

Website Buzz (March 16 & 28 2012)

FREMONT HORNETS GROUP BUILD TECH

(aka HORNETS Gruppe Build, The Glee and the Grind Parts One & Two)

(Part One)

Seeking a topic which strikes a chord but isn't directly contest related for this go around. Thus, "Hornet Gruppe Build: The Glee and The Grind". Which of course begs for some definitions and boundaries to illustrate/explicate.

After working through, I determined the best tack to take is dividing this into two parts for posting on The Buzz. So this is the re-edited Part One, basically definitions with bare analysis inside. Part Two; History/Analysis will come some weeks from now. Good Luck.

First off, WHAT IS A GRUPPE BUILD ? Loosely translated, this is the "Group" within the master set of Fremont Hornets as a subset grouping. A subset that assigns itself the "mission task" of building a collection of an agreed upon focus within a reasonably set time.

Now obviously the Group or "Gruppe" as some (me in other words) prefer to call it, is by definition a self selecting subset, also by definition NEVER actually consisting of the ENTIRE Hornets club or its associates. Why? Answer is very reasonable and rational, of course. "Mission Task" with self assigned extra discipline to complete something(s) in an externally imposed set time, is hardly everyone's idea of having fun with their hobby. Even if it is, eventual specific definition of those basic terms will still winnow out, at the start, some potential Gruppe membership. Yes, term Mission task is pretty clear, do the work to complete the assignment, but there's the first big rub. The eventual assignment, aka the agreed upon focus. Namely, WHAT is the Gruppe to build? So that's the next big defining point for what comprises the Group Build. Thus why there's never a complete unanimous full club membership, always a subset. Not everyone, even when their spirit is willing, has flesh that is willing to put itself to working to finish one single model subject or another, regardless of it still being a model in other's eye, not of their choosing.

Now that's not me trying to say their flesh is weak, despite my turn of phrase (it was just handy and concise). Quite the contrary. Strength to just say no at outset, not joining in a Gruppe Build when you know you're not at all really that fired up about the selected Mission, is truly that, a true strength I am pleased to opine. I know though, what is weakening factor to final Gruppe Build success in fact roots in this starting soil. How so will be explained more in detail with examples in the subsequent portion of this Current Buzz. Just keep it in mind and mull it over yourself.

Lastly in defining terms for our exploration here, is group membership's building "within in a set time". Again, phrased innocuous and a simple stating. Understood, clear, purposeful and real. Ah, there's the other silent slow death for many a mighty birthed Gruppe. In the deadly detail of time that waits for no modeler or man, and seems to ever so swiftly pass in a convulsive manner. Stronger modelers than many I know (myself surely, NO Mercury of Model Completion here) have been hoist upon this petard of schedules that are not in their nature to meet. Setting themselves and the Group up for less or no fun. So again, this is another big rake that takes out potential members of the subset. Perhaps another specific example, one more woven into fabric as an illustration of this in a context of discussion regarding "success/lack of" for the Gruppe Build will be forthcoming. Maybe not. Look for in Part Two...

Okay, we have some idea of the common framework of terms, let's rip into it some. How does your Gruppe Build go and grow? Ahh, NOW there's The Glee and The Grind ! For several years now, the Hornets with their very purposely rude, sarcastic and minimal administrative model, have been challenged meeting this desire. How to put together this "organized effort" while remaining true to ourself. With history of varying degrees of success, unless you are more in depth with true measures of what comprises success. For one, we as a club have proven consistently MORE successful at getting to a consensus at the genesis. Agreeing on what the Gruppe Build Mission Task/Focus process should be. Nowadays, interested parties prompt it. All by sharp sarcasm, naked naive enthusiasm, combined in choice remarks at about end of each actual calendar year and begin of new. All designed to get someone ELSE to get started on our next Gruppe Build. That's the end of Part One, the vicious glee signalling begin of the Gruppe Build.

Something on the order of 3 to 6 weeks, I'll have the Upcoming Buzz devised to post the rest of this current saga.

(Second and Final Portion)

OKAY...let's (unlike many of this type project) FINISH this thing (talking about the Gruppe Build idea)

Last Buzz we ended with notation on the specific HOW of getting GROUP BUILD project starts. SO...

This in turn usually results within two meetings (spanning from about November to January) an officer (of which we have few) or motivated playful smart ass (of which we have an abundance) deciding to try to call for a discussion of "WHAT DO WE WANT TO GROUP BUILD". This mistaken polite, direct and innocent opening will usually result in big chaos of epithets, great ideas, stupid ideas, no ideas at all, complete non sequiturs, all stewing until loud rude calls for some order have enough effect to get forward movement.

Volatile eruptions will continue but at least one soul will attempt to write down on a paper the ideas spewing forth while others try to get word in edgewise, disrupt any who are in fact trying to do just that, completely diss anyone's ideas and offer none of their own or utter despair at any of it resulting in any true finish, and so forth. Hornets near and far have come to conclusion after this system in place as it were, that just setting a LIMIT OF EITHER FIVE or TEN ideas good bad or incredibly awful but at least with a majority present shutting up to assent that's a good enough list to begin voting on, WORKS BEST. This can be a great deal of Glee, actually. There will very well be in some years that the resulting 80 percent of the list will be exciting and get votes of some small majority on the first round, other years it will seem so but only actually 20 percent gain any steam.

No matter, the PROCESS THAT WORKS FOR US is to go ahead and vote, to get a list of THREE remaining if TEN and TWO if FIVE. Then after some additional hand wringing, bemoaning, unrelated crap tossing and actual worthy argument, a call for a FINAL vote is made. If a tie, as has happened, WE VOTE UNTIL IT IS BROKEN regardless of how underhanded a means is found to do so. THEN WE HAVE A FINAL AGREED UPON FOCUS and thus a Mission to Task. The final rub is where we still are working on improving the scope of "success", although as I will attempt to illustrate later, ALL of our Gruppe Builds have been successful, in some way or another.

We currently have also settled on that "set time" period to be roughly the first moment we agree upon a Focus subject and the arrival of a significant to us external Contest. Most recently, that has been the Tri City we Hornets put on in the fall, years past it has been IPMS Nats or the SVSM Kickoff Classics. This usually has translated into roughly 9 to 13 months for a "Gruppe Build Year" frame.

Okay, SO HOW DOES IT TURN OUT?

Well, given what we have picked and the goals we have set, so far not bad. In the WAY BACK past, we had our basically prototype "first article" Hornets Gruppe Build, that more or less came about without any formal process or framework, "A-4 Skyhawks" birthed with fiery spirit and wicked intent. It was quickly enough refined and defined to be "a collection of the Fremont Hornets for entry as a Collections built by a Group or Club" for that years IPMS Nationals (which were well outside California that year). The scale was set to be 1/72, and the charter was that NO DUPLICATES, all who were to be in on this were going to have to sign up for a sub type of the Douglas A-4, the aggregate collection intended to show off the type's variety along with club's coolness.

Well, there began why we have come to the process and success definitions we're in use of now. The passionate and large group that started out on this mighty worthwhile endeavor as time passed, winnowed down as the calls for progress point showings at the monthly meets became more "pointed and finger pointing" versus fun, others who were crafting truly elegant works were sometimes questioning whether they'd be smarter to enter their art separately and perhaps snag a Nats trophy, then add their A-4 in Gruppe Build at another point. Later still, the big question of who was actually going to be able and willing to transport all these delicate works came to needing a final answer. AFTER determined who and how to get them all together for that purpose was figured out as really not yet, um figured out with a backup plan, now that one was needed... This pesky disregarded reality helped sink the original purpose project completion and put for a while, a very sour taste for the "Gruppe Build" concept in the Hornets community.

Then in 2004 spirit returned with an effort to provide a Gruppe Build with a difference, in that a particular then new kit was selected with plan to "group purchase" for a deeper discount from a local supplier. The commitment was more up front tho with this build, you had to choose the variant of the plane and pay in advance, no fooling around.

The build subject? Hasegawa's new F-104 Starfighter, in all the versions you could hope for and schemes galore, in 1/48. Even with a starting discounted price of about 25 dollars and more for certain limited edition ones, Starfighters did end up pretty abundant by the 9th month of "Gruppe Build Year" when the Tri City contest came for them to show. Although NOT the 20 plus that started out to be part of this GB, the 8 to 10 that eventually made appearances in that and following year contests was a definite success point in the concept for Hornet GB.

We returned to concept and actually (literally) THREW together a collection of P-47D Thunderbolts, for a planned exhibition at the 2007 IPMS Nats. It was NOT required that you have built the any entry recently, only that you participate and in good faith. It was also ruled that BOTH scales 1/72 and 1/48 would be welcomed, which meant most Hornets who wanted to could play in the game.

Several Hornets were in the Gruppe Build, one contributed "fancy" display placards for the entirety who stated they were going to show up and these were given to Mick Burton, who was bringing 9 total himself. He volunteered to be the party responsible for set up and entry of the Fremont Hornets into the Nats competition for this in the proper category, and also set out placards as the models arrived to join his. Results were splendid, and pictures of them have been on our websites ever since.

Counted as one of our great Gruppe Builds ever since, and for good reason. Popular with group subject, the mission/task was very reasonable (due in part to allowing past builds to be part, not exclusively "new for the GB constructions"), the timing wasn't terrible (we had several months and more than one Hornet cheered on to keep a fire going, without cynical bite). Since then, our "Spitfires" only was basically another toss together not really a formal GB, but it did snag a 2nd place award in "Collections" at SVSM, which Woody Yeung who was part of that, got from the rest of consortium as a thanks for being in the play.

The next year out we had a vote that was finally decided F-16s (Vipers) over a formal "Spitfires", however it ended up being paired as "Vipers and Spits, any type/scale" in a heartfelt but ultimately fruitless effort to make the end result bigger by including the losing competitor fans in the Gruppe Build.

What ended up happening? With no defined leader (aka the pain in the ass who keeps all eyes on the ball here) and not much administration as result, nothing much really happened. A few random models which never got put in as a Group, and some who were mystified why such a cool idea never went anywhere.

Lessons? Make it fun, make it real (don't try to satisfy everyone, just keep focus on fun, finishing and few choices and fewer choosing).

Proof? "EYES IN THE SKY" Photo recce project that followed, while it was a hard won choice and inspired huge starting pool, ended up nearly as moribund as FalconSpit idea.

THIS YEAR's 2012 Gruppe Build is "CARS" which is just that. No armored, no scout, no funny business, it is CARS only the "Staff Car" exception allowed. This choice is perfect to illustrate the damned few and the proud, of the Hornets. We're known to ourselves as well as the outside world as a perennially Air and Armor (now, was just Air before) centric club, and Autos are still getting the shaft for respect.

So if we do this right, we'll have fun and add Auto to our Air/Armor rep. SUCCESS. If we don't, success is still in we did choose and have fun doing this. GLEE and little Grind.

Seeya next Buzz. -mickb smilodon49