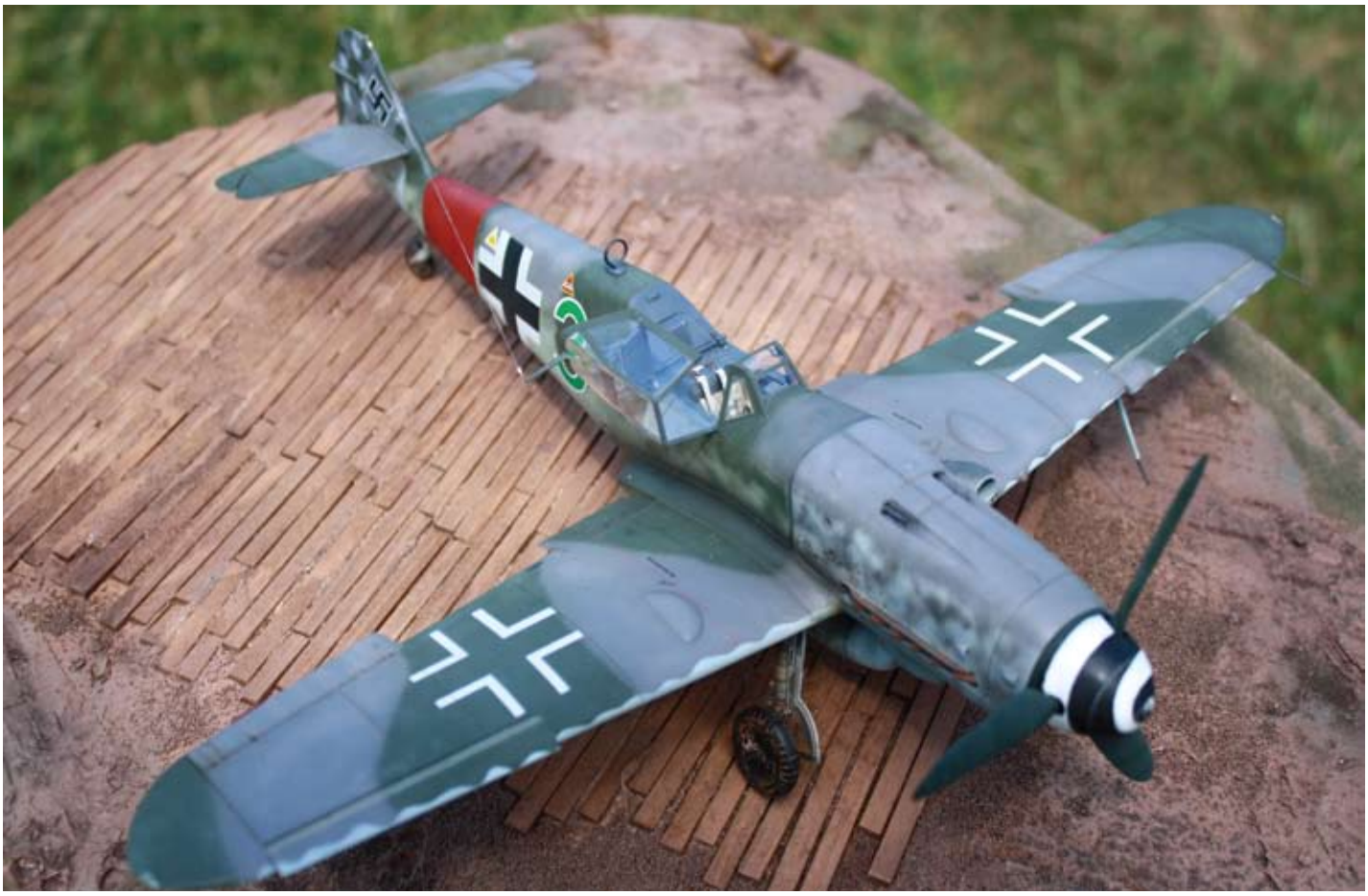
The masks were removed and the appropriate parts were added to the inside, such as the lights, flare gun and grab handles from Master Details.

An antenna was added to the canopy, wings and to the fuselage. The canopy and navigation lights were added and the model was done.

Was it worth the effort? You better believe it! I think this is my best 109 ever. I enjoyed the build immensely. The kit is a little expensive, but you can use everything in the kit. I've built plenty of Hasegawa G-6 kits, but this kit is slightly different and has its own issues. Some people will have a problem with the squared-off spine, but I did not find it to be overly objectionable. The most notable issue is the wing spar, which is mounted too low. This is easily fixed, but you should be aware of it. ■

LOYD WERNER IPMS/USA #26266

Floyd became a member of IPMS in 1988, while he was still an active-duty soldier serving in Army aviation. He may not wear camouflage on a daily basis, but he still flies; he works as a pilot for the Baltimore City Police Department flying Eurocopter EC-120s. A member of both IPMS/Baltimore and IPMS /Washington D.C., Floyd's been building since 1968, when he first got his hands on Aurora's classic Allosaurus kit. Today, he focuses mostly on 1:48 World War II aircraft, especially Luftwaffe subjects and Bf 109s in particular. His other hobby, photography, helps him expertly capture images of his modeling subjects. Floyd lives in Baltimore; he and his wife of 29 years, Yvonne, have three daughters, Angel, Athena, and Alison.



The wavy demarcation on the leading edge was made using an out-of-production set of masks from Cutting Edge.