



# FSM 2000 Readers' Choice Awards



Just when you think you know what to expect . . .

By Terry Thompson

Photos by William Zuback and Jim Forbes

Surprising results are part of the fun of awards – that's one reason people watch the Oscars. And if you base enjoyment of awards on the number of surprises, you'll love this year's Readers' Choice Awards.

**Aircraft.** Our first surprise came in what has been perennially the hottest category in our awards, Aircraft, 1/48 Scale. Going into the balloting, we expected a real dogfight. From the start, we thought the Accurate Miniatures B-25 would be a contender. After all, it's a well-engineered

kit that builds into a beautiful model. Plus, it's big, which never seems to hurt a kit at awards time. However, the year 2000 saw the introduction of other terrific kits, including Tamiya's Dornier Do 335, the Revell F-15E Strike Eagle, the Hasegawa F-104C, and Eduard's lovely P-39/P-400, among others. Could one of these kits stay close to the Accurate Miniatures B-25, or even pull a mild upset? No. The big Mitchell dominated from the start, with Tamiya's Dornier coming in second and the

Tamiya F4U-1A Corsair tied for third with the Accurate Miniatures F3F-2/3. And, as good as this year's jets were, they couldn't catch the prop warbirds.

In Aircraft, 1/72 Scale, the Academy C-97, another terrific large kit, outdistanced the excellent Revell Germany He 177A-5 Greif kit to take first place. Not far behind, two of Tamiya's new 1/72 scale gems tied for third – the P-51D and the F4U-1D – showing that even kits of familiar subjects can do well so long as they're well-designed. (Oddly, the Tamiya

Mustang received far more votes for Model Kit of the Year than the Corsair. Go figure.) In Aircraft, Other Scales, the 1/24 scale Airfix GR.3/AV-8A/AV-8S Harrier far outstripped two lovely 1/144 scale airliners, Minicraft's MD-80 and Revell AG's Airbus 320, to win the award.

**Ships.** This year also saw a surprise in the ship category, where ICM's excellent 1/350 scale *König* defeated Tamiya's 1/700 scale *Indianapolis* by a narrow margin to claim the first-place plaque. The surprise wasn't so much the victory as the fact that the kit is on the market at all, given that no new 1/350 scale battleship has been released in the past ten years. Let's hope the warm reception for this kit means there are more 1/350 scale ships to come.

**Armor, Artillery, and Military Vehicles.** The biggest surprise, at least to us, came in Armor, Artillery, and Military Vehicles, 1/35 Scale. With so many ter-

rific and long-awaited kits released in 2000, including Academy's M12 GMC, AFV Club's M10 tank destroyer, Italeri's LVT Amtrac, Tamiya's Leopard 2 A5, Skybow's Dodge command car, and Revell AG's PzH 2000 (among others), we nearly overlooked the Tamiya M26 recovery vehicle. Voters didn't, however, and this abbreviated version of 1999's Dragon Wagon finished first, ahead of Italeri's LVT and Tamiya's Leopard.

In Armor, Artillery, and Military Vehicles, Other Scales, Tamiya's enormous and impressive 1/16 scale Tiger I cruised to an easy victory over Academy's nifty and useful 1/72 scale WWII ground vehicle set and Revell AG's 1/72 scale Panzer IV H. Guess size *does* matter. Or does it?

**Military Figures.** In Military Figures, All Scales, Dragon's excellent 1/35 scale German paratroopers (Ardennes) narrowly defeated Tamiya's sharp 1/16 scale German machine gun-

ner and ICM's 1/35 scale German tank crew. It will be interesting to see if 1/16 scale armor and figures continue to build momentum in coming years.

**Movie/TV/Sci-Fi and Spacecraft.** Polar Lights' Robby the Robot defeated its stablemate, the Phantom of the Opera, in Movie/TV/Sci-Fi, All Scales; and Revell AG's 1/144 International Space Station out-paced its Heller counterpart in Spacecraft, All Scales.

**Model Kit of the Year.** Finally, we reach the biggest award of all, the Model Kit of the Year. Two years ago this award went to an armor kit, Tamiya's Dragon Wagon, and last year it went to an aircraft, Tamiya's Swordfish. This year the Accurate Miniatures 1/48 scale B-25 Mitchell flew past Tamiya's 1/16 scale Tiger I and 1/35 scale M26 recovery vehicle to take the trophy. Will 2001's winner be another aircraft, or will an armor kit reclaim the top spot?

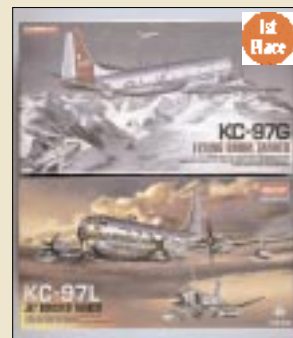
**Conclusions?** Based on this year's awards, World War II-era kits still rule, and the popularity of large kits continues to grow. Most importantly, though, we now have more firms building excellent kits than ever before – eleven firms won awards this year.

Now that's the most pleasant surprise of all. FSM



### Aircraft, 1/48 Scale

1. Accurate Miniatures B-25 Mitchell family
2. Tamiya Dornier Do 335A-0/A-1
3. Accurate Miniatures F3F-2/3 and Tamiya F4U-1A Corsair



### Aircraft, 1/72 Scale

1. Academy C-97 Stratofreighter/KC-97 family
2. Revell AG Heinkel He 177A-5 Greif
3. Tamiya F4U-1D Corsair and Tamiya P-51D Mustang



2nd Place



1st Place

### Aircraft, Other Scales

1. Airfix 1/24 Harrier GR.3/AV-8A/AV-8S
2. Minicraft 1/144 MD-80 Airliner
3. Revell AG 1/144 Airbus A 320 "Condor"



2nd Place

### Armor, Artillery, and Military Vehicles, Other Scales

1. Tamiya 1/16 Tiger I early
2. Academy 1/72 WWII ground vehicle set
3. Revell AG 1/72 Panzerkampfwagen IV Ausf H



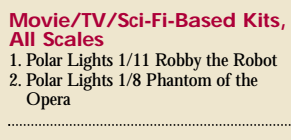
1st Place



1st Place

### Ships, All Scales

1. ICM 1/350 König WWI battleship
2. Tamiya 1/700 I-58 Japanese submarine
3. Revell-Monogram 1/400 RMS *Titanic*



1st Place

### Movie/TV/Sci-Fi-Based Kits, All Scales

1. Polar Lights 1/11 Robby the Robot
2. Polar Lights 1/8 Phantom of the Opera



1st Place



2nd Place



1st Place

### Armor, Artillery, and Military Vehicles, 1/35 Scale

1. Tamiya M26 armored tank recovery vehicle
2. Italeri LVT Amtrac
3. Tamiya Leopard 2 A5 main battle tank



1st Place

### Military Figures, All Scales

1. Dragon 1/35 3rd Fallschirmjäger Div. Ardennes, 1944 (Pt. 2)
2. Tamiya 1/16 German machine gunner
3. ICM 1/35 German tank crew (1941-1942)



2nd Place



3rd Place

### Spacecraft, All Scales

1. Revell AG 1/144 International Space Station
2. Heller 1/125 International Space Station



1st Place