

Small Scale Models Are A Large Scale Business

By ROBERT J. SERLING
 United Press International
 VENICE, Calif. (UPI) — Thanks to Lewis H. Glaser, millions of American males (age 6-60) will spend tonight figuring out how to attach the left wing of a DC-8 and where to locate the secondary gun batteries of the battleship New Jersey.

Glaser is president of Revell, Inc. world's largest manufacturer of plastic scale models — boats, cars, planes, animals, trucks, guns and missiles.

Vacationers Have Choice

United Press International
 Wondering where to go this vacation season? Here are some special events scheduled for the months ahead:

Colorado's 1959 Centennial. "Rush to the Rockies" is the celebration's motto, and the program is year-long and extensive.

Oregon's Centennial Exposition (June 10 to September 17) and international trade fair in Portland during the Centennial's first week.

Chesapeake Bay Fishing Fair at Rose Haven, Md., in August.

The three-state (Vermont, New York, New Jersey) Hudson-Champlain Celebration, May through October, with a special New York City observance, "City of Light," beginning June 14.

Virginia's historic triangle — Jamestown, Yorktown, Williamsburg—commemorates the nation's beginnings in Jamestown Festival Park and nearby centers, beginning June.

Boston's "Freedom Trail," spring and summer-long, points the way to historic buildings and monuments.

Seattle's Seafair and Gold Cup Hydroplane races, July 31 to August 9.

The "foliage" tours of New England—apple blossom, harvest, fall colors—May through October.

In Canada, Vancouver's International Festival of the Arts, July 11 to August: new music, world famous conductors, Japanese and Spanish dancers, drama premieres.

Chicago's International Trade Fair, July 2-18; also Festival of the Americas, August 3 to September 7, and Pan American Games, August 27-September 7.

New York City Summer Festival, June through Labor Day; special events include Hudson Celebration, Shakespeare Festival.

US Firms In Top Bracket

NEW YORK (UPI)—The United States has 45 giant corporations in the billion-dollar-a-year class, according to "News Front," a magazine for management. Among them they produce one-fourth of the nation's entire gross national product.

Heading the so-called "billion dollar club" is General Motors, followed by Standard Oil of New Jersey, American Telephone & Telegraph, the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company, Ford Motors, General Electric, Sears Roebuck, U.S. Steel, Socony Mobil, and Gulf Oil ranked in that order among the top ten.

In 1957 there were 47 corporations in the billion-dollar category, according to "News Front," but three fell below the magic mark in 1958 while one climbed into it. Those which dropped just under the billion mark last year were North American Aviation, which fell from 1,255 million dollars to 964 million dollars, Republic Steel from 1,227 million dollars to 910 million dollars, and Armco Steel from 1,074 million dollars to 910 million dollars, "News Front" reported.

The newcomer to the exclusive billion-dollar rank, the magazine said, was General Foods whose sales rose from 98 million dollars in 1957 to 1,000 million dollars last year.

Thanks mainly to Glaser, the plastic model industry is now one of the booming giants of the toy field. Revell alone grossed more than eight million dollars last year and sold more of its realistic "kits" than the rest of the competition and making elastic scale models is now the number one hobby of youngsters, surpassing even stamp collecting.

The Revell success story dates back to 1950, when Glaser's tiny firm was making plastic toys. Glaser decided to put out a replica of the old Maxwell automobile and then had a brainstorm: why not build it in a "knocked down" form so a customer could build it himself.

The plastic auto kit sold so well that Glaser abandoned the toy field entirely and took the plunge into the virgin territory of scale models. He first put out a line of antique automobiles, then came up with the biggest-selling kit of them all: the battleship Missouri.

It was an ambitious project. The model was in perfect detail and even included radar, scout planes and liberty boats.

That was in 1952. As of January 1, 1959, Revell had sold 1,750,000 Missouri kits and it still is the best-selling model on the market.

Revell designs its replicas from actual blueprints furnished by the government and private industry. The armed forces are happy to supply detailed plans for various planes, guns, ships and missiles; they not only consider them good publicity but use them in military classrooms.

The same is true of airplane manufacturers and the various airlines, who pay Revell a certain fee for the privilege of seeing their insignia and colors used on airliner replicas.

Revell insists on complete authenticity. It was all tooled up to turn out a replica of the DC-8 when Douglas engineers sent word that they had decided to lengthen the jetliner's fuselage by two feet. Revell promptly changed its dies for the miniature to conform to this modification.

Occasionally, Revell has decided to produce a model for which no plans are available. One was the Russian Bison jet bomber (Glaser figures it would be a waste of time to ask the Kremlin for the blueprints). Revell scrounged every available photograph and drawing of the Soviet plane and made up its own blueprints. Then it sent a hand-made model of the Bison to aeronautical engineers and military experts for approval.

"We have heard since that we couldn't have made the Bison any more authentic if we had done it from the actual blueprints," a Revell official declared.

Another difficult project was the old Christopher Columbus flagship, "Santa Maria." Glaser sent a researcher all the way to Madrid for a look at the Spanish Admiralty archives, which contained the original plans.

Revell's modern plant, with 700 employees, turns out 30 million kits a year of 25 to 40 individual models. There are 13 molding machines producing a kit every 26 seconds. The molds are the biggest expense item, and Revell estimates it costs about \$100,000 to bring out the average model—more in the case of the large, super-detailed replicas of old sailing ships.

Revell has a "new products committee" which decides what new models to put into production. The committee screens suggestions from model builders (40 per cent of Revell's customers are adults), the armed forces and private industry. It also watches the headlines, which occasionally have supplied a surprising sales boost.

Two years ago, Revell put out a replica of the atomic submarine Nautilus. Sales were only fair, until the real Nautilus made its record-breaking trip under the North Pole.

"We got swamped with orders the minute the headlines appeared," Glaser recalled.

Now Revell is going "atomic" on a big scale. It is planning to market an atomic merchant ship, an atomic submarine that actually fires the Polaris missile, and a

scale model of an atomic reactor plant (with a booklet on atomic energy included for schoolroom projects).

Such projects require at least a year of research, planning and production before the kits appear in stores. After the blueprints are finished, Revell experts make a hand-made model which is sent to the original manufacturer for approval of authenticity. Then the molds are cast for full-scale production. The first models go to a special assembly room where experts put together display models for use by the retail outlets (these assemblers are all women, "Because they're more patient than men").

Revell has its troubles. It once went ahead with the dies for a certain missile when word came that the Defense Department had scrapped the original project. So

did Revell, even though it had invested \$75,000 in the dies.

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