



USAF SIG display at the IPMS Nationals, Telford 2002

Report by Phil Butler.

50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BOEING B-52



I suppose that the origin 50th anniversary display can be traced back to the USAF SIG's display in 1997 to mark the 50th birthday of the U.S. Air Force. This was the first year that the SIG's display at the IPMS nationals was to a specific theme and to a single scale. Since that year, the first that I had any involvement with the SIG, there have been several suggestions each year regarding possible themes to the display, none of these ever progressed beyond the discussion stage.

At the beginning of 2002 our SIG leader Haydn Hughes suggested that the 50th anniversary of the B-52 would be a suitable theme. This challenge was taken up by people who had little concept of what they were committing themselves to.

You may decide to build a single B-52, but would you really want to build more than one within a single year? So what about two, three or even five!

As the months leading up to the nationals progressed, the numbers of promised models fluctuated as various projects came and went. For example the XB-52, no you can't just stick a B-47 canopy on top, the H model with D-21 drones, only one drone and the problem of constructing the fairing on the pylon caused these two projects to be terminated. The range of colour schemes for the B-52 is surprisingly large, ranging from the early years of overall natural metal finish, the addition of white undersides, the application of camouflage with the SIOP scheme, the strategic scheme and the monochrome grey scheme. In addition to this throughout its fifty-year history there have been test and special project aircraft colour schemes that have added varying amounts of orange and red.

My personnel experience in attempting to build 5 new B-52's taught me quite a lot, first off allowing enough time for the project. Leaving every thing to the last minute then panicking is not the best approach. With five under construction at the same time my workroom resembled a scaled down Boeing factory, even down to each one having a construction number and the sub-assemblies so marked.

The production run of 2 x D's 2 x G's and an H quickly split in to two batches as the make up of the Monogram and AMT kits differed as did work they required.

One of the big advantages of belonging to a SIG is the help you get from your fellow members, for this project I was supplied with spare stub pylons off the D for one of the G's and the H as both of the subjects I chose to make had these fitted. I was also supplied with decals for the "Lavender Panther" and two resin cast air-conditioning units to detail the wheel bays of the D models. I think this was the point that things started to go wrong as having been given these resin casting I felt obliged to use them and in spite of the fact I was running out time I commenced to fully detail the wheel bays on both of the B-52D's. Yes I know now that you can't see anything when the model is sat on its wheels. These models consumed a huge amount of yellow chromate in the wheel bays; the area must be greater than the total surface area of most fighters.

The AMT kits of the G and H need the droop of the main wing attended to, I spent a lot of time thinking how to accomplish this before finding a review by Ernie Lee in the IPMS magazine this involves cutting and scoring around the wing glove on the fuselage and bending down to the required angle. As the AMT kits all purchased during 2002 are not readily available the three of them represented a large investment, so it is not surprising that I sat at my workbench for half an hour before I had enough nerve to start cutting the first one. The H model was to be an early test aircraft the AMT kit was a late model one so required the removal of all the ECM and EVS bulges, leading to the thought "I paid £30 for this and all I am doing is hacking it to bits" Eventually an executive decision had to be taken; to abandon all work on the AMT kits and concentrate on the Monogram B-52D's in the hope of finishing two models in time for Telford. How close run this was can be demonstrated by the fact the outrigger undercarriage legs and doors went on at 06:00 on the Friday, the day I was travelling up to Telford. As for the AMT kits well I will have a head start for the 60th anniversary.

We eventually ended up with 23 models on the display; a consolation for me was that there would have been no room for the three I failed to complete. Getting them there was a major project in it's self. My two were packed in the biggest cardboard box I could get hold of which only just went in the back of the car. Four B-52's flew in from Oman and one from the States and several arrived in pre-fabricated components and had to be assembled in place on the display table.

The "Golden Buff" mounted on a pole above the stand carried the 50th anniversary markings and the badges of the wings that flew the B-52 over the last half century. It was going to be squadron badges but even a B-52 is not that big. It also carried "Castle Air Museum" on the wing tanks to commemorate the fact that its builder had been on board the B-52 in their museum. The "Golden Buff" is of course a fictitious scheme but it's what the USAF should have done to mark its 50th birthday. During the weekend at Telford one person did ask, "Did it fly in that scheme?" to which the reply was "Yes! All the way from Oman" although it was inside another Boeing aircraft at the time.

These pics are intended to show the wing cuts and their effect on the AMT/Italeri B-52. Each wing had two cuts parallel to the fuselage - the inner one slightly wider (may be 2 to 3mm) than the outer into which strips of plastic card were inserted. This did lead to the fun job of replacing all the vortex generators.



Roll Call:



Pic 1. B-52H with EVS modified SIOP scheme (dark grey nose)
AMT kit by Haydn Hughes



Pic 4. B-52F natural metal / black undersides
Revell re-issue of Monogram B-52D kit by Ted Bayliss



Pic 2. B-52G early G no EVS in SIOP scheme
AMT kit by Haydn Hughes



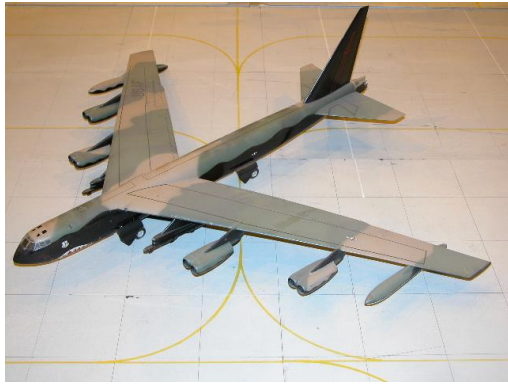
Pic 5. B-52H early H in painted aluminium / white undersides
AMT kit by Haydn Hughes



Pic 3. B-52G with ALCM strategic scheme
AMT kit by Haydn Hughes



Pic 6. B-52H later H with EVS in SIOP scheme
AMT kit by Haydn Hughes



Pic 7. B-52D SEA scheme (sharks mouth markings)
Monogram kit by Ian Southwood



Pic 10. B-52H with ALCM strategic scheme
AMT kit by Alex Hunger



Pic 8. B52C nat metal / white undersides
Revell re-issue of Monogram B-52D by Ted Bayliss



Pic 11. B-52F nat metal / white open refuelling port
Revell kit modified with resin engines by Alex Hunger



Pic 9. B-52A nat metal /white modified with short G tail and engines
Revell re-issue of Monogram B-52D kit by Graham Bullock



Pic 12. B-52H late monochrome scheme
AMT kit by Adrian Davis



Pic 13. B-52D SEA / black scheme
Revell/monogram kit by Alex Hunger



Pic 16. B-52F nat metal / black scheme
Revell/monogram kit by Richard Farrar



Pic 14. B-52G with EVS SIOP / white scheme
AMT kit by Alex Hunger



Pic 17. B-52D nat metal / white/orange
Monogram kit by Phil Butler



Pic 15. B-52H late H strategic scheme
AMT kit by Henry Ludlam



Pic 18. B-52D SIOP / black scheme
"Lavender Panther" markings
Monogram kit by Phil Butler



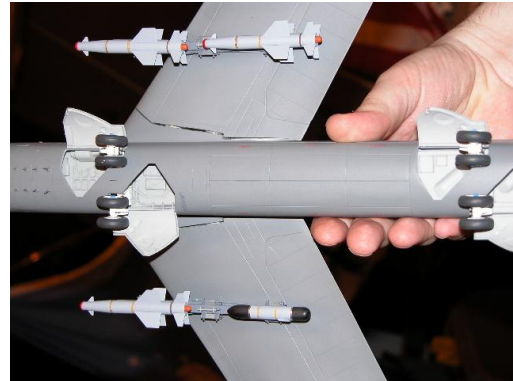
Pic 19. RB-52B nat metal / white scheme
Revell/Monogram kit by Ted Bayliss



Pic 22. Golden Buff B-52D
"50th anniversary scheme" Flew all the way from Oman!
Revell/Monogram kit by Ted Bayliss



Pic 20. B-52G all white overall scheme
Edwards AFB test aircraft
AMT kit by Haydn Hughes



Pic 23. Detail photo of B-52H late monochrome scheme. Note missile fit and wing joint partially pulled open to show wing attachment detail. This kit travelled from the States to Telford.
AMT kit by Adrian Davis



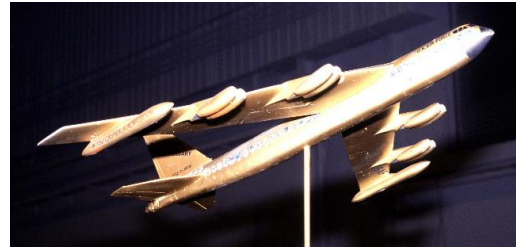
Pic 21. Another photo B-52A details as Pic 9



Pic 24. Detail photo weapons fit B-52H with ALCM, strategic scheme
AMT kit by Alex Hunger



Pic 25. Detail photo of B-52F nat metal / white open refuelling port
Revell kit modified with resin engines
by Alex Hunger



Pic 28. Golden Buff B-52D
“50th anniversary scheme” if only the USAF had painted one up!
Revell/Monogram kit by Ted Bayliss



Pic 26. Detail photo of weapons fit
B-52F nat metal / white open
refuelling port
Revell kit modified with resin engines
by Alex Hunger



Pic 29. NB-52E nat metal and
(the much debated is it the “Right
Red”) red,
Revell/Monogram kit very modified by
Chris St Clair



Pic 27. B-52D nat metal / white/orange
Monogram kit by Phil Butler



Pic 30. B-52A nat metal /white
modified with short G tail and engines
Revell re-issue of Monogram B-52D
kit by Graham Bullock