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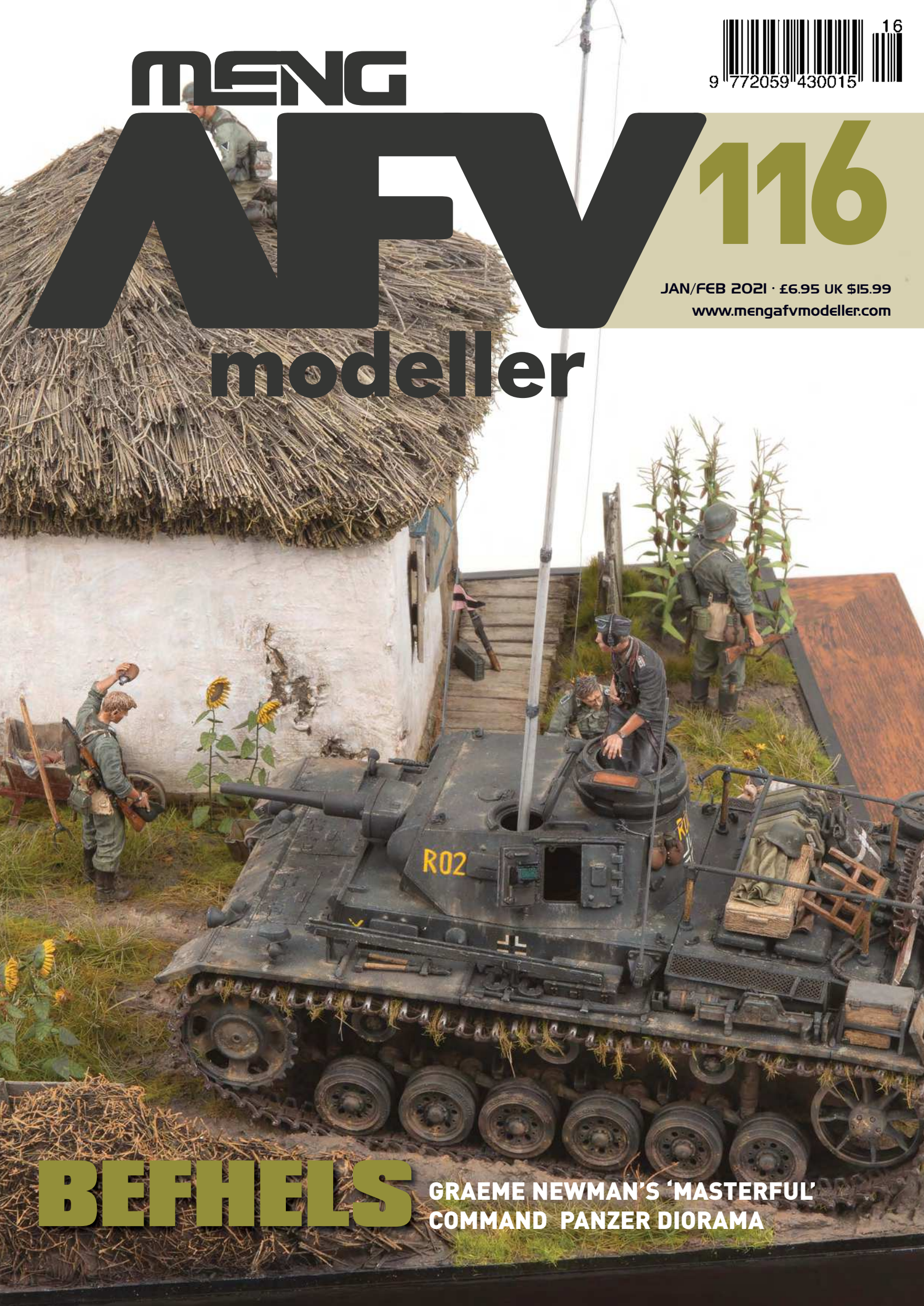


AFV 116

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modeller



BEFHELS

GRAEME NEWMAN'S 'MASTERFUL'
COMMAND PANZER DIORAMA

**U.S. NAVY AIRCRAFT
CARRIER U.S.S.
ENTERPRISE (CV-6)**

**1/700
SCALE**



THE RETURN OF THE PS SERIES, THE MOST ENJOYABLE ENTERPRISE !

Enterprise may be America's favorite name for ships. It's used to name the warships of the U.S. Navy, a space shuttle and even the fictional starships in movies. The most famous one is a meritorious warship, U.S.S. *Enterprise* (CV-6) aircraft carrier. She was the second ship of the *Yorktown*-class aircraft carriers and the seventh U.S. Navy vessel named *Enterprise*. She participated in all the major actions of the U.S. Navy in the Pacific Ocean theatre in WWII. *Enterprise* sank 7 Japanese warships and shot down more than 400 Japanese aircraft. She was leading the U.S. Navy warships by receiving 20 battle stars. After her, two nuclear-powered aircraft carriers have been successively named *Enterprise*.

This PS-005 U.S. Navy Aircraft Carrier U.S.S. *Enterprise* (CV-6) is the latest product in the MENG PS series. This kit features pre-colored parts and a fast snap-fit design. It includes the hangar and elevator structures. Length: 362mm Width: 53mm



▶▶ This kit features pre-colored parts and a fast snap-fit design. It includes the **hangar** and **elevator structures**.



▶▶ The hangar side doors can be built open to show the **unique open-sided hangar** of WWII U.S. aircraft carriers.



▶▶ All the three large elevators are movable.

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MENG is willing to offer modellers excellent model kits and top-quality service.



▶▶ The island has excellent details. The **CXAM-1 radar** on *Enterprise* is eye-catching.

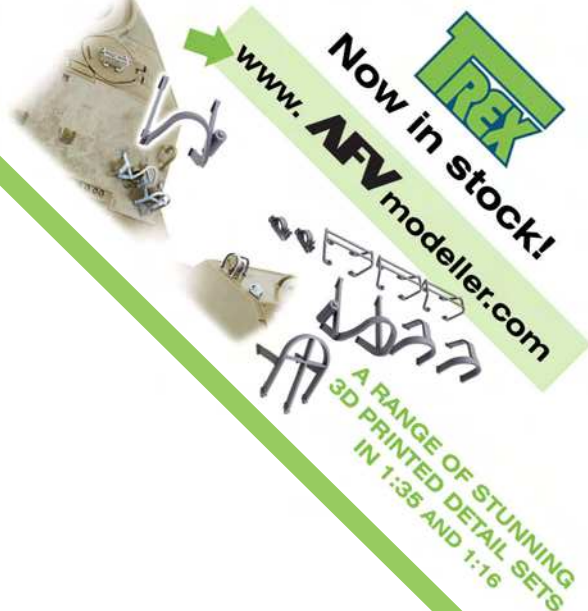


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Seasonal Best Wishes from us at AFV Modeller

As we approach our twentieth year of publication, a fact that makes us all feel old, we have thinking about making some changes to our format. After much deliberation and debate, we have decided to end our Keeping Track new release review section in AFV Modeller. As AFV Modeller is published bi-monthly we've increasingly felt much of what we are sharing on the pages of Keeping Track could be regarded as 'old news' to many readers when you get your copy. The popularity of on-line reviews and social media announcements by manufactures has brought instant coverage of new kit releases, something a bi-monthly printed publication cannot compete with. We plan instead to use the space creatively.

Our thanks to all the manufacturers and publishers who have supported Keeping Track over the years. We hope you agree and enjoy the extra article coverage in future issues of AFV Modeller!

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'Like' us to follow what's new and follow our build projects.

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NO REST FOR THE WICKED

The Germanic tribes had been moving East since the Dark Ages, by the Middle Ages spreading their influence up the Baltic coast founding Hanseatic trading posts all the way to Estonia, agricultural communities had been founded deep into Russia as far as the Volga. During the 19th century the nationalist slogan "Drang nach Osten" had been used to promote a German Empire in Eastern Europe, under National Socialism this goal had morphed as if on steroids into Lebensraum.

One of the key targets was the rich agricultural lands of Ukraine and the industrial Donbas beyond. Whilst highly effective the German war of manoeuvre "Bewegungskrieg" had some limitations, highly mobile armoured units cut through and drove deep into enemy territory, tens, sometimes hundreds of kilometres ahead of following infantry and logistical units, creating a "tyranny of distance".



Graeme Newman returns
with another of his beautiful Barbarossa scenes.

1:35



The first person accounts that have become available in recent years describe in vivid detail the agony of marching 30 to 40 km per day in an attempt to keep pace with armoured spearheads in blistering heat with little fresh water and food. Within a couple of months of Barbarossa attrition due to sickness and exhaustion were taking their toll on Infantry units. When choosing a scene to model I am invariably inspired by photos, one of my favourite books is "Panzer in the Ukraine" by Heimdal these books always have great photo coverage. The photo selection is rich in command or befehlsanzers in summer 1941, these vehicles are a subject that causes some confusion with the mix of features evident on certain variants. I decided to depict a typical Ukrainian "mazanka" or peasant farmhouse with exhausted Infantry attempting to take some respite with a command vehicle relaying orders to distant action a couple of kilometres away.

Dragon kit 6844 PzIII Befehlswagen Ausf. H stirred my interest when released, it is a pretty good representation with plenty of spares and some interior parts, there are however some errors within the kit these only became evident only when construction proceeded. These are not difficult errors to correct and should be within the remit of most modellers. Dragon have released two versions of this particular variant one with the dummy 3.7 cm gun and the one featured in this article with the 5 centimetre dummy gun. These vehicles were only armed with a machine gun, the turrets were bolted to the hull and radio equipment replaced the breech and ammunition storage. Depending on configuration battalion, regimental or divisional headquarters vehicles were equipped. Two series of ausf H were built but it is clear from photographs 5 cm dummy gun configurations were available from the summer of 1941. Panzer Grey is a very difficult colour to work with as the colour was a very dark hue with a tint of blue as seen in period photographs it lightens with layers of dirt and dust. As the base colour is fairly dark any pin washes to emphasise detail are less evident than would be the case when painting a North African or late war scheme.





Using photos from the Heimdal book I chose a command vehicle from the 9th Panzer Division, there are plenty of photos showing both 3.7cm and 5cm dummy gun command variants, as with all units the storage and fittings were bespoke for individual division's. Particular noteworthy are the semicircular spare wheel retaining brackets fitted to the rear of the vehicles, these are obviously a field modification by the divisional maintenance unit. Some vehicles had three of these others two the vehicle I chose to model had the latter. As can be seen in the photographs the stowage was created with sympathy to the period photos, this attention to detail is what makes a vehicle realistic and gives it a lived-in look.

Of particular interest some of the vehicles in this unit had cane furniture seats and carried these in with the stowage, in place of these I opted for a simple wooden stool as no equivalent could be found in scale.

I will summarise the fixes for this kit :-

- Dragon has supplied the driver's front plate from the gun armed tank that has the square machine gun opening rather than the circular opening for the pistol port. The bolt fixings for this plate are in an incorrect position.
- A new front plate was constructed out of plastic card with the correct circular cut out and fixing bolts positioned as per reference.
- All visors had observation slits on the command vehicles unlike gun armed tanks which had some visors without observation slits, Dragon supplies spares but the instructions are for the gun armed tank. Observation slits were scribed into the visors.
- The hatch for the TSF1 periscope on the turret roof sits flush with the roof not raised as in the kit. A new thinner circular hatch was constructed as well as the hinge bracket.
- The winch mast aerial hatch is too thick and was thinned to a scale thickness.





From a personal point of view the grey can't be lighted too much as you begin to create an unrealistic colour to fit modelling requirements rather than reality. On this vehicle I used Xtra Colour Panzer Grey slightly lightened with a light grey progressively lightening areas of highlight, pin washes followed as well as defusing sympathetic colours across larger areas. The wheels are left off at this point to facilitate the application of mud and grime on the lower chassis this was aided by using AK muddy ground tentatively in areas the grime would build up, some interesting effects were achieved by scraping this mixture as it began to dry to simulate worn mud.

The wheels are then added and areas of mud revisited using pigments mixed with paint, areas of damp mud were painted a dark shade then successive lighter tones to simulate dried mud. One useful technique shared at a show by Lester Plaskitt is applying a mix of water and detergent on areas where dust builds this is allowed to dry, successive dust coloured acrylic washes can then be applied and finessed using a damp brush to give an opaque dust effect. It cannot be emphasised enough that revisiting this dirt application stage is key to building up realistic mud and dirt effects. It is best to practice with some of these effects as no one person has a monopoly on what can be achieved. The tracks were an old set of Friul ALT03 the pinch-together type from an older model of 25 years vintage; these were painted a medium Grey followed by successive washes of dark umber oils followed by washes of earth tones and highlighted with graphite pencils. I wanted to create grass field tracks that you can see in so many photos this was achieved with white glue and static grass embedded in the recesses then carefully created longer strands hanging down. The extended FUG8 aerial mast has very fine stretched sprue creating the extension mechanism and wiring, this is nicely represented and is going to prove a bit of a nightmare to transport.

Moving onto the 'mazanka', believe it or not this isn't too difficult, the hardest part is slicing through the structure at an angle taking into consideration roof angles. These buildings were simple wattle and daub structures with a weatherproof coating of plaster then paint. Foam board of a suitable diameter is used to form the basic walled structure, windows and doors can be easily cut away at this point.





Polyfilla is applied in a thin layer, after drying window frames, door frames, doors and shutters can be created using basswood or the like. The roof is the time-consuming part, after creating a cardboard base wallpaper brushes are used to create the thatch effect, sections of brush 1 cm or so wide are glued to the cardboard in rows, layers, more rows and more layers just as a thatcher would work in real life.

A week or so and several brushes later you will have built-up a realistic depth, any unrealistic repetitive pattern can be infilled randomly until the desired effect is achieved. The roof was painted a very dark straw colour that was successively lightened to create variation and depth. A very Ukrainian shade of blue was added to the door and decorative areas before drying this was scraped with either a wire brush or a sharp blade to simulate wear and tear.

When creating a scene It is important not to leave large areas empty one such area is filled with a dung heap; this is simply plaster with brush cuttings coloured to reference. Fence and walk boards are soft basswood, the weathered wood is a series of grey washes over a very pale brown creating areas of variation will be rewarding as lifelike effects can be achieved.



The corn is commercially available printed paper vegetation that was coloured subtly then kernels were added. In any historical scene it is as important to put as much research into architecture and fauna as is put into vehicles and uniforms.

Corn was grown widely in the Ukraine from the 1920s onwards according to sources, the type of habitation in the scene is very common in rural areas of southern Russia, Ukraine and the Caucasus, moving further North where it is heavily forested timber buildings become more common. Sunflowers are another synonymous feature of the region I have depicted random blooms that are the result of dropped seeds to add interest. Aber etched metal are my preferred choice as stems and petals can be realistically bent into position.

A small printed soft wood wheelbarrow kit was painted weathered and some potatoes left inside giving the impression that any withdrawal either by civilians or Soviets was hasty. The figures are a collection of stock and slightly modified, only rarely does a figure fit perfectly for your purposes so it is inevitable that when creating a vignette or a diorama some modification is necessary. Stalingrad miniatures have released some beautiful figures in recent years top marks go to Russian sculptors who are highly gifted, one figure that fitted perfectly

is the Panzer crewman sitting on the road wheels, sculpted directly from a photograph in the previously mentioned Heimdal publication it shows exhausted Pz III crewmen of the 25th Motorised Infantry division.

I posed an infantryman in conversation with the crewman, this figure is modified to sit on a small seat, the angle of the legs and a new

arm constructed. A sublime figure from Alpine sits in the cupola, wiring and throat mic on off switch added. Some areas of the legs and posterior are cutaway and remoulded with magic sculpt to fit snugly and realistically into the opening. The two observers on the roof are modified to fit the scene again using wire armatures and magic sculpt, changing arms, legs to suit.

All other figures are stock and portray exhausted infantryman, flesh and leather items are painted in oils, my default paint for uniforms is Lifecolor acrylics these dry perfectly flat which is ideal for clothing. Uniforms are referenced to the period one item of clothing commonly seen are Officers lightweight summer tunics many of these were privately tailored in lightweight taupe-coloured fabric, the officer on the roof wearing one such item. Once the groundwork is complete the vehicle is mated to the surrounding terrain. Never hurry groundwork or accessories these are as important as vehicles and figures I revisit the weathering process matching surrounding tones to the vehicle. Time spent on positioning figures accessories is particularly important and can make or break a scene believe you me you will have as many failures as successes, practice makes perfect.

These projects tend to be time-consuming and if you expect quick rewards you're in the wrong hobby, sometimes I achieve what I set out to sometimes not, if others like it it's a bonus.





Meng's latest Merkava 4/4LIC with Nochri-Kal Mine Roller System



Modelled by **Mark Neville**

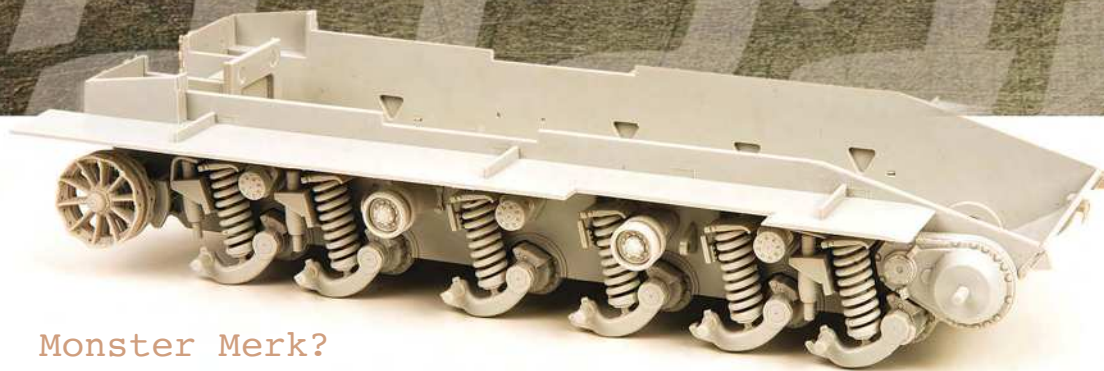
ROCK



The latest Meng Merkava is another version of their excellent 4th generation of the IDF's 'Chariot' with the 4 and 4M considered the most significant MTBs which serve along with older versions securing Israel's borders. An important anniversary falls this year with the Merkava's unique design hitting it's 50th year. Once again Meng have collaborated with Mr. Michael Mass who heads up the team at Desert Eagle Productions (who provide superb reference books for the IDF modeller) and also happens to be the curator of the Latrun Armoured Corps Museum so we're assured of the highest levels of accuracy which we've seen with the other collaborations between Meng and Mr. Mass.

So what's new in this 4/4LIC version of the kit? The most significant difference is the monstrous Nochri-Kal mine roller system which is, most definitely, a kit in itself supplied on three large sprues this elaborate spring loaded multi-fingered contraption can be built completely separate from the rest of the kit. I'd suggest perhaps doing the build of this first as it's pretty demanding. Also new is the turret shell being the earlier version without the loader's hatch, again Meng have made a sterling effort to create the anti-slip surface throughout within the confines of injection moulding. A full new sprue includes some beautifully rendered stowage basket covers; cast your mind back to issue 100 when the Editor had to rely on the resin upgrade to get a realistic finish to these parts. Thanks to the latest digital 3D sculpting these parts are a very welcome addition to the box. Also on the same sprue (and some of the new photoetched parts) is the funky-looking 'Droid' soft-kill system which throws out disruptive beams to send incoming hostile fire off-target.

LOBSTER



Monster Merk?



The suspension includes working torsion bars and springs; very clever but largely hidden on the finished model.



I'm never keen on assembling 'indi-link' tracks. Of course the results are worth it ultimately but two parts per link? Not really much fun to be honest. I found some flash on the outer link parts which was easier to remove with the parts still attached to the sprues. A strip of foam board with a slot cut in it provided a good guide for assembly.



Following reference images some of the rubber tyres received some damage.

The tracks can be made fully workable but I have to admit they are a fiddle to assemble. If your budget will stretch invest in some aftermarket metal links.



No Slip-Ups

Although Meng have made a good effort to replicate the anti-slip texture I've added a little more 'grit' to it in places with some 'Cast-a-Coat' powder. I would have favoured VMS Hull-Tex but with COVID19 Lock-Down restriction I wasn't able to get into the AFV studio to steal the Editor's! I feel this additional fine texture helps replicate the dust at the weathering stage so is worth doing.

Note the vision blocks and head-lamps need to be installed at this stage. I applied some liquid chrome ink from a Molotow marker pen as a reflector on the reverse. The photoetch lamp guards will need installing after masking is removed at the paint stage...yes, I forgot...

The rear stowage baskets and turret basket have these beautiful new covers included. Digital 3D sculpting gives very realistic results. Photos of Merkavas in hostile and combat situations often show stowage bins (both rear and turret) empty and the top covers removed due to the risk of fire.

The ball and chain protective skirt and stretcher are superbly detailed.

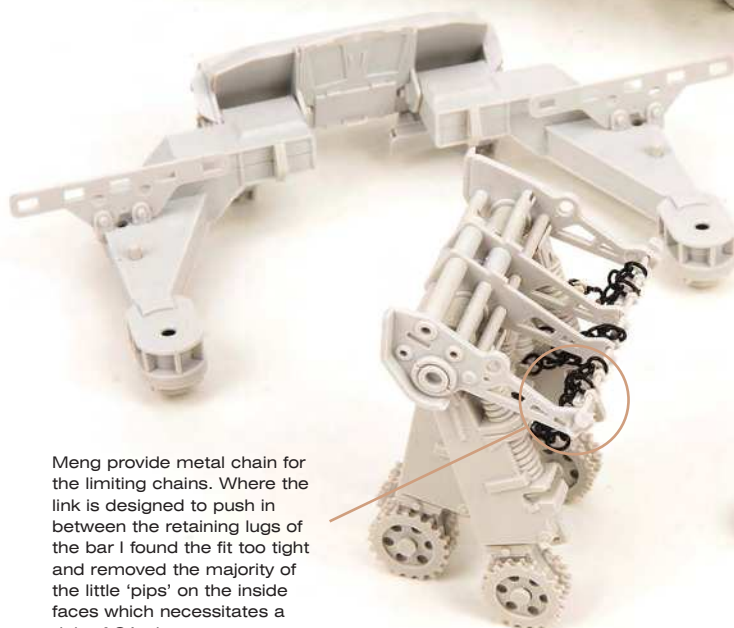




Idler wheels are slide-moulded in a single piece, superb!

Holes were drilled through the lugs in the extractor collar following reference images.

With the turret and hull top dry-fitted the beast begins to take shape!
The 120mm smooth-bore gun is constructed from two halves with a good fit.



Meng provide metal chain for the limiting chains. Where the link is designed to push in between the retaining lugs of the bar I found the fit too tight and removed the majority of the little 'pips' on the inside faces which necessitates a dab of CA glue.

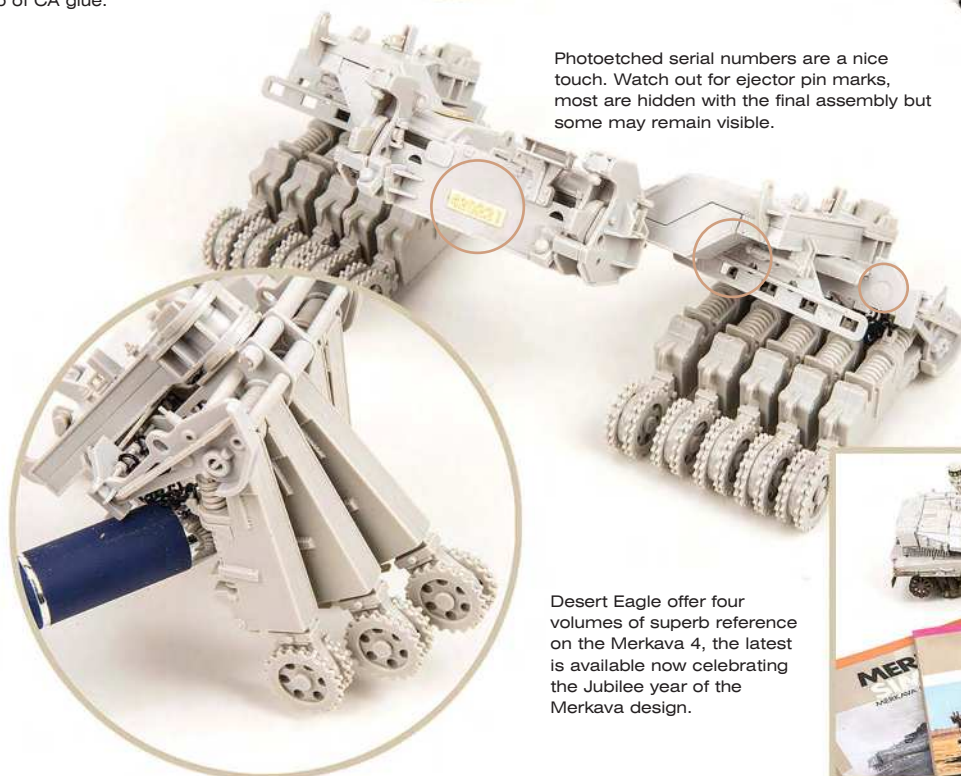
On a Roll

The Nochri (foreigner) Kal (light) mine roller system is a massive piece of equipment and a major part of the model's construction. Meng has designed this to be fully articulating. I tackled the construction in a few sessions as it's a demanding little kit in it's own right.



I'd recommend building the lobster-like right and left units completely separately as per the instructions. Many parts appear similar but have subtle differences.

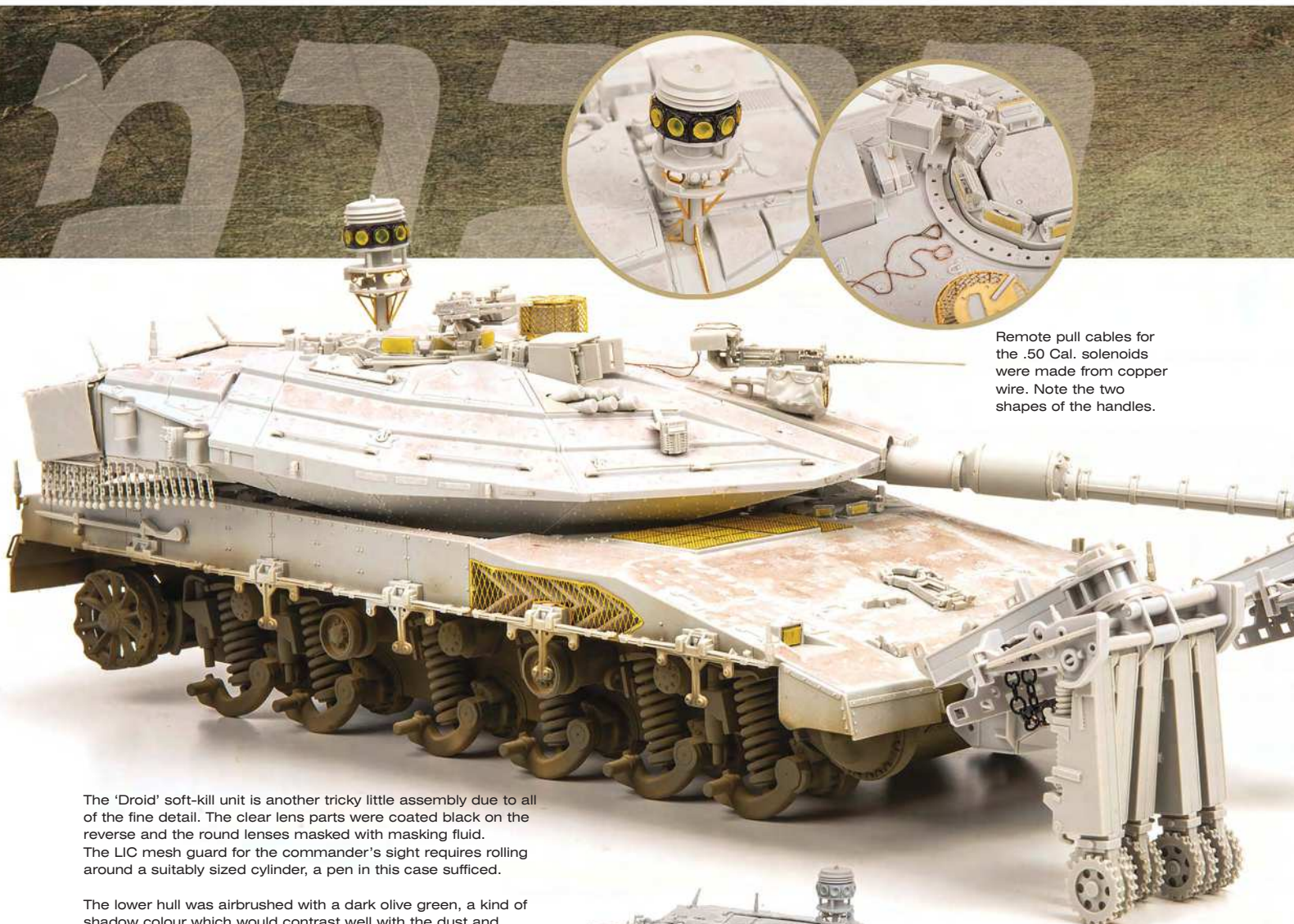
Photoetched serial numbers are a nice touch. Watch out for ejector pin marks, most are hidden with the final assembly but some may remain visible.



All of the movement of the unit is replicated; each of the fingers can move independently and the arms can be raised or lowered. Most photographs of the Merkavas fitted with these show operations on flat ground but the model would look great posed on some rough terrain.

Desert Eagle offer four volumes of superb reference on the Merkava 4, the latest is available now celebrating the Jubilee year of the Merkava design.





Remote pull cables for the .50 Cal. solenoids were made from copper wire. Note the two shapes of the handles.

The 'Droid' soft-kill unit is another tricky little assembly due to all of the fine detail. The clear lens parts were coated black on the reverse and the round lenses masked with masking fluid. The LIC mesh guard for the commander's sight requires rolling around a suitably sized cylinder, a pen in this case sufficed.

The lower hull was airbrushed with a dark olive green, a kind of shadow colour which would contrast well with the dust and weathering.



There's something very satisfying about a coat of primer! We find Mission Model's own primer essential to allow their acrylics to grip well. Mission's acrylics are one of our go-to brands and always perform well following their excellent guidance on www.missionmodels.com

'That' Colour

IDF colours are one of those debates that seems to go on forever with modellers. Sure, we have many colour photos to work to but effects of various colours of dust and natural light give images very different results. I had set in my mind's eye the colour I was gunning for, something which would give a suitable contrast to the dust and dirt.

I ended up using a mix of MMP 056 RLM 02 'Grau' (Luftwaffe colour) and MMP 105 'Worn black-grey tyres' in a ratio of around 10:1 respectively.



The turret prior to any dust application. MGs were base coated satin black and polished with Ushi Van Der Rosten metallic powder.



Lifecolor liquid pigments were airbrushed to replicate exhaust soot.



Dust Buster

Unless you're showing your Merkava in a colder winter setting, dust is going to feature in some degree so I shunned my usual dark oil colour pin-washes and filters and went for washes of dust colours in different intensities. I've used only two products to replicate dust; Wilder 'Aqua-Line Light Mud' and Wilder 'Light Rust' pigment powder to add a touch of the orange tone often seen on IDF vehicles. The mix is simply thinned with water and is easily worked and reworked with wet and dry brushes and sponges in various layers. As with the real vehicles, the dust clings around the anti-slip texture and sits around details and recesses.

Pigment powder was mixed to match the dust and applied to the tracks after base-coating in dark metallic grey and masking the tyre contact area. The workable tracks proved pretty robust when painting and received a buffing with graphite powder on high contact areas before being wrapped around the wheels.

The flag adds a splash of colour; it's a pre-coloured super-thin photoetch part from Eduard.

Antennas were made from fine brass rod and the tie-downs from stretched sprue. Insulators are blobs of PVA glue.



Armour skirts can be added once the wheels and tracks are in place. Bottom sections are thick rubber in reality, Meng have captured the look well.



After all of the dry dust effect was complete I looked to replicate the damp areas common in most of the photos of IDF vehicles. Lubricants attract and hold the dust and it takes on a much darker appearance lightening towards the edge of the stain. Something I did notice in my reference was how clean the 'Droid' soft kill units are; kept covered when not in use this sensitive piece of technology was the only item I applied

a dark wash to.

Paint damage is quite minimal on these beasts, I've kept mine restrained with some exposed red-oxide primer exposed in a few places and some scratches and scuffs done with a sharp, soft graphite pencil. This is most prominent on the road wheel rims and hubs, idlers and the drive sprocket where the exposed red primer was stippled with an almost dry (of paint) piece of sponge. The same red primer/dark red is used on the lifting points of the mine roller system, something often seen on IDF machines to highlight maintenance points. Again, referring to the images in the Desert Eagle books, many of the bolt heads are picked out with a sharp pencil, either new fixings or paint removed from abrasion.



The kit provides a tow cable from braided steel (which I haven't fitted) and a heavy tow chain as metal links. The kit part wasn't quite chunky enough in my opinion so I swapped it out for one in Accurate Armour's shackle and stainer set for the M1070 (A195) which was treated to an overnight bath in blackening fluid.

Although photoetch isn't favoured by all modellers there's sometimes no other way to recreate certain details such as the exhaust outlet mesh. 1500 BHP of diesel power can kick out some smoke at high revs!



Reference shows a particular pattern to the abrasion of the paint of the mine roller wheel units with exposed primer through to actual bare metal; a kind-of sand-blasting from the contact with the terrain.

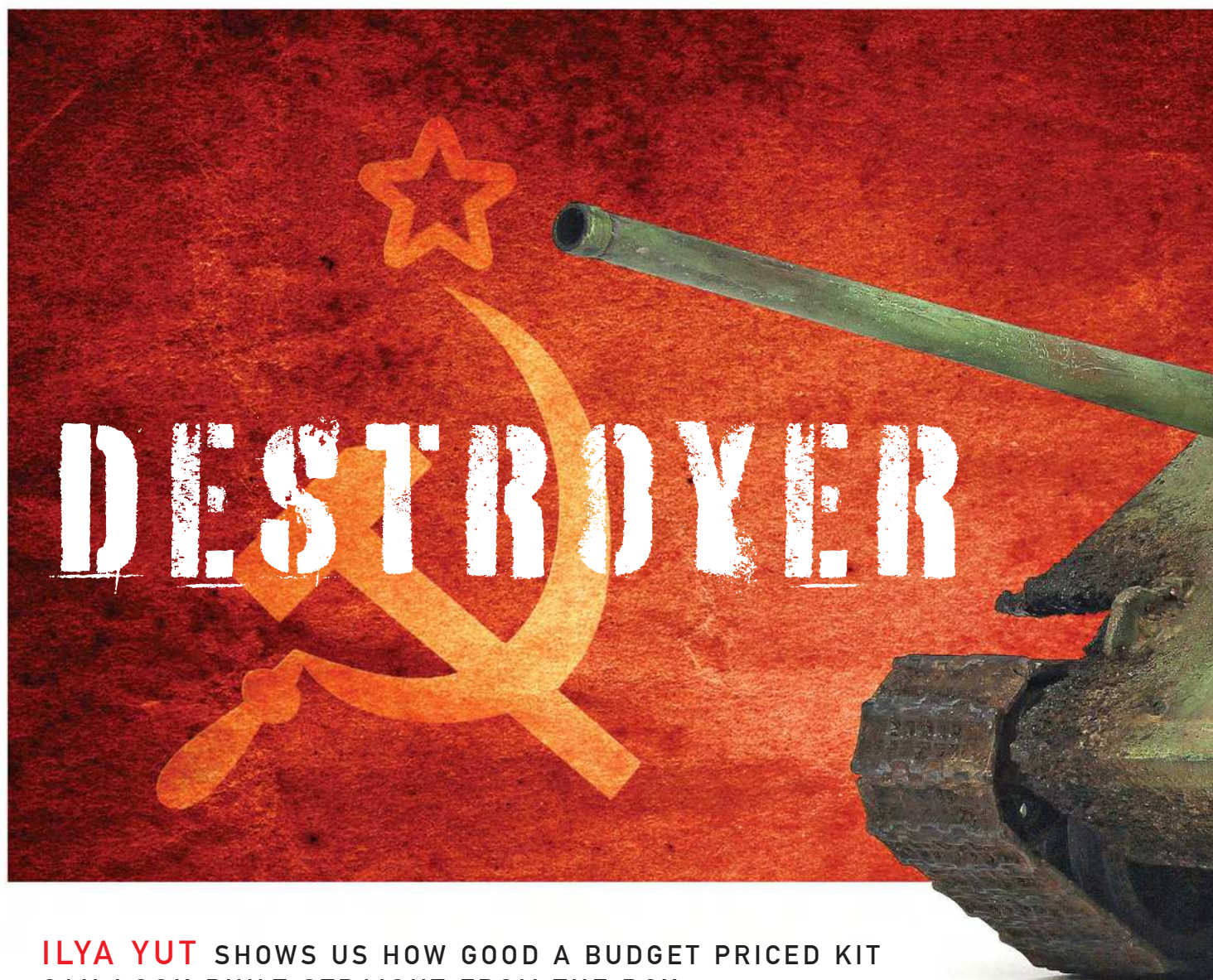


Merk-nificent

To surmise, this is a beautifully detailed and accurate IDF subject again from Meng which fits together without issue. Don't expect to throw it together in a weekend, there are many hours of work assembling this beast, especially with the mine roller system installed, it's probably a kit for the more experienced builder to savour, and a very rewarding one at that.



ROCK LOBSTER.



ILYA YUT SHOWS US HOW GOOD A BUDGET PRICED KIT
CAN LOOK BUILT STRAIGHT FROM THE BOX



ZVEZDA'S 1:35 SU-85



WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

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Following my positive experience with building Zvezda's T-34 UZTM, I decided to build one more kit of their newly tooled T-34 line. This time I chose the SU-85 tank destroyer, also a nice kit, with good detail and decent parts fit, not unlike Tamiya. The only minor issue was assembling the fighting compartment. The roof was slightly warped (I reinforced it with thick plastic) and the front plate attachment was not as precise as I would have liked.

I built the model pretty much OOTB, replacing handles, tie downs and the fuel tank handles. One of four fuel tanks I decided to remove and that required some surgery. I also used some putty here and there, and that's basically it!



In true 'budget' fashion the kit barrel and tracks were utilised, and why not? both are good, the tracks requiring only a little filling of ejector pin marks. The link and length style tracks can be left removable for painting.



Removing the mudguards and fuel drum ads character and allows for the extreme mud-throwing to come later!



Some simple old-school tweaks such as drilling the track pin holes and replacing handles with brass rod add a little finesse for free.

Zvezda have made a great job of the engine deck mesh frame, something that usually needs tackling in photoetch. A good design for more novice modellers.



Camouflage is not typical for WWII Soviet armour, but also not unheard of. I opted for a green-brown scheme. My colours of choice were Tamiya acrylics; XF-5 Flat Green and XF-68 NATO Brown were both lightened with XF-2 Flat white and applied by airbrush. Adding white helps keep the colours visible under all the layers of washes, enamels and other weathering.



Note that I painted and weathered wheels, tracks, hatches and other parts separately.



Pre-dusting over the lower hull was airbrushed with diluted XF-57 Buff.



Chipping is the step that I really hate applying, but it adds so much to the weathered look, that I force myself to do it every time! I used several techniques here: sponge chipping, speckling with a stiff brush and precise painting with a fine brush.



The third technique is the most tedious but helps achieving precise and controlled effect, while former two are the opposite – less precise, but time-saving. I usually apply two layers; lightened base colour and then in the middle of some chips base metal metallic brown to add depth. Chipping was again made with acrylics.



Once chipping was done, I made a wash using Wilder LS-09 Black Brown oil, thinned with odourless thinner for enamels. The same paint was used for “fake shadows” or let’s say detail emphasizing. It’s mostly visible on the gun barrel.

The technique adds some depth to otherwise boring areas. I applied some oil, waited until it dried a little bit and then blended with almost dry brush. This trick becomes easy when you feel the right amount of oil and thinner on the brush.





The proper weathering started with dry dust. Initially I wanted to make it with enamels, but failed and used good old pigments instead. I applied them both dry and mixed with thinner. Once I was satisfied with the dusting pattern, I then fixed them with pigment fixer by Mig Production. The pigments used were Mig Production Gulf War Sand (the best and most useful tone I find), Abteilung 502 Desert Sand and Beach Sand and Wilder Beach Sand colours.



When working with dust on my models, I keep three things in mind:

- 1-Use several dust shades, minimum two tones.
- 2-Contrast is key. While generously applying dust on some areas, I leave others relatively clean. Dust may cover a vehicle uniformly and boringly in real life, but it don't look cool on a model! A gentle dust wash in the corners looks better than peppering the entire model with pigments.
- 3-Some depth looks good when areas of darker/damp dust emphasize the light dust.

To achieve the desired contrast, I used AK Dark Mud enamel product to add darker dust, or dry mud if you will. I applied small quantities of the product and then blended with thinner to obtain a smooth transition.

The same enamel was used for initial spilt fuel effects.

To push the contrast in weathering even further I reinforced the darker areas, adding spilt fuel and other wet effects. I worked here in several steps, some drops and areas were emphasized with additional glossiness using AK Wet Effects & Engine Oil enamels and Abt.502 Engine Grease oil, while others were left less glossy. The base patterns had been painted with diluted Wilder Black Brown and Winsor & Newton Burnt Umber oils. The method of application is easy, but requires some practice. Fortunately oils and enamels can be easily removed if things go wrong.



I used Winsor & Newton and a fine brush and applied the effects slowly using diluted oils and enamels in several successive layers.





For dusty streaks I used the same pigments that had been used for light dust. I mixed them with Pigment Fixer and applied with a thin brush. Once they dried a bit, I shaped them more precisely. This method is less convenient than using oils or enamels, but those that I had at the moment were not vivid enough for me. Maybe I should buy more alternatives or mix better tones from those oils that I have. Dark streaks were made with enamels and oils from the previous steps. The application method was similar – drawing a thin line, then shaping it properly with a fine brush damp in odourless thinner. More glossiness was again achieved by adding AK Wet effects and Engine Oil effects.



The lower hull was weathered throughout several easy steps. I started by applying AK Sand Yellow & Light Dust Deposits. I then made streaking effect with a flat brush moistened in enamel thinner



Textured dry earth was applied by speckling Wilder Light Europe Fine texture product. I used an old toothbrush and a stiff brush, moving them against a toothbrush. Well, it covered the previous layer almost completely, so you can skip the previous step, learning from my errors!



To add tonal variety I applied aforementioned AK deposits together with Brown Earth Deposit and Dark Mud enamel. All products were blended with thinner to obtain a nice colour transition and emphasize darker areas.



Dark mud speckles were applied as the light earth texture. The only difference was using Wilder Textures of darker shades and AK Dark Mud.



Glossy wet mud areas were imitated by applying AK Engine Oil and then blending it with thinner.



Piles of textured mud were also done using acrylic textures and enamel products. I started with applying some light-toned Wilder texture mix on the fenders using Tamiya stirring stick as a spatula. These acrylic textures are water-soluble but once dry, they become rock-hard and can be removed only mechanically, e.g. with a hobby knife. So some practice on old models is highly recommended!



The same texture was then speckled, again using a toothbrush, a stiff paintbrush and a toothpick. It makes sense to mask the nearby areas to avoid overspray. However the specks can be easily removed with water, it's better to avoid it. The texture dries slowly. You can speed up the process by using a hair-dryer or blowing air from an airbrush, but the speckles and texture in general becomes softer and less edgy.



Speckling dark fresh mud was the next step. Again, Wilder Dark Brown and Dark Russian fine textured earth textures were used.

The final step was blending the mud and adding wet effect using AK Dark Mud, Fresh Mud and Engine Oil enamel products.





I started the tracks by applying a dark brown layer of Tamiya acrylic paint.



Then light-coloured Wilder textures were added. I blended them with water to obtain fine texture.



Then Tamiya XF-57 Buff and XF-78 Wooden Deck Tan colours were airbrushed.



Speckling mud was done using AK Fresh Mud, Ammo Mig Turned Dirt Splashes and AK Sand Yellow Deposits.



Areas of damp mud in the centres of each track were added using AK Engine oil & Fresh Mud enamels. I simply applied them with a small brush and blended with thinner.

The last step was adding some metallic shine using a pencil and MIG Productions Gun Metal pigment, rubbed with a finger. After gluing the tracks to the model, this step was partly repeated.

Weathering the wheels was rather similar to weathering of the lower hull. AK Deposits were followed by speckling light and dark mud texture and then adding wet areas using AK Engine oil and Abteilung 502 Engine Grease oil.



The V-2 diesel engine produced quite a lot of smoke and soot. The black soot is evident on all T-34 based vehicles. I painted these areas with an airbrush using Tamiya XF-1 Flat Black and added a bit of Black pigment with a small paintbrush.





After all parts had been treated separately, I glued everything together, fixed some minor painting issues and added eye-catching stowage items.

This range of T-34 based kits from Zvezda are fantastic value, nice to build and very well detailed. I hope you agree that the SU-85 looks rather good treated with some modern weathering techniques.



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Model by Fabio Sacchi



BTR 60

Bronetransportyor Sixty

Modelled by Fabrizio Pincelli





The BTR-60 is an armoured personnel carrier built by the Soviets originating in the sixties but still in widespread use although superseded by the newer BTR 70/80/90. BTR translates as Bronetransportyor "Armoured Transporter".

It has advantages and disadvantages: the first advantage is mobility with 8x8 power, it's amphibious with solid reliability. Among the negatives is the difficulty of entering and exiting the vehicle. The successful platform has created many versions, but its main ability as an amphibious vehicle earned it the nickname 'the boat with wheels'.

Trumpeter's kit is really well done, good fit and quite satisfactory detail. It features photo-etched parts but not enough for my desired level of detail. To solve this problem, I purchased the excellent ET Model set that in addition to the photo-etched, features a barrel in resin and machined aluminum with excellent finesse. Not knowing the quality of the Trumpeter vinyl tyres, I purchased a set of 'weighted' wheels in resin from ET but found considerable gaps between the rim and the tyre. I tried to close the gap but the final result wasn't what I wanted. I used the wheels from the kit with the 'screw' trick to compress and simulate the effect of weight on the tyres. I also rebuilt the rear basket and the light guards with copper wire, soldered for strength. I took measurements from the kit and after fixing all the pieces in place with masking tape applied the liquid flux and joined everything with a touch of solder. The result is rewarding and also strong. As regards the finer details, in my opinion, some parts of the kit may have been satisfactory in hindsight. Photoetch can be too thin compared to reality. This is my personal opinion, not to detract from the excellent quality of modellers who are masters of PE. Everyone interprets this fantastic hobby in their own way and the best thing is just that; build and paint how you like.

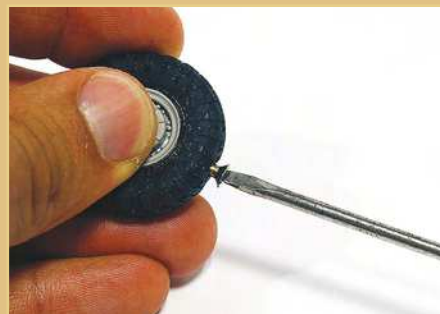
The rolled tarps are a nice feature and were reproduced using a piece of paper handkerchief to the inside and baking paper for the outer. I prepared a mixture of water, Italeri acrylic paint, and PVA glue. I slide the paper handkerchief to absorb into the mixture and then apply it onto the sheet of baking paper. I press away the excess mixture and the 'fabric' is ready to be folded or formed.



This is the Trumpeter kit used and the ET photoetch set. I wasn't happy with the fit of the ET wheels so resorted to modifying the kit parts.



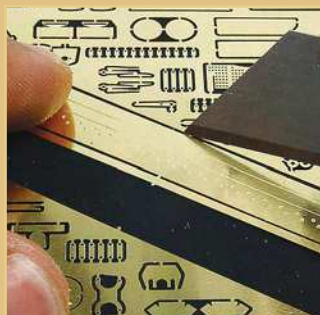
After fixing the tire to the rim a hole is drilled through the tyre and into the wheel rim part.



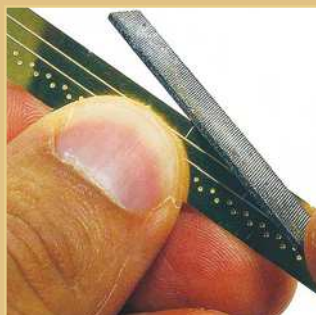
Using a self-tapping screw it pushes on the rubber to simulate the effect of weight giving a realistic bulge and slight flat spot for ground contact.



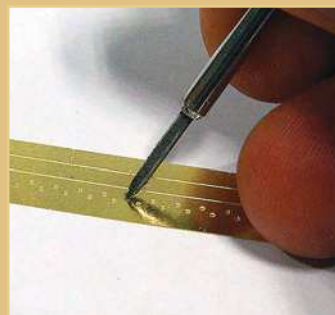
The difference between a normal rubber tyre and the modified one; a quick and easy method for this type of kit tyre.



I find a heavy duty DIY type knife best for removing photoetch from the fret.



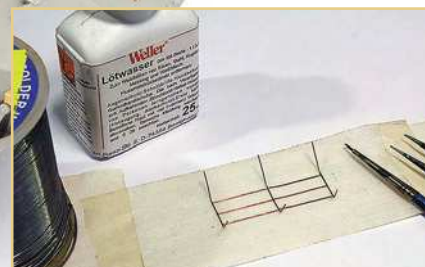
To remove the burrs a small fine needle file is my favourite.



This piece requires a punch to simulate the non-slip fender pattern.



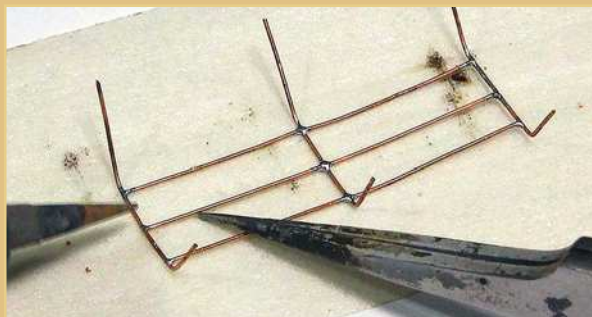
Using the right tools to achieve very good results. A photoetch folding tool is a good investment for long parts with tight folds such as these fenders.



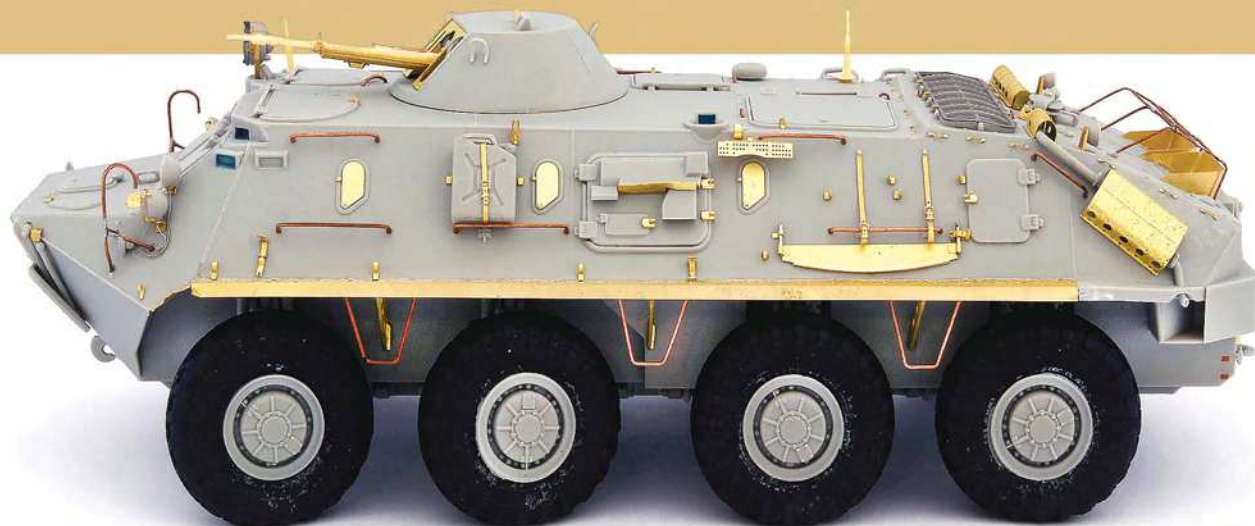
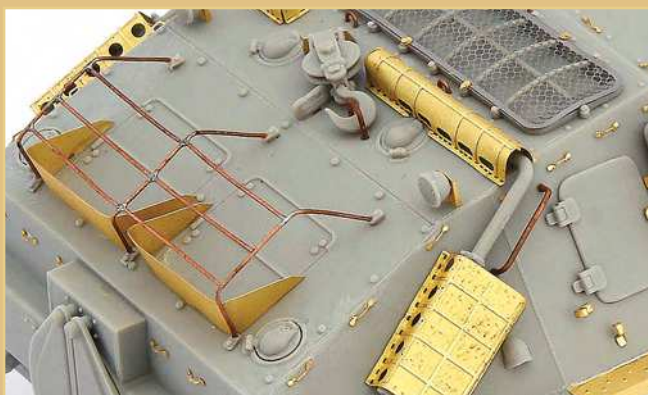
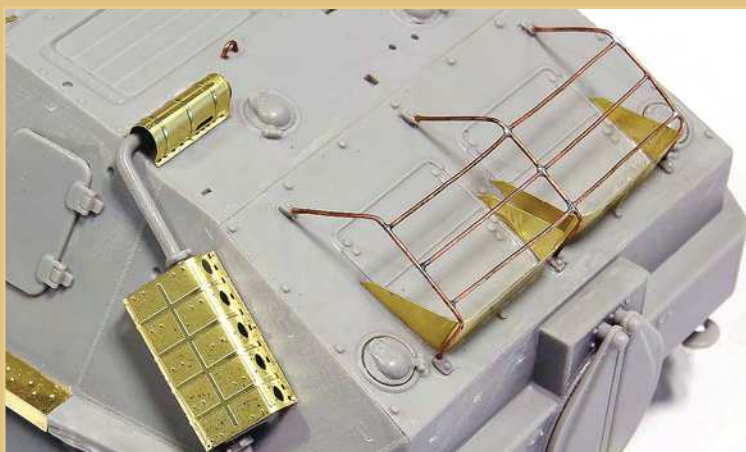
To rebuild the rear rack I placed the copper wire as the original kit part onto masking tape.



I apply the flux with a fine brush...



Then take a very small amount of solder to the tip of the soldering iron and allow it to run into the joints, when cooled the joints are strong. Soldering is simple with a little practice and the tools and materials are inexpensive.



The model is ready for painting. I remade all the handles with copper wire using the kit parts as a pattern.





After cleaning the model with pure alcohol sprayed with an airbrush, I applied the Tamiya primer directly from the spray can.



When the primer is fully dried a coat of AK Interactive 746 Russian Green acrylic is applied and set aside to fully cure.



To paint the wheels I used AK acrylics applied with a brush. They have excellent performance brushing as well as thinned for airbrushing.



I applied AK080 'Kursk Earth' over the entire wheel...



and with a soft brush 'Light dust' pigment applied when the colour is still wet.



After time to completely dry, 'Earth Effects' to simulate the damp mud along the rim were



Here is the result after weathering. Little can be seen of the original base colours!



Using the lighter green of the AK modulation set (Russian Green) I created a slight modulation on the panels and surfaces keeping upper areas lightest.

Pushing the contrasts even further I brushed the 'Highlight' green on edges and details. This effect will tone-down after the weathering stage.

The model is ready for weathering. I tend to apply a layer of clear matt varnish after this step to preserve the work done previously.



AK Dark wash and Burnt Umber oil paint thinned with white spirit prepare the 'pin wash' to be applied around selected details. I applied the mix into the recesses and the weld beads. With a brush soaked in clean white spirit the excess wash can be cleaned away.



Below we can see the strong contrasts of the green highlights and dark pin-wash.



I simulated chipped paint on edges and corners with a sponge cut to a point using a 'dabbing' action.

The lower parts of the model are painted with Tamiya Buff to simulate the dust in the first stage of weathering.



Next step was to simulate collected dry mud. I applied a generous layer of AK Nato rainmarks...



... onto which I sprinkled a layer of fine sand on the colour while still wet. The wet paint sets the sand in place and absorbs colour.



Buff oil colour with white spirit created an overall wash to simulate the dust on the hull.



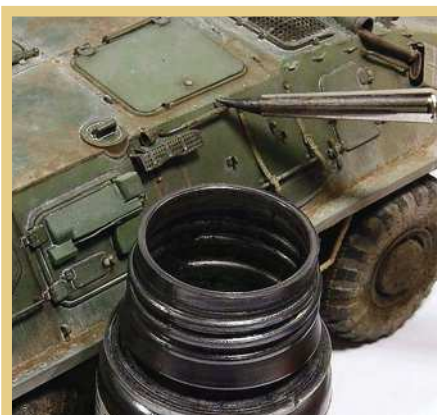
Clean white spirit can be used to move the dust effect around allowing it to collect in corners and recesses.



The same diluted oil colour previously used but diluted even further was used to simulate the streaks and rain marks.



More brown tones were added to replicate damp dust and dirt.



With a rubber artist's shaper I applied Dark steel powder to add bare metal wear and damage.



AK Engine oil mixed with Terra di Cassel oil colour and white spirit simulated grease stains. This dries with a glossy finish.



With buff added to the glossy mixture the stains are refined and some final fine streaking applied.





I had never built an armoured wheeled vehicle before but after seeing some photos of the BTR I decided I had to make one, a change from my usual subjects and to face the challenge of the tires. I must say it was very interesting and fun to complete this project, filling a gap in my display cabinet "fleet".

On this model I wanted to recreate a high level of dirt due to heavy use and abuse, dried mud, damp mud, dust and grease stains and it proved the ideal test-bed for some extreme effects. The large tyres also bring their own challenges; the heavy encrusted mud but the raised areas of tread which results from driving on paved or tarmac roads...all part of the fun of modelling!

BTR 600

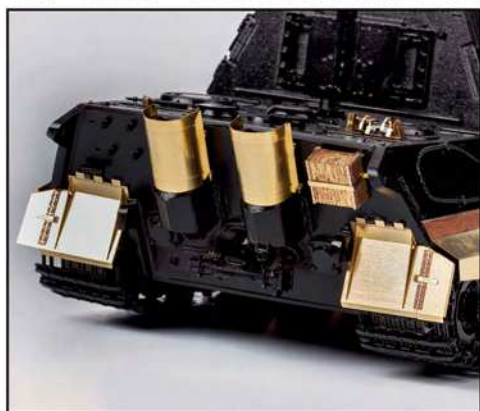
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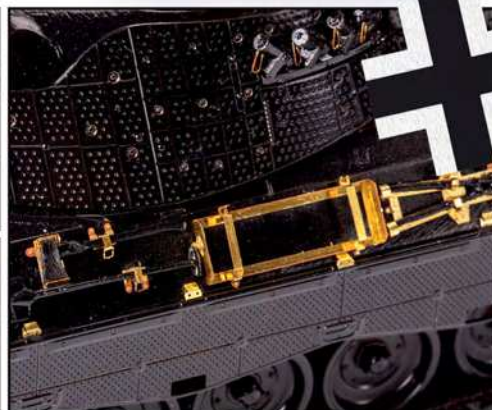
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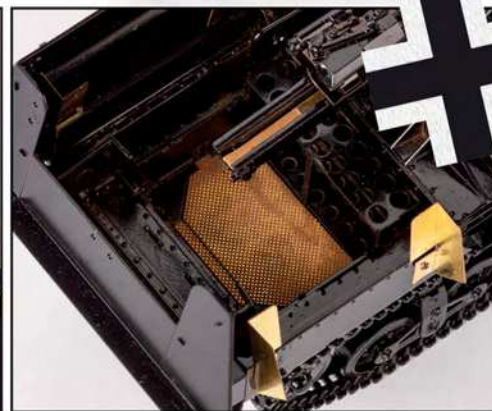
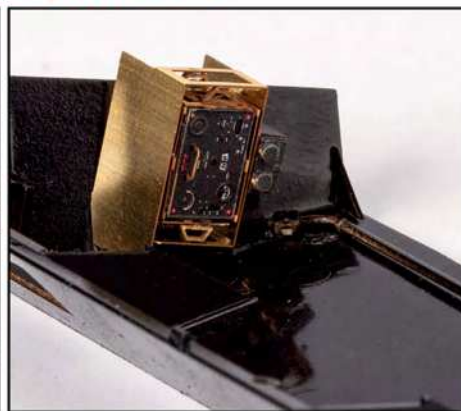
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David Parker builds Trumpeter's 1:16 kit

W

Part Thirty Four

Work continues on fitting out the turret with a large number smaller details and an awful lot of wiring. Things inside the turret are becoming incredibly busy with overlapping fittings and cables meaning that a planned out assembly sequence is critical. Even so I managed to get myself in a couple of scrapes where my enthusiasm for seeing a part installed overruled my planning. Happily I was able to work around these without too many problems. The fitting of the gun sight and turret traverse and

elevation controls marks the end of the main work for the moment on the lower half of the turret. Attention then turned to fitting out the upper turret shell and the majority of the work here was adding the cables to connect in the intercom, lights, fan and the illuminated gunsight. All of this cabling runs up the RHS of the turret wall and across the roof on the internal rib that underlies the split between the angled and flat sections of the roof plates.



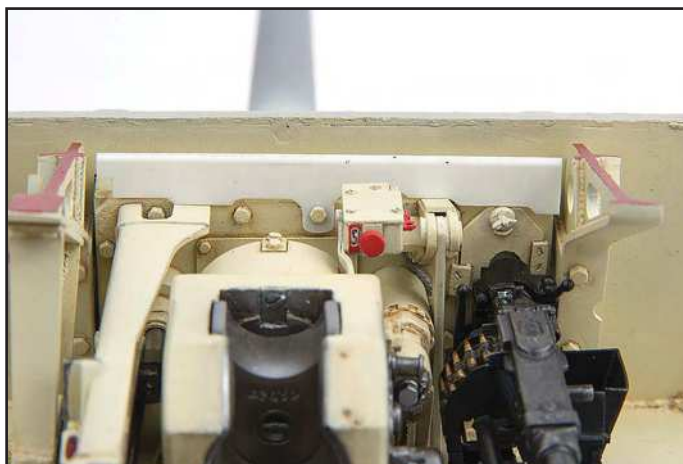
It was now safe to install the elevation and traverse handwheels which were painted and pre-weathered before doing so. There is some room for debate about the colours of these but I went with black as it matched the traces of paint on the Ausf H I examined.



As well as the light buff wash applied to the black areas I also added some polished metal to the rim of the traverse wheel and the handgrip/trigger.



The handle of the back up traverse system was also added at this point.



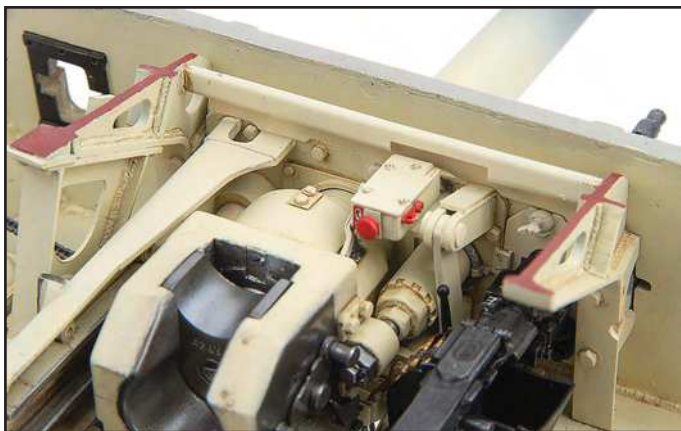
This is a good example of a piece that I should have modelled long before the gun was installed but I had somehow overlooked. I assume it is some sort of splinter trap to protect the mantlet opening. The first piece was constructed from plastic card and fitted to the top of the gun mount. The



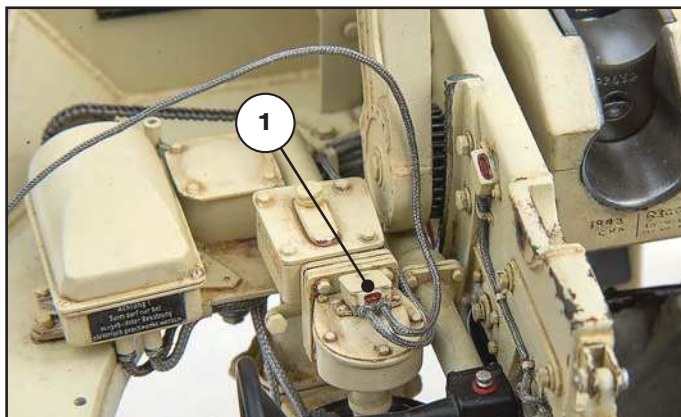
second part spans between the roof brace and I needed it to be strong because it will carry some cabling so I used brass strip that I bent to shape.



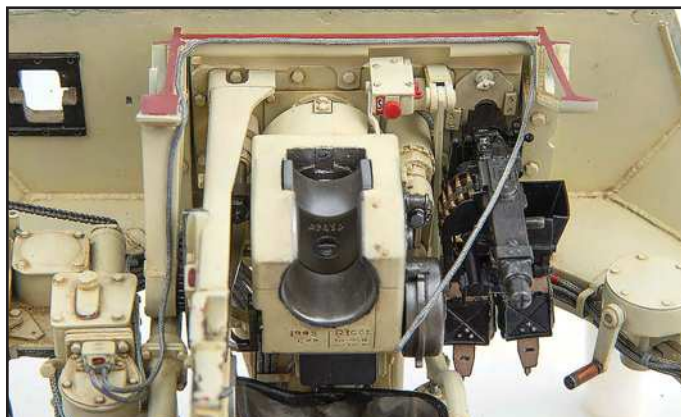
Viewed from above the two parts have a staggered position.



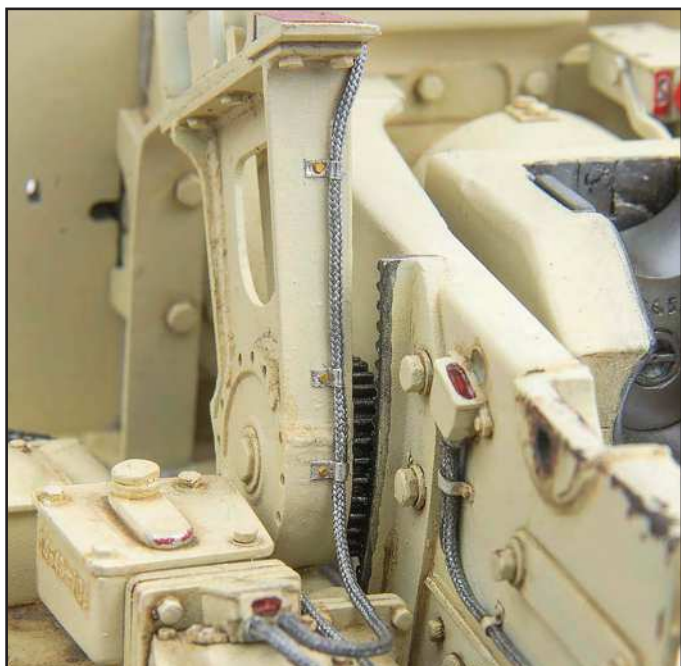
The new parts were pre-painted before they were fixed into position and then touched up in situ.



I could now add the rest of the gun firing circuit which runs across the top of the gun mount on the new splinter guard. I began by gluing the ANYZ cable into the warning light box atop the traverse controls 1. This was then glued into position up the arm of the elevation system and across the gun to the other roof brace.



I added the missing welds to the braces which needed to be done before these areas became inaccessible. I used Magic Sculpt to create the welds and they were painted to blend in with the existing weld details/



Returning to the new cable, I added the cable clasps using strips of self-adhesive aluminium and small photoetched bolts. The clasps were then painted in Elfbein cream to match the rest of the interior.



I could now install the gun sight which was pre-painted but I left off the delicate parts at this stage. The telescope was glued into the mounting frame which was painted black.



This is one of the parts that would need some adjustment and careful alignment so I used 5 minute epoxy to glue the mounting frame to the gun shield and the whole thing was supported by two blobs of Blue Tac until the glue had set.



I could then add the lens cover **2** and the brow pad **3** and also the traverse control arm **4** situated below the telescope.



Above & Below These pictures of the completed telescopic sight show the critical importance of the assembly sequence, such is the complexity of this area.



Now the vision port mechanism could safely be installed **5** This just slotted into position against the front of the turret. I used the kit glazing panel and weathering was restricted to some worn metal where the latch moves.



In my excitement at fitting the gun sight I forgot to add the power cable (the sight was illuminated) so I had to locate it down the RHS of the sight



The other part of the gunsight mount is the roof-mounted arm that supports the eyepiece end of the scope. Because the turret shell including the roof will be removable I had to consider the best way to arrange this. The kit part

was adapted with weld details, new hinges and locking clamp as well as photoetched chains for the pin. The small placard comes from the AFV Modeller decal sheet and adds an extra touch of detail.



The completed support bracket was glued into place on top of the sight and supported with more Blu Tac. The angle was checked to confirm that the bracket just touches the turret roof.



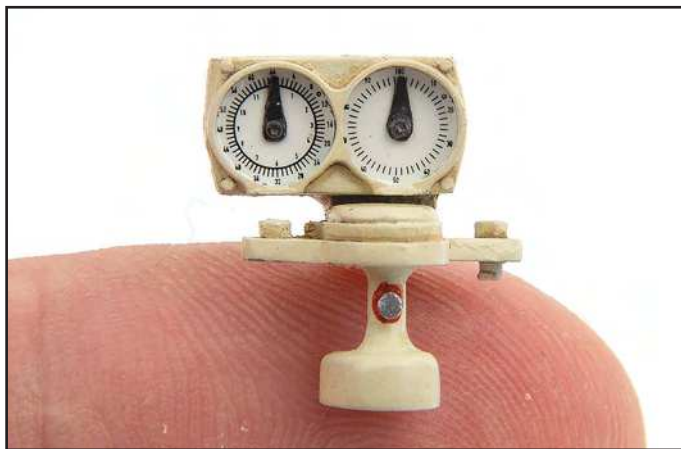
The completed support bracket was glued into place on top of the sight and supported with more Blu Tac. The angle was checked to confirm that the bracket just touches the turret roof.



The power socket for the gunsight illumination was fitted to the side of the gun mount bracket and the cable connected to it. The power supply to the socket runs across the roof so will be fitted there in due course.



Likewise the power socket for the safety switch was fitted to the other gun bracket and connected to the braided cable. The socket and connecting cable were 'plugged' into the power supply socket.



The dials on the direction indicator were added after some thinning of the fascia panel using the AFV Modeller decals. I made a pair of pointers from plastic which were pre-painted and glued in place on the dials.



The completed unit was then glued into place on the turret ring.



Attention now turned to work on the turret shell with preliminary weathering applied to the interior.



A pair of Kastan 21 boxes from the AFV Modeller range of accessories were painted in preparation for fitting out the turret shell. They provide the comms connection for the Commander and Gunner.



The location of these boxes on the Ausf H was at the rear of the side hatches.



The first of the cables were added using the ANYZ chord with coloured rings added showing green for the intercom system. Note also the power socket added to the left of the hatch.



The layout of the cables takes some careful planning as here were the four way connector has been added above the power socket and its cable threaded behind the intercom cable.



The other intercom cable runs back across the turret roof and is loosely laid in place here.



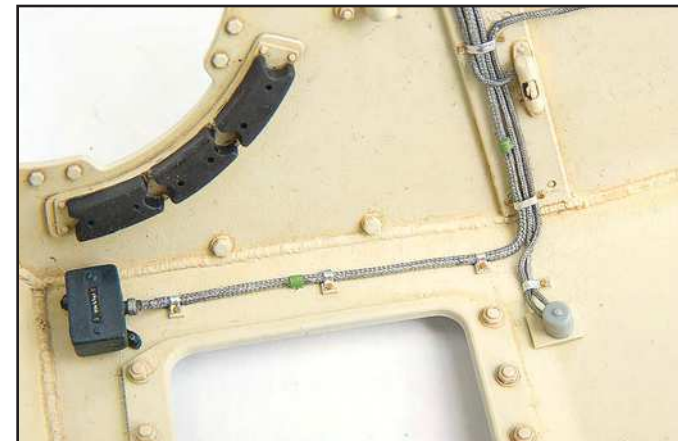
Gradually the jumble of cables was laid out and glued onto position, not without a few false starts and revisions.



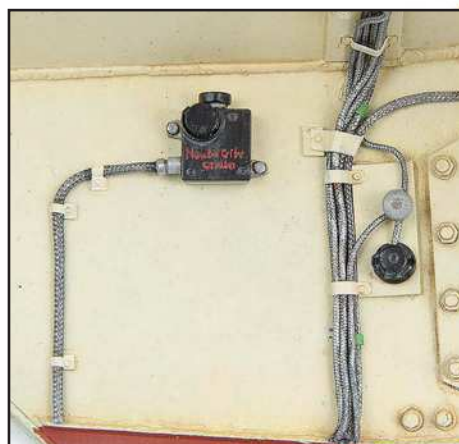
I needed to make the emergency stop button which cuts off the power traverse for the turret. The square shaped box was relatively simple to construct with some scrap photoetch for the circular ring.



Once all the cables were in place I was able to add the cable clamps using self-adhesive aluminium tape and photoetched bolt heads.



Once all the cables were in place I was able to add the cable clamps using self-adhesive aluminium tape and photoetched bolt heads.



The emergency stop button complete with its warning lettering was fitted and the cables added.

The project continues in the next Issue



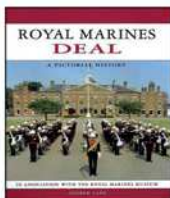
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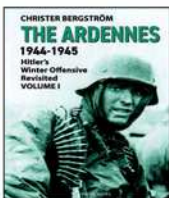
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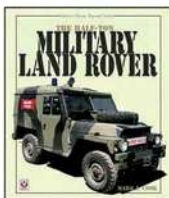
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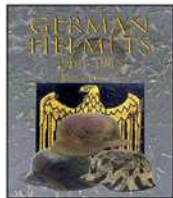
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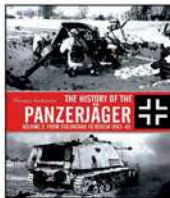
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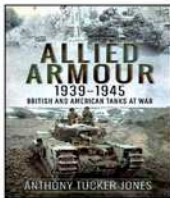
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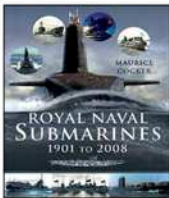
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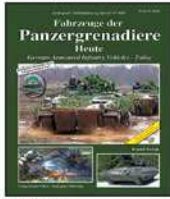
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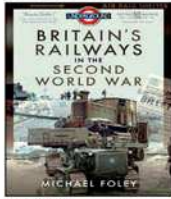
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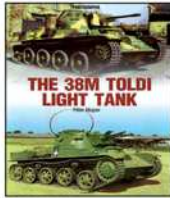
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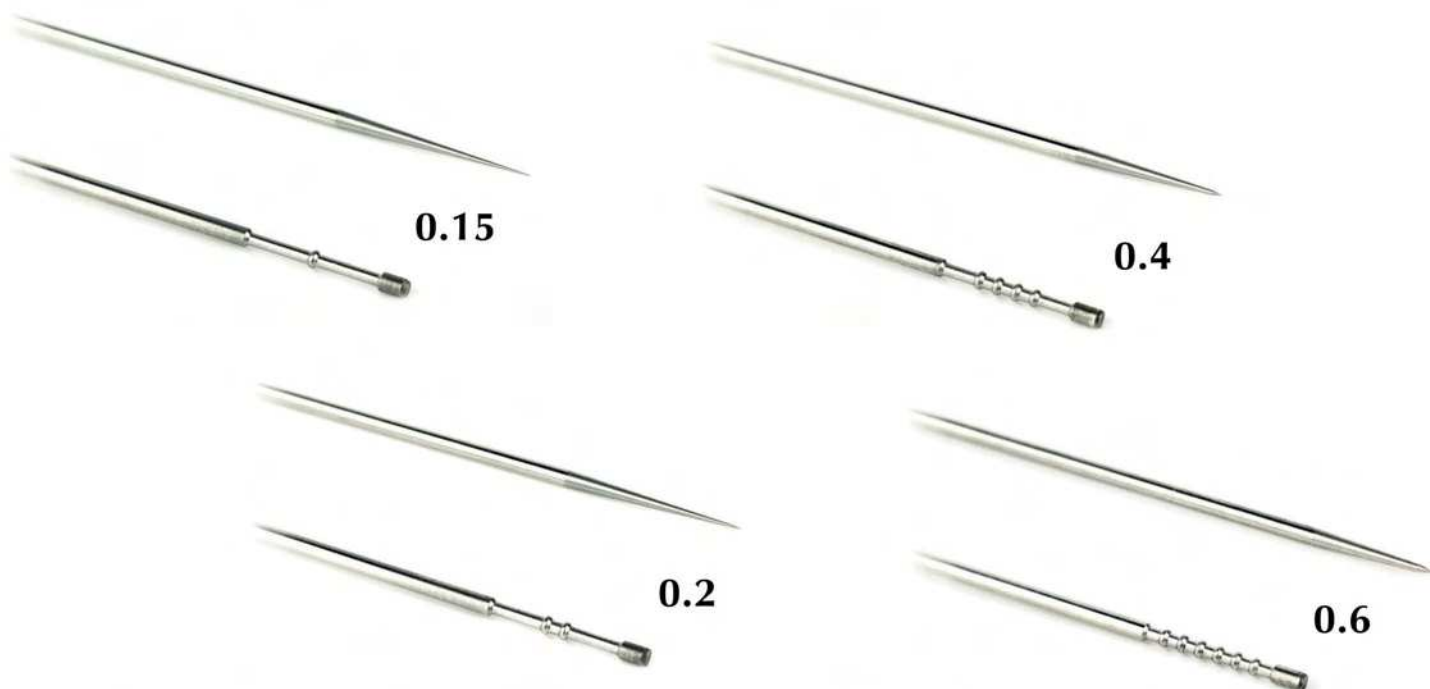
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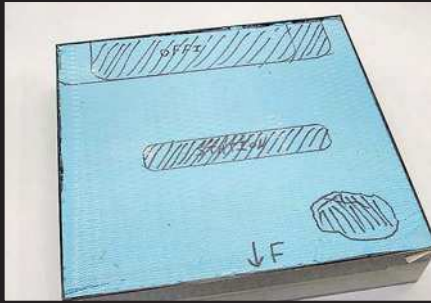
The Ukrainian conflict, was always interesting to me, and I have been prompted many times into doing some research about this conflict. Eventually I came across a photo of a filling station, in Donbass, where very heavy fighting was happening between the separatist forces and Ukrainian Army, during which the two parties took heavy losses. The diorama represents a group of separatists attacking the Ukrainian Army under heavy fire, since this station was positioned on a critical and strategic road for both factions. After finishing my rough layout, I did much research to understand more about the filling station construction, for example what type of material they used for construction. This understanding will affect my painting process and help avoid any mistake.



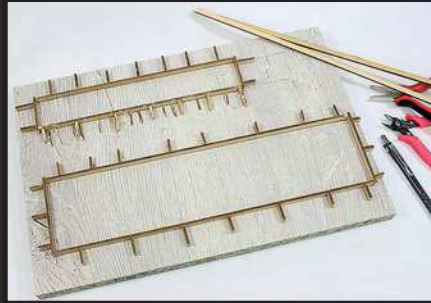
DONBASS ON FIRE

Imad Bouantoun describes how he modelled his dramatic diorama

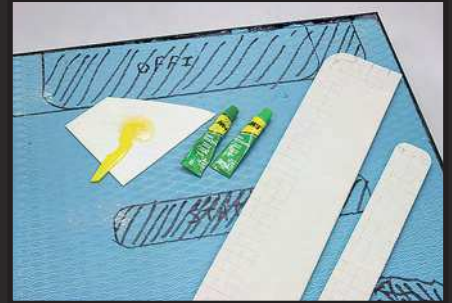




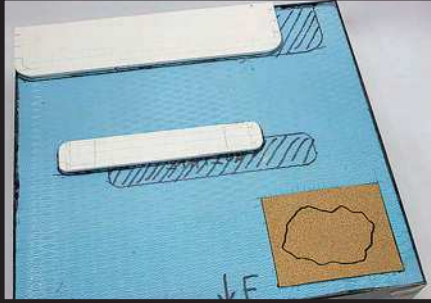
The ground was shaped using blue foam and roughly planned.



I created the office base mould and the fuel pumps base from balsa wood to allow plaster to be poured level.



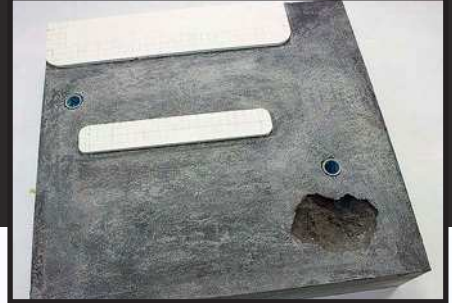
When the plaster had set the detail was scribed, I glued the plaster onto the foam using Epoxy glue.



As you can see above, I inserted a piece of cork to create the cracks in the asphalt.

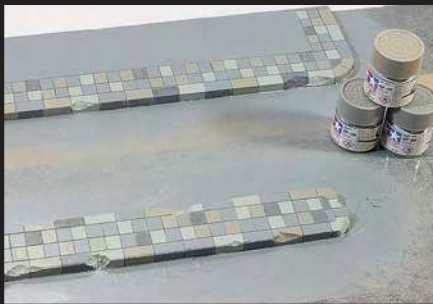


A layer of acrylic resin was applied to simulate the asphalt.



After the acrylic resin dried I used Tamiya XF1 as the main colour and then worked with different layers of oils using light and dark grey and finishing with some brown washes. Man-hole entrances were also added at this point.

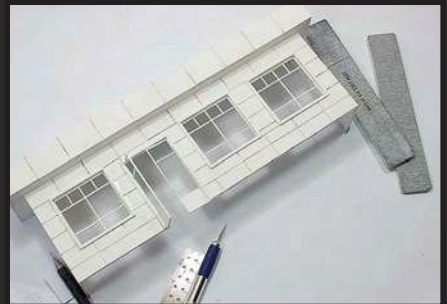




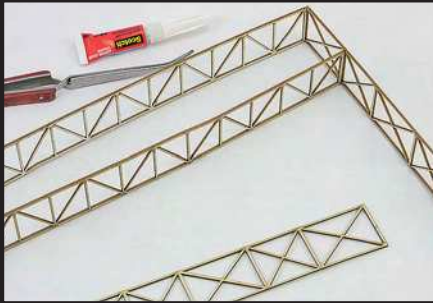
I masked the ground and start painting the tiles using different mixes from Tamiya based on grey colours.



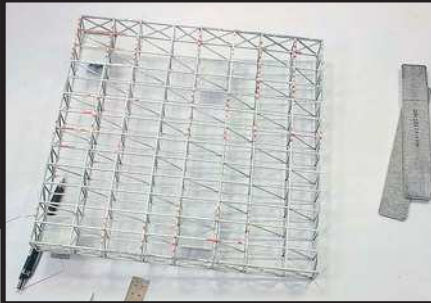
Later I applied different layers of oils for the weathering shading and weathering.



The different facades of the office building were drawn to scale on a sheet of paper and glued to a styrene sheet, 1.2mm thick, for cutting.



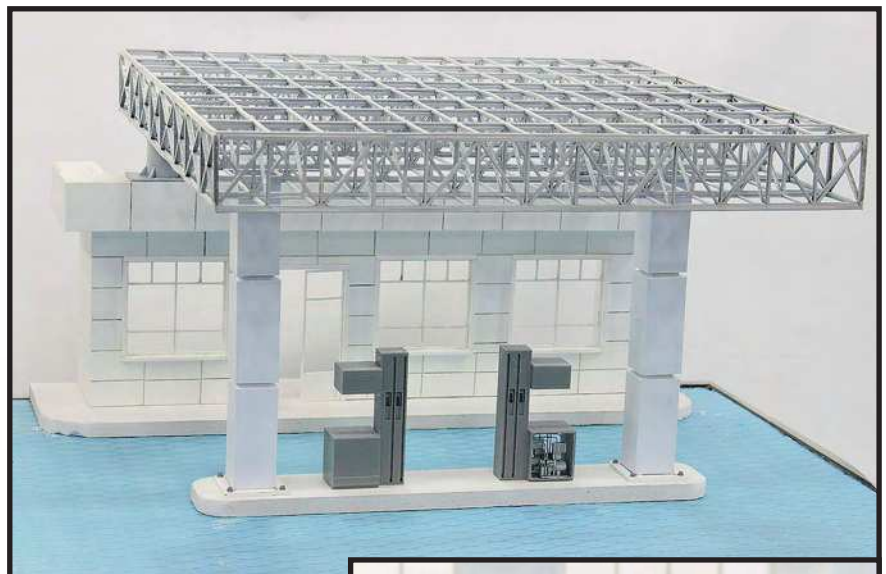
For the metal canopy frame I designed the structure in 3D software and assembled it from laser cut 1.2mm card strips.



After I assembled the structure, I applied a layer of white car primer to create a good base for the paint.



The office building received different layers from Tamiya colours as you can see in the picture. The bullet holes were created using a fine drill. For the windows and doors I used AMMO Desert Sand acrylic. To simulate the Aluminum in the bullet holes I used Mr Color Aluminum 218.



For the pumps I used AMMO gas pumps and modified them to see the internal workings which I designed in CAD and 3D printed.



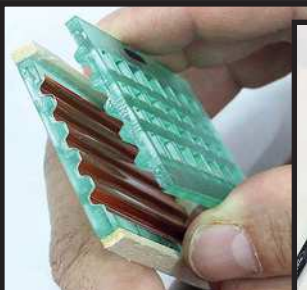
To apply the weathering I used Abt. 501 oils (Light grey -ABT170, Neutral grey-ABT100) and then I use different layers of Bitume-ABT004, finally I applied by airbrush AK Engine grime and AK Dark streaking Grime, blended later by brush.



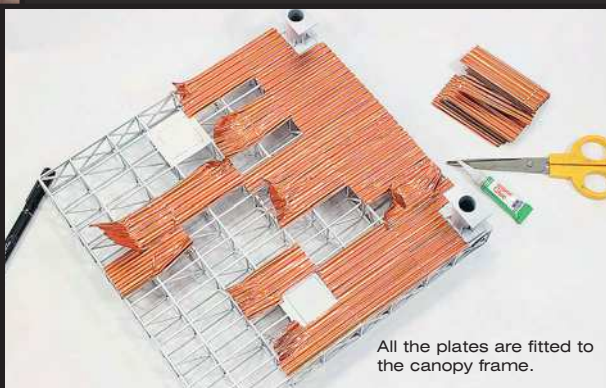
For the weathering of the ground I used AK washes followed by different layers of dust coloured Abteilung 502 pigments (Dry mud, Africa earth, Gulf war), fixing them using white spirit.



Now it's time to create corrugated roof, but these panels have a different shape from the usual, it's like V shape as shown, so I designed a bending tool using 3D printing technology. I chose very thin Aluminum sheets (0.7mm thick) to make the bending process easy.



The sheet was formed easily and quickly between the two 'moulds'.



All the plates are fitted to the canopy frame.



I started now with the outer shape of the canopy using 0.9mm aluminum sheets. Using this material was a big advantage because it gave me the opportunity to simulate the real effect of bullet holes.



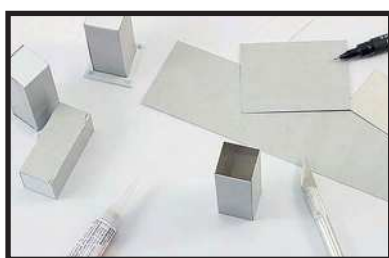
After I applied a good car primer on the aluminum parts I airbrushed the main colours using Tamiya white XF2 and red XF7. Now it's time to assemble the canopy and start the weathering process.



The signage for the canopy was cut from plastic card.



Again, oil colour tones and AK weathering enamels were used in layers for the weathering.



The two main metal support poles of the main canopy were built using aluminum sheet of 0.9mm and styrene sheets 1.2mm thick, also I used Meng bolts to detail the base.

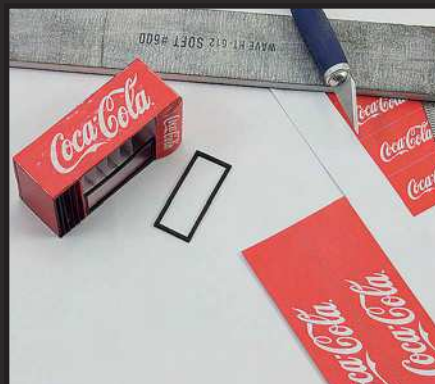




Now it's time to start the individual details; the fuel pumps were base coated with Tamiya, and before I applied a coat of varnish I did some weathering to the red using AK pencils. Finally different oil colour layers and AK enamel colours were used to simulate dirt and aged colour on the pumps.



I scratchbuilt the Coca Cola fridge using also Aluminum and styrene, shelves were made from Voyager PE mesh.



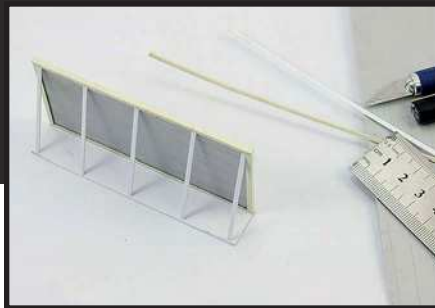
I printed-out Coca Cola logos and fixed them to the aluminum and started the weathering process by using 1000 grade abrasive paper to sand the red colour to age it.



Various washes were layed to produce the dusty and damaged finish of the chiller.



The main sign post was made from styrene tube with a diameter of 8.7mm and bolts from Meng.



Styrene strip and Aluminum was used to construct the main sign and frame.



The graphic for the sign was sized on my computer and printed-out. Streaks of oil colour and Ammo Engine Fuel and oil was applied on the lower part to simulate accumulation of dirt.



To add some more details on the ground I used plastic containers from EUREKA; they are perfect and very well detailed.



To simulate the broken glass I used Shattered Glass from Artefakt, it's a very realistic looking product and so easy to use.

FIGURES

The figures were converted and painted by my dear friend Alexey Sergeye. Figures are the story-tellers of any diorama. Here are modifications made to some of the figures.



- 1** Based on the Bravo-6 35202 "Huguette" Agony (2) figure, which is a French subject from the battle for Dien Bien Phu in Vietnam. A modern Russian bulletproof vest and uniform elements were sculpted from epoxy putty. Modern Russian helmet from Armor-35 (356010) and RPK machine gun from ICM were also used. In addition, a beard and mustache were added to the face.
- 2** Bravo-6 rifleman from 35052 US Infantry 'Thumper Power' set was turned into a militia of the DPR army with the help of the Russian C-68 helmet (Tank Models), body armor making from Magic Sculpt, AK rifle from Zvezda and a backpack from DEF Models.
- 3** Grenade launcher converted from an Arab rebel from Evolution (35139). The head was replaced with a Hornet product, a backpack with RPG-7 grenades from Live Resin, an Armor-35 helmet (356010), as well as various shoulder straps made of photo-etch, Magic Sculpt and masking tape were added. The Grenade carrier (not shown here) has also been converted from the Evolution 35139 set. I decided to dress this fighter in a T-shirt of the Donetsk football club Shakhtar. Croatian defender Darijo Srna played for this club at number 33 and was very popular with the fans.
- 4** The orderly and wounded soldier were converted from Tank Models set 35248, representing the German WWII gunners in battle. The uniform was again sculpted, modern body armour, ammunition and weapons were added.
- 5** This figure from Tank Models represents the legendary militia commander Motorola (35180), and the second - a machine gunner in modern uniform (35188)
- 6,7** The machine gunner and Kalashnikov rifleman from the Evolution Miniatures 35060 Russian Contract Soldiers set were used out of the box.

The GAZ Truck



I built the Trumpeter GAZ 66 out of the box using only resin flat-tyre wheels from Miniarm. Meng's ZU 23 gun received some scratch-built armour plates from aluminum and styrene. Both kits fit together without issue and are very well detailed comparing with the photographs I'd gathered as reference.



I airbrushed the camouflage on the GAZ using Tamiya and Mr Color the main green colour was from Mr Color. For the desert yellow I use a mix of Tamiya XF 3 and Buff XF 57 for the black I used Tamiya NATO black XF 69.



I applied a filter of ochre using diluted oil colour.



For the rear bed of the truck I sponged AMMO Chipping Colour as a base to simulate the worn paint.



Paint chipping and scratches on the main cab was done with AK pencils.



For the lower areas to simulate the dust and dirt I used different coloured pigments fixed using Tamiya thinner X 20A.



For the wheels I use Tamiya XF1 and XF 85. For weathering of the wheels I used first different layers of AK enamel dust colour, after 24 hours to dry I applied a mix of pigments from Abteilung, also I use dark steel pigment on the edges of the rims to simulate bare metal in some areas.



For the ZU 23mm I used acrylics from Lifecolor, all the highlights are applied by brush in lighter tones.



For the armour I used 3 rust tones using a piece of sponge.



Different layers of dust from AMMO (North Africa and Kursk soil) were applied into corners and recesses where dust would settle.

The T-72

For the T-72 I used Meng's kit T-72 B/B1, on all the T-72B offered from Russia to the separatists there were some numbers and markings that were changed when these tanks entered the Ukraine territory. I decided to follow the history of one of these tanks, and after many weeks of research I had all of the movements for the one that you see in my diorama. I decided to add some modifications and details in-keeping with the subject tank, I used Master Club tracks, smoke dischargers from Aber, the metal barrel from Voyager. Ammunition boxes from Eureka are also very well detailed resin parts.





After primer I referred to a working drawing for the T-72 since some parts are made from aluminium. I decided to use the hair spray technique to show bare aluminium, and airbrushed Alclad Aluminium (ALC101) in areas.



The base colour is mixed from Tamiya (XF-5 Flat green), (XF-67 Nato green), (XF-49 Khaki), (XF-3 Yellow). All the various greens are based on Nato Green, the first mix was 80% Nato Green + 20% Flat Green, Second Mix was 50% Nato Green + 50% Khaki, third mix was 40% Nato Green + 20% flat green + 40% yellow. I enhanced all the details using lighter tones brushed with Lifecolor.



After referring to the reference photos the main number of this tank was 125 changed later by separatists by covering with a blue painted panel to give the tank the new number 005, I always prefer to use vinyl cut stencils where possible.



After applying a good layer of satin varnish from Testors, now it's time to apply a filter, filter is a mix of brown wash 90% and dark rust 10% oil colour from Abt.502.



I started my weathering process on the lower hull by using AK pencils to create chipping effects, then I covered these scratches by a thin layer of satin varnish as a base for the dust effects. I used AK Summer Kursk Earth and AK Rain Marks for NATO tanks, they give me a good dusty base in the recesses followed by some colour modifications on the reactive armor using oil colours. Finally, I applied the oil and dirt using Abteilung Engine Grease and Bitume.



For the wheels I applied a different mix using NATO green mixed with Yellow and J.A green for a better contrast to the heavy dirt.



I applied different colours of pigments on the wheels and fixed them using Tamiya thinner X-20A. finally I used AK Dark Steel for the raw metal parts on the idler wheels. The white paint on the four wheels are used as a mark where crews should fix the chains on the train during transportation,

Note the primered light covers bearing the original number of the tank.



With the vehicles and figures finished I could now bring all of the diorama elements together and fine-tune the composition blending any colours into the groundwork if required.

This was a big and time-consuming project but very rewarding to sit back and study the finished piece...now what's next on the workbench?







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1:35 RESICAST 351288 AEC 850 RECOVERY

1:35 RESICAST 351223 7.5-TON RECOVERY TRAILER



The 1:35 Resicast AEC 850 Recovery grabbed my interest a few years ago when it was first released. A classic 'inter-war' look, stocky body and a squashed bulldog nose – and a recovery wagon to boot – what else could I want? For me it's an example of something being so ugly it's beautiful.

A huge part of modelling for me is the research into the subject that I'm building. This usually starts a few weeks before my previous build is finished and I will amass as much information as I can gather from internet sources and books. Most of this ends up in a folder on my laptop which just keeps getting bigger and bigger! It's not unusual that I'll have in excess of 200 images for a project; if you've seen my work in other issues of AFV Modeller you'll know that I like to model some pretty obscure and unique machines, so good all-around images are a must.

WAKE UP AND SMELL THE RESIN...

At the time of release I carried out some research into the '850' but there was very little information out there – a few pre-WW2 images and some contradictory written reports of its heritage, but nothing else. I put this one down as a 'to do later' – possibly when there were more images available (you never know, someone might even do a walkaround...) and some history to go on.

Cue 2020...and I'm sure like many of you, I have found myself with a lot more time at the desk than I expected. A bit more research into the 850 revealed that it was originally built between 1932 and 1936 by the Four-Wheel Drive (FWD) Lorry Company along with Hardy Rail Motors; with the designation of R6T. It was equipped with a 6-cylinder, 95 horsepower petrol engine and had all-wheel drive transmission. During this time Associated Equipment Company (AEC) acquired FWD and the R6T became the AEC 850 – only 33 were ever built; almost all of which were lost during the BEF's retreat to Dunkirk in 1940.

I should also point out here that the 850 kit also comes with a CD full of walk around images and colour, high resolution instructions. The walkaround images also include what I assume to be the master-builder's written comments; which provides a great insight into the thought process behind building a master for production.

The paper instructions in the kit are useful, but I found the printing to be a bit 'washed out', so the CD images really helped (I don't have a CD drive, so I emailed Resicast who emailed all the images to me). On the CD is an image of an AEC 850 being used by the BEF to tow Vickers light tank on a 5-ton trailer; and towing what looks to be a Bren Gun Carrier behind the trailer using an A-Frame. To the best of my knowledge there are no kits available of the 5-Ton trailer, but Resicast do make a 7.5-ton Recovery Trailer, specifically designed to carry light tanks and vehicles. Looking closer at the image seems to show a camouflage pattern on the AEC 850, so I also ordered the HATAKA British AFV Paint Set (WW2 European Colours) set – reasoning that the camouflage colours would have to be Khaki Green No.3 (G3) and Dark Green No.4 (G4), this being an early war image – but more about colours later...

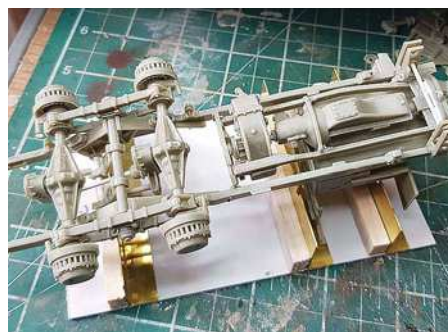
Resicast have only used resin for this particular model so there's no photoetch, white metal or other materials apart from some plastic rods of varying thicknesses and some string for cables. In some places I think this is a shame as etched brass is a lot more stable for finer parts, however Resicast do make their casting plugs very easy to remove (no massive amounts of sanding



Well over 150 resin parts, none of them numbered! Follow manufacturer's instructions when handling resin, sand larger parts wet to avoid dust



The etched brass brackets are provided in the kit, just glue them at the right lengths to make the chassis jig.



Rear suspension fitted to a busy looking underside.

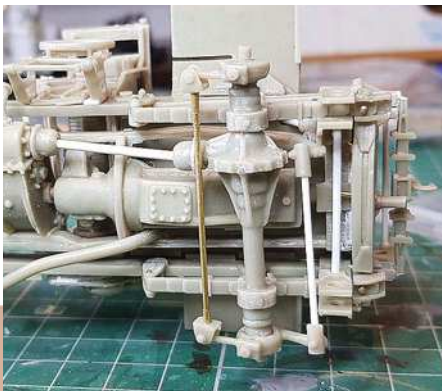
I started the build with the 7.5-Ton trailer which when together in 2 nights; I drilled out the pivot points and hinge pins for the suspension and A-Frame mounts and replaced them with micro brass pins. This allows these 'movable' parts to then be posed and positioned on a base later on. One of the fine resin mounting clips for the swing-down legs on the rear of the trailer broke off and was lost to the carpet monster, so I replaced this with a strip of lead foil. I also left off the ramps at this stage so they could be fitted later or clamped to the trailer bed as required. A useful tip if I may – when fitting the wheels make sure that the casting plug remnants are at the bottom (road side). This way they won't be visible on the final model. I also sanded the bottoms flat to add a bit of 'weight'. The trailer kit also includes some string to add the winch cable but I replaced this with suitable wire from the spares box. I also made up a tow cable as 2 spare cable ends were included in the kit. I added a lead foil cover for the spare tyre and

called it a day on the trailer.

Moving on to the AEC 850: The 850 box is absolutely chock-a-block full of resin! The parts list shows 148 parts, many of which are duplicated... and herein lies the first problem I found. Whilst there is a parts list both in the instructions and on the CD, none of the parts are actually numbered! Also, in many of the instruction steps (but not all) the parts needed are shown but not always with numbers... All of this means that each step takes longer in preparation and identification of parts that actually gluing the things together! In most cases this isn't a problem – the huge winch housing is easily identifiable and nothing else looks like it; but when it comes to steering brackets versus jib brackets the parts are nearly identical... In most cases I took a punt and it turned out ok, but in some instances, it was only the addition of the walkaround images on the CD that came to my rescue.



Cab and front go together without issue.



The front suspension and steering is quite complex. Test fit and test fit again!



The rear A-frame needs quite a bit of flash removing. With a bit of careful construction it can be made movable,

With my (minor) rant over I'll move on to actually building the thing... I'll say now that this is definitely an 'experienced modeller' build, but once parts have been identified and test fitted (and test fitted again) the build is actually quite straight forward – yes I had to refer to the CD instructions for better images and walkaround images more than once, but I see this as part of the build anyway.



The build starts with the construction of a jig to hold the chassis frame stable whilst the (sparingly few) cross members are added and the rear suspension bogies are built. There are 3 thick etched brass parts included in the kit for making the jig and measurements are clearly shown. Again, as with the trailer I used micro brass pins to make the rear suspension workable.

Strangely, although clearly shown on the walkaround images Resicast have omitted to include the rear brake linkages or cables. I added the linkages with plastic card and made the cables up from fine copper cable. The front suspension is a complex design (as per the real thing) which Resicast have made a great job of – again, using brass pins I made this workable.





Not a kit for the novice, but certainly not 'unbuildable'!



The retaining clips on the rear of the trailer are very delicate. I lost one after this pic was taken.



The entire model was washed in warm soapy water before priming.



The model was primed with car primer. Summer weather meant it dried outside within hours.

Much of the underside of the truck is clearly visible once complete, so a lower engine portion, exhaust and drive-lines are all included and make the underside look suitably 'busy'. Resicast suggest leaving the oil filler pipe off until later in the build – I will echo this after knocking it off about 10 times during the remainder of the build!

The cabin and front bonnet are quite straight forward; I again referred to the walkaround images for the front light mounts, as there were not clearly shown in the instructions. I drilled out the solid resin lights in order to add clear resin items later; I also fitted a hollow tube to the steering wheel column so that it can be fitted without glue and be easily removed if I want to add a driver. I found that the handbrake lever seems to be shown upside-down in the instructions when compared to the real thing; and that in many of the wartime images canvas mud flaps have been fitted to the front mudguards. I added these from lead foil taking care not to foul the rear handbrake lever on the righthand side. I also added front (and rear) number plates and divisional marking plates from plastic card (although the front one is included as resin I missed it in the instructions).

The rear load-bed is made up from 2 large bins and the load-bed as a single casting – these all go together quite easily. The winch housing and mountings are quite complex parts which take quite a bit of test fitting and whittling to get a good fit. I would suggest that if you want to add cable to your winch drum do it before any gluing takes place.

The final part of the 850 build is the lifting frame. Again, this is quite straight forward, although with a bit of flash clean-up required on the main beam. I replaced the string bracing cables

with braided copper wire and left the mounting hinge unglued so that the lifting frame can pivot backwards and forwards. Usefully, the CD includes annotated images of the primary and secondary winch cable feed routes depending on types of tow or recovery. I simply hitched the primary hook to the secondary loop, so that I could pose it as needed later.

In preparation for painting I gave both the trailer and the truck a warm soapy bath! I often hear that this isn't needed as a good primer will remove any grease marks or mould release agent; but I'd rather not take that risk... in truth the drying time (at least 24 hours) allows me time to take stock of what's been done so far, make minor corrections and think about what needs to be done with regards to painting.

I primed the models (both the truck and trailer) with white car primer from a spray can – I find this highlights any gaps, fingerprints or blemishes very well. I was lucky during this time as the UK was experiencing some rare sunny weather, so I put the models outside and the primer was dry in a few hours. I airbrushed Vallejo Modern Russian Green as a dark base coat (for no other reason than it's dark green and I have lots of it!) before airbrushing the Hataka Khaki Green, leaving the dark green to show through on the lower surfaces and crevices.

Now, I'm no WW2 British colour expert (others are), but I now had what appeared to be lime green 850 and trailer...! A quick post of a pic of the models to an online forum; and with a response back from the Editor nonetheless, revealed that this colour was nothing like Khaki Green G3... cue much tutting and muttering of "what were Hataka thinking...".



G3 and G4 paints, and the dark green used as a base coat.



Lime green...a little off the mark...



Decals applied from the spares box.



Dark green bands were applied with the G4 tone, with a paintbrush! Shock, horror!



Dust build-up is started using Lifecolor Liquid Pigments. Attention was paid to wear and tear on the trailer bed along with fuel and grease stains.



Despite the poor colour representation, I was really happy with the colour highlights and shading – so mixed up a watery mix of Tamiya Olive Green and Vallejo Dark Green Wash and applied a 'tint' all over the models. I'm never a stickler for 'exact' colours on models – I've worked around enough military vehicles to know that colour can be very subjective and has hundreds of factors which affect its final appearance. At this stage the Khaki Green looked right(ish) and I knew that I wanted to apply a good dust covering which, again would affect the overall green appearance anyway – I moved on from the Khaki Green saga...

My initial intention was to airbrush the Dark Green G4 stripes, using masks to get a hard edge pattern – although sat at my desk one night with the Hataka Dark Green G4 (yes, it looked to be the right colour) and a paint brush I thought I'd go 'old school', so decanted some of the Dark Green onto a palette and applied the stripes to the rear bed sides and cab front area with a brush – crazy I know! I then brushed in detail areas such as tyres, cables and plates by hand.

After drying overnight, I applied a Future Klear coat by airbrush before adding decals for the dials, number plates and Divisional plates. Resicast don't provide any decals so these all these letters and numbers came from the spares box. I sealed the decals with a quick brush of Future Klear and allowed to dry. I then mixed up

a brown/black oil paint mix using odourless thinners and applied a pin wash to all crevices and low points – this is a time-consuming process but really gets the details popping on this ugly beast. At this stage it's worth thinking about how dust and dirt settles on a real military machine – I know it may seem obvious, but in the majority of cases dust will rise up from roads and tracks as a vehicle passes over it. The front of the vehicle will get less dirt and dust (unless it's following behind another vehicle) and the rear of the vehicle will get more. You can almost draw a diagonal line from the front tyres (or sprockets) up to the uppermost corner at the rear of the vehicle. Dust and dirt will settle in crevices and gaps; and be brushed off peaks and areas of heavy use. With this in mind I airbrushed a light misting of clean water all over the truck and trailer, before immediately liberally applying the best part of a pot of Lifecolor Liquid Pigments Dark Dust -with a thick brush. Immediately following this; and whilst still wet, I used a clean, soft thick brush to 'wipe' downwards all over the model from the top down (put some tissue paper underneath unless you want to ruin your carpet). This motion wipes the 'thick' dust off the upper surfaces and into the crevices and lower areas. I don't bother with wiping the underside – have a look under a real truck on a construction site to see how dusty it is under there.

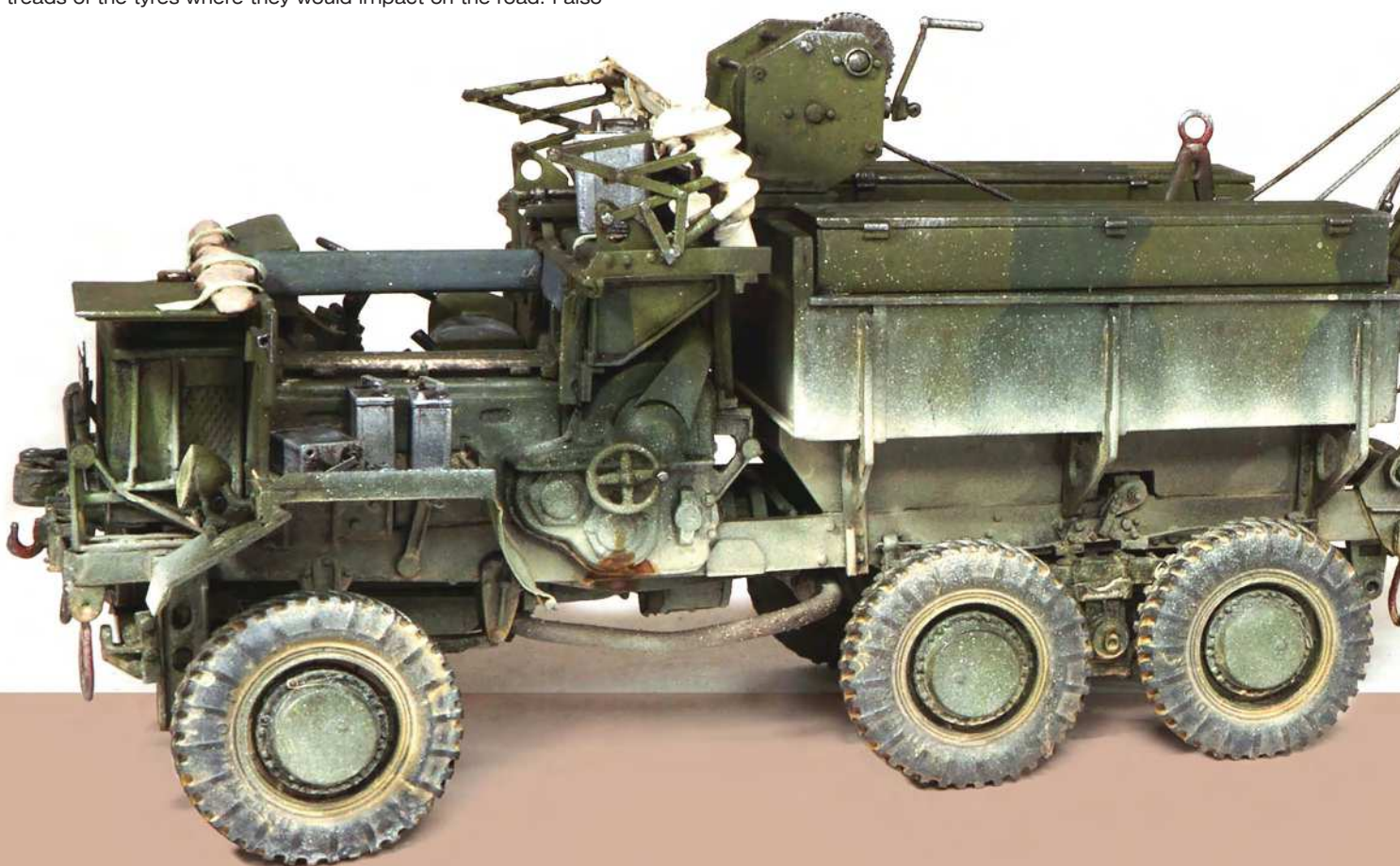


The Liquid Pigments dry quite quickly and following this the effect can look quite streaky, so I wet my brush in clean water and again wiped all over the model; this 'softens' the streaking and can be done again and again if needed. I sometimes also use a cotton bud (cue tip) on more stubborn areas. Around the wheel wells and the bottom sides of the load bed, as well as on the trailer sides and bed I used thinned Tamiya Buff through an airbrush to get the effect of dust being kicked up – this again softens the streaking effect and, over the top of the Liquid Pigment Dark Dust gives the impression of there being much thicker dust around the lower surfaces.

To finish off I used a Mig black weathering powder around the treads of the tyres where they would impact on the road. I also

applied Mig Gun Metal weathering powder around the corners of the load bed, trailer ramps and winches; as well as cables and around the cab. These are the areas of most wear so dust; and even paint would be worn off them. The final touch was to add some oil and fuel staining to the load bed and trailer bed; as well as around the fuel filler cap and winch mechanism body.

So, final thoughts... without a doubt complex, and with time and effort even enjoyable; but by no means unbuildable. A useable parts list with numbered parts (even pictures) would have been useful, but all in all this just adds to the challenge.





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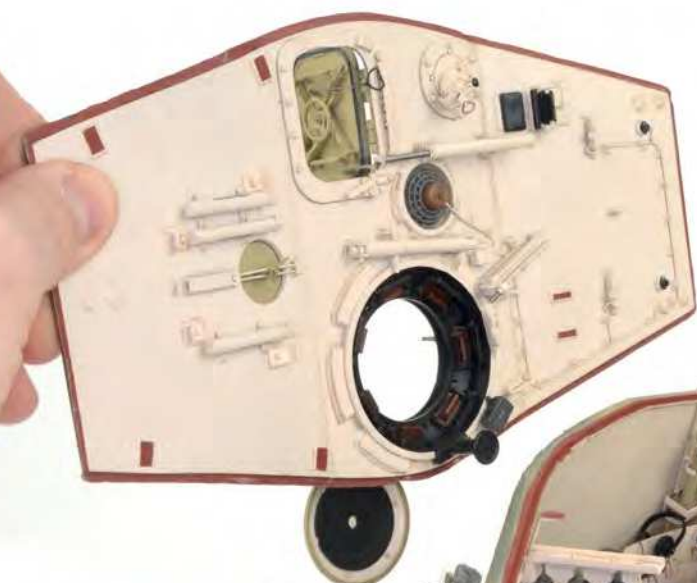
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