To quote Warner Brothers’ Looney tunes character, Marvin the Martian:

*Oh, dear, delays, delays!*

It’s now several weeks into my build of the Trumpeter 1/350 USS Saratoga. I have been working diligently, putting teeny-tiny little airplanes together. Tiny little torpedo bombers, with yellow wings and silver fuselages. Done. Decaled up. Finished. TWELVE decals EACH. 18 planes...do the math. Now I am halfway through the dive bombers...again 12 decals each, when I run out of tiny little “b”s to put on the fuselages. I post on Steelnavy, hoping someone out there has a few to spare. No response. So I do the next best thing: I spend money on new decals from an outfit called Starfighter Decals, specifically their set for a 1940 Sara air group. It just came it today.

OMG.

OMG.

They are unbelievable. A full set for all 80 aircraft, plus the utility planes Sara carried, including her air group commander’s personal aircraft. SUPER sharp images, super-detailed emblems. They are, in a word, a piece of art. 30 bucks, and worth every single cent.

So now I am in a major quandary: Do I start all over? Do I peel everything off that I have already spent hours and hours doing? Am I that insane?

Apparently I am.

My friend and our meticulous club Secretary/Treasurer, Boyd Waechter, has advised that I “go for it”. Boyd is a Nationals-level quality builder, very uncompromising in his work, and with a keen eye for accuracy and detail. His wall has enough first place plaques to prove it. When one receives sage advice, one should listen to the sage. OK, I’m going for it.

Where’s the tape? Peel them all off. All those lousy Chinese decals, crappy stripes and such...off they come. %^$#@, these won’t come off! Too much Future over them! Paint paint paint....

*Oh, dear, delays, delays!*

So I’ve blown a month or so of time. So what? I had fun...at least sort of. Piecing together air group markings from a huge pile of leftover numbers, letters and stripes from China was sort of fun, and a challenge. But it can be BETTER, and we all know, better is...well, better. The unfortunate fact of working in 1/350 is that it’s very visible...up close. Better is better, and half-*ssed is obvious. I’ve been guilty of that before. Not this time.

So now I have completed and put aside the 1/35th truck and two *black projects* – top secret for now-and am concentrating on the MAIN EVENT. Sara’s island and enormous funnel are taking shape. After filling and sanding the enormous seams on them, that is. Trumpeter has this nasty habit of making deckhouses
that are built up from all four sides, and slapped around a solid interior box, thus resulting in seam work all around. But it’s going to get done right, this time.

Is this a trend? Am I going to become more uncompromising in what I do? I think so. I am a competitor at heart, and the basic fact of competition is that you had always best strive to get better, or you will get passed, and eventually left behind.

Forget the clock, and the show schedule. Forget the meeting in a day or two. If it isn’t done, it isn’t done, and hang speeding up and cutting corners to get it so. Do it right, even if it means doing it slower. Rome wasn’t built in a day, and neither should your Flabbenschlapper be.

I intend to slow down, and build this beast right. I intend to do things I have never done before, to take time, and to take risks. I intend to work it until there is nothing more that can be done with it. I heard a fellow ship modeler talk at a club meeting about running lines through photoetched 1/350 scale pulleys (!!!!!!). THAT should give one pause to think.

The time for compromising is over. Do it right, the slow, hard way. The result will show it.

Hmmm….80 planes...plus the AG commander’s plane...plus the squadron hacks...times 12 decals each.....

I should be through by 2017!

Rick