

I recently suffered a heart attack/life-threatening respiratory distress which, mercifully, did not paralyze me; ergo, I can keep modelling, and I have several commissioned commitments to fulfil (refer to “Current projects”). I had to move my airbrush compressor ... /double paint booth (2 Master Airbrush Portable joined together) into my studio, as depicted left. Everything I do now requires advance planning, and takes longer to accomplish than it did prior to my medical misadventures.

The respirator mask hanging below the front of the paint booth table reminds me of the bipap (oxygen mask) I had to wear for three long days at the hospital; that bipap, and its associated forced breathing equipment, was instrumental in saving my life.

## **The real heroes: the health care hospital staff**

*The real heroes are the nearly one hundred members of the MUHC, especially those from the Montreal General Hospital (MGH) Coronary Intensive Care Unit (CICU) staff, whom, over the course of my 2-month hospitalization, brought me back to life; my appreciation and esteem for their dedication grew exponentially with each passing day; due to Covid-19, they were risking their well-being (and that of their families), for a total stranger.*

*I had to do much more than simply thanking them verbally. Contributing to their X-mas party was out of the question (“No X-mas party; Covid-19”). In any case, that concept felt too impersonal to me. I had a thought: get 12-month calendars printed, using photographs of my models for each month (which I since have had done at Staples, and mailed out). However, I wished to do more. By the end of my stay, my aircraft modelling activities were known to some staff members, so I proposed building a 1:32 CF-104 Starfighter, and gifting it to the CICU staff for display in their station, 11<sup>th</sup> floor West, at the MGH, and it was accepted. Appropriately, “Starfighter” sums up succinctly the CICU staff’s courage, commitment, encouragement, and fighting spirit: they all are star fighters! To boot, the CF-104 Starfighter is my favorite Cold War era bird.*



**My 1:32 rendition of CF-104 “12704”, on permanent display at the Montreal Aviation Museum. On the fuselage of the MGH CICU model, “MGH” will replace “704”, and “CICU” in lieu of “RCAF” (same number of characters as on the original “12704” above; same size, color, and front)**