

MILITARY MODELLING

Review:

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Storm in Miniature - An Exhibition of Scale Models inspired by the Croatian War of Independence. Published by Signum Laudis Association (Association for History, Art and Technical Culture Promotion), HR-10000 Zagreb, Mihanoviceva ul.40, Croatia. ISBN 978-953-56308-0-7. Price 49kn, €14.99, £12.99, US \$20.

Events following the break-up of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s were followed in the media at the time though the details of what happened will have faded in most memories. From a Croatian viewpoint, one of the most important periods was the campaign known as Operation 'Oluja' ('Storm' in English) in August 1995 which resulted in their territory coming firmly under their own control as forces from the Republic of Srpska were pushed out and the siege of Bihac broken. To commemorate the 15th Anniversary of this, a series of 25 models representing Croatian equipment used at the time was brought together for public display. This publication shows these models and provides background details of the campaign and its progress in both Croat and English. It includes information on the Croatian forces with notes on where equipment was obtained, uniforms and markings.

The models cover land, air and naval forces. Of the 25 in the collection, 16 cover vehicles in 1:72, 1:48 and 1:35 scales. Some are based on stock kits either out of the box with suitable colour schemes to show T-34/85, BRDM-2, T-55, M18 Hellcat and M47 Patton or minor changes to depict an M36 Tank Destroyer with turret top armour. Others have modifications such as converting an ICM BTR-60 into its Romanian equivalent TAB-71, T-55 with additional armour as a 'Leopard 1' or Dragon T-72 into M-84. Two scratchbuilds depict a selection of the many and varied improvised AFV on lorry and farm tractor chassis.

Aircraft range from several MiG-21 including a two-seat conversion to a civilian Hughes 500 helicopter pressed into military service and more conventional Mi-8 and Mi-24. Finally, but not least, one figure - a converted American paratrooper in 1:9 scale - and one ship - a nicely scratchbuilt gunboat - round off the coverage.

Background details of each item are provided with notes on air and naval actions, a useful glossary and two maps can also be found at the back of the book. Photos of the original item modelled are provided as well as brief descriptions of the work that went into each model. One drawback of the small size of the book is that model and original photos as well as the more general photos used in the historical sections are small which limits their use as reference sources.

Overall an unusual book giving an insight into a period which will be little known worldwide, it would have benefited from a larger format allowing bigger photos to be used.

Copies are available from Aviation Book Centre www.aviationbookcentre.com at £12.99 plus postage etc. For direct purchase or stockists elsewhere see www.signum-laudis.com/products/e_products.html

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