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May/June 2022

40TH
1982-2022
ANNIVERSARY

p. 42



Modeler[®]

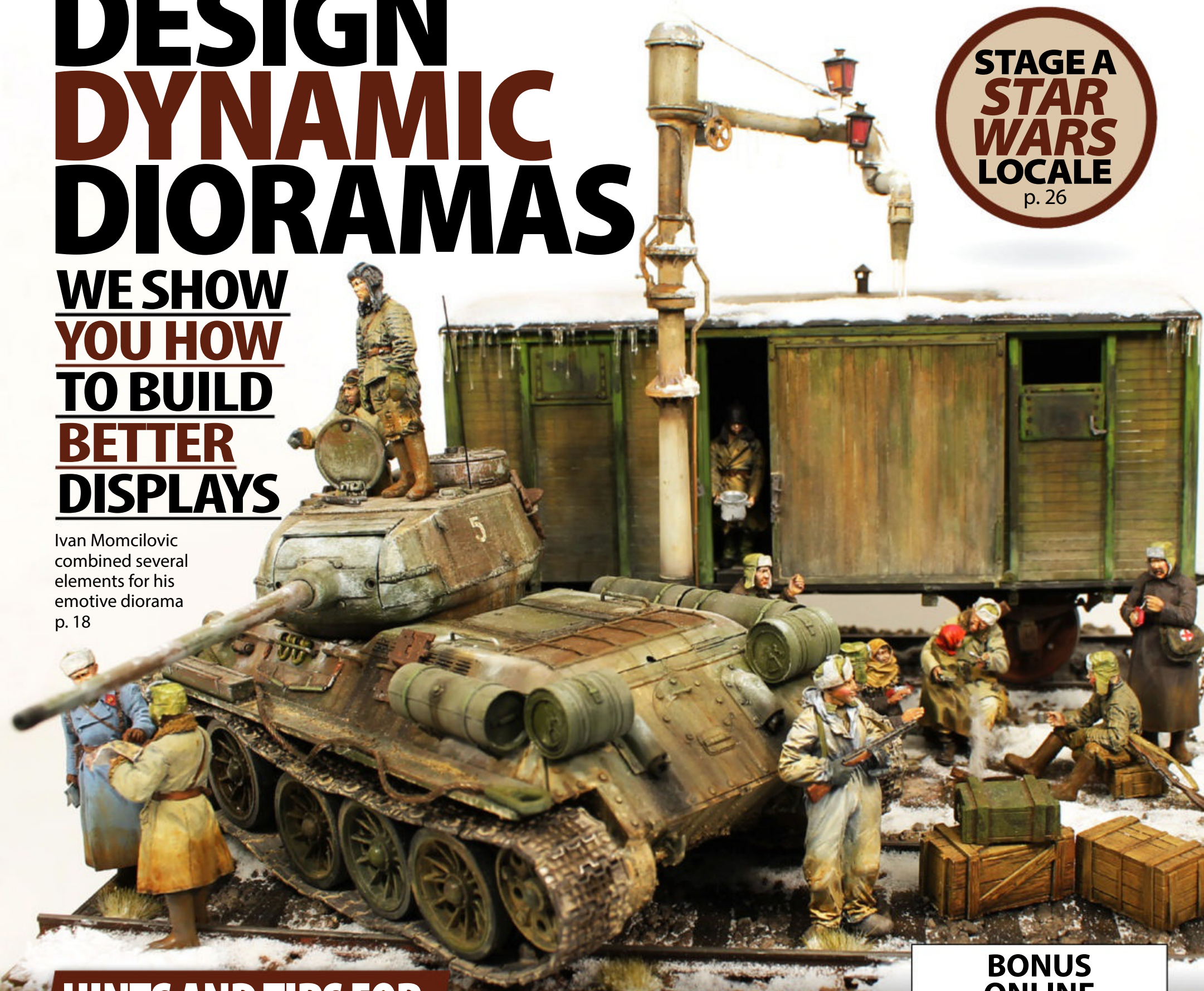
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DESIGN DYNAMIC DIORAMAS

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TO BUILD
BETTER
DISPLAYS**

Ivan Momcilovic
combined several
elements for his
emotive diorama
p. 18

**STAGE A
STAR
WARS
LOCALE**
p. 26



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**BONUS
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CODE
PAGE 3**

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(64011) 1/16 Scale Pz.Kpfw.III (Type M)
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Pz.Kpfw.III Ausf. J, L & M

Build Any One from this Kit

When it rolled off the production line in 1937, Pz.Kpfw. III was expected to be Germany's main battle tank. In response to the increasingly better armor and armament of the enemy, it became apparent that to meet the Russian's KV-1, T34 and other foes, Panzer III needed both more firepower and better armor. Each variant from A to N was upgraded.

Here are just a few of the upgrades you'll find in the box... Panzer III Ausf. J was up-gunned with a hefty 5 cm KwK 38 L/42; Ausf. L was bolstered with additional steel plate on the front and the turret; Ausf. M now faced opponents using spaced armor on hull sides. **Build any one of the three models, J or L or M.**

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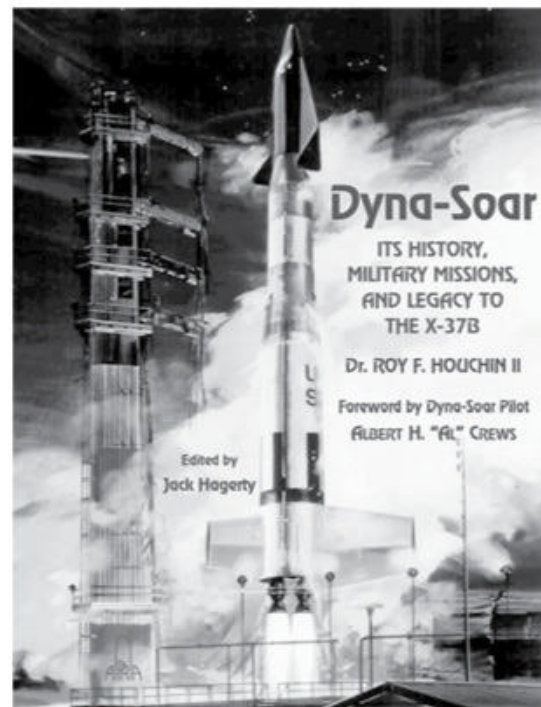
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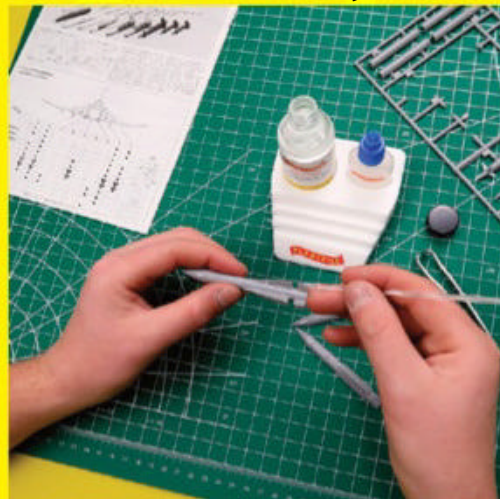
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Elefant with Custom
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by Joe Porter

By Aaron Skinner

Gotta love a great diorama!

There's something about a well-crafted diorama that epitomizes the craft of modeling. Don't misunderstand, I am impressed by freestanding models and that's how I finish most of mine. They look great and capture the essence of the aircraft, vehicle, ship, or figure. But a simple display base with basic groundwork and a figure gives the model context and a sense of scale.

For example, a beautifully painted and weathered F4U-1 Corsair always looks cool, but placing it on a base with a surface that looks like a crushed-coral runway with bare-chested ground crew shows the kind of grueling conditions under which many of these fighters operated.

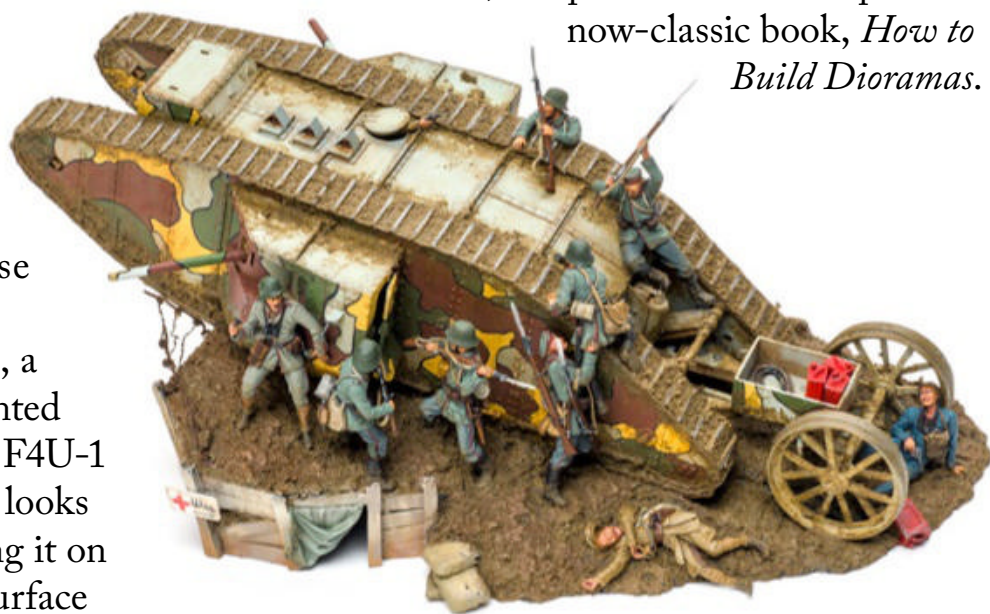
The height of the art form are those carefully crafted scenes that, whether they are simple or complex, tell a story. The best of them require no explanation because the elements communicate the story clearly.

While I enjoy looking at dioramas, I often find building them daunting. As the stories in this issue show, placing a model or models in a scene requires planning and that has to start before the first part is clipped from the tree. Do parts need to be modified to fit the groundwork? How does the finish reflect the scene? What parts and accessories are needed to add realism and authenticity to the scene?

I struggle just finding the time to finish a freestanding model without

the added complexities of placing it in a diorama. So, I admire the many modelers out there who specialize in dioramas and vignettes.

That's why it was a no-brainer to include this diorama special issue in our 40th anniversary lineup. The issue also serves as a callback to what prompted the creation of *FSM* in 1982, the publication of Shep Paine's now-classic book, *How to Build Dioramas*.



Andrea Miniatures' 54mm World War I diorama is compact and easy to understand as it shows the brutality of the Western Front.

That book's success prompted Bob Hayden to kick off a magazine for scale modelers, and the rest, as they say, is history.

• • •

Expert modeler Tim Boyd has a deep knowledge of car kits and brings that to bear in Classic Car Kits, the latest addition to *FSM*. Check out the first installment on Pg. 58. Tim Boyd has a deep knowledge of car models and their history, which he shares in Classic Car Kits, the latest addition to *FSM*. Check out the first installment on Pg. 58.

editor@finescale.com

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Inspiring the next generation

Dear Editor of *Contest Cars*,
I love your book and will highly recommend it. It does what it says.

I have a few model cars, myself, but I've never had a model car magazine. This is a great start.

Keep it up!

— Mike Wonsala
Maryland

Ed.: Thank you so much for your letter and kind words. I'm overjoyed that you liked Contest Cars and hope it inspires you to build model cars of your very own.

You should know that every one of the models you see in Contest Cars was built by a modeler who, at some point, started at the beginning of this hobby, just like you. If you want to, you'll be able to build models that look every bit as good as those you see in the photos. There's no stopping you!

I promise to keep working hard on Contest Cars and FineScale Modeler. But that goes for you, too. Do your best in whatever you try, and that's the most anyone can ever ask of you.
— T.K.

Fun modeling revelation

Several years ago, I purchased a Craigslist bargain — a crumbling carton containing 40 unbuilt plastic model kits, largely Airfix and Revell from 50-60 years ago — for \$10. Mostly, they had no packaging, no instructions, no decals worth using, and each one was just a tangle of sprues inside a



ragged paper envelope, faintly marked with a pencil. Every now and then I pull one out of my stash and play around with it.

So, I was doing a test assembly of an F-4 Phantom made by Revell Great Britain according to letters molded inside a fuselage. It was — and is — a truly bad kit, with warped parts, mismatched locating pins, tabs, and slots, bad fits everywhere, and assembly seemingly demands three hands and two heads. It was a struggle just lining everything up into the shape of an airplane.

In the midst of this grim but amusing task, I suddenly realized I was in the presence of one of the Holy Grails of modeling: Calvin and Hobbes' recurring nightmare, the Phantom that just kept getting worse! I never had much respect for the craftsmanship of Calvin or Hobbes, but my opinion has turned 180 degrees! I can't imagine myself even just managing to get all the parts glued together, but Calvin pressed on and completely assembled the whole sad mess before chucking it in the trash! What a man! What a tiger!

— Mel Kennedy
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Ed.: I think all of us have worked on a model that had us channeling Calvin. Thanks for sharing. — A.S.

Gallery, wherefore art thou?

Are you ever going to get the readers gallery up and running again?

— Michael Wodka
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Ed.: Not sure which iteration of Reader Gallery you are referring to, but it will be back in the magazine, Michael. We have had to move it in a couple of issues because we ran out of room. You might also be interested in the upcoming Great Scale Modeling 2022 which contains many a photo submitted to Reader Gallery that we haven't been able to use before

On FineScale.com, we replaced the original online Reader Gallery that was attached the



Forum with a weekly Reader Gallery. You can find that under the "Extras" tab.

Let me take this opportunity to say that we are always looking for more Gallery photos from readers. You can submit your models at contribute.Kalmbach.com. In the "Comments and Instructions" field, be sure to include information about which kits were used, the scale of the model, what type/brand of paint you used, what the model represents, and why you built it. Better yet, upload a text document along with the images giving all of that information. For information about how to get the best photos, check out the "Digital Photo Guidelines" under "Contribute to FineScale Modeler" under the "About Us" tab. — A.S.

Great customer service!

I wanted to acknowledge customer service above and beyond.

About a month ago I contacted MiniArt, which is based in Kiev, Ukraine, as our dog had (I know this sounds like an excuse I used in middle school) eaten the assembled grille from my build of the 1/35 scale Lieferwagen Typ 170V German beer delivery wagon. I emailed, hoping I could buy the two sprues and photo-etched metal (PE) parts I needed.

Instead, MiniArt simply mailed the parts to me at no charge. The company's representative just said: "We want happy customers." All the way from Ukraine! The parts arrived today, including the PE.

— Mark Ebell
Athens, Ga.

Ed.: Nice, Mark! Thanks for sharing your positive experience. — A.S.

Q&A

Deciphering hairspray

Q I wanted to pick your brain about best practices and techniques using hairspray. My current project is a 1/32 scale Trumpeter Su-27. I want to depict it as a heavily-weathered Arctic Flanker with some primer exposed. I have tried to absorb as much as I can about the hairspray technique via online videos/resources, but since I almost exclusively use MRP lacquers, I am always open to guidance. I also have the AKAN acrylic paints.

— Michael Purvis
Murfreesboro, Tenn.

A The trick with using hairspray is that whatever paint you intend to wear away should be acrylic. I have used Tamiya alcohol-based acrylic and Vallejo water-based acrylics to good effect with hairspray as a release agent. The base coat, in the case of your Flanker, the primer shade, can be enamel, lacquer, or acrylic, because the hairspray will seal and protect it against the water being used to distress the upper colors.

So, use the MRP lacquers for the primer shades but use the AKAN acrylics for the camouflage. — A.S.

Working with old decals

Q I have an old Hasegawa 1/32 scale Fw 190 and the decals won't release from the backing paper. I have tried soaking them in very warm water for an extended time. Is there anyway I can get them to release so I can use them?

— Frank Stetson
via YouTube

A There are few things as frustrating as decals that don't work. But they are the components of kits most susceptible to damage from long-term storage. Compared to plastic, decals are fragile. Extremely hot or cold weather can make decal film crack or shatter. Insects, especially silverfish, relish the taste of decal adhesive. But the true nemesis of decals is moisture, and I suspect that may be what happened to your sheet. Humidity can activate the adhesive on the sheet and permanently attach them to the backing paper. There's not much that can be done, but there are plenty of aftermarket markings for Fw 190s. — A.S.

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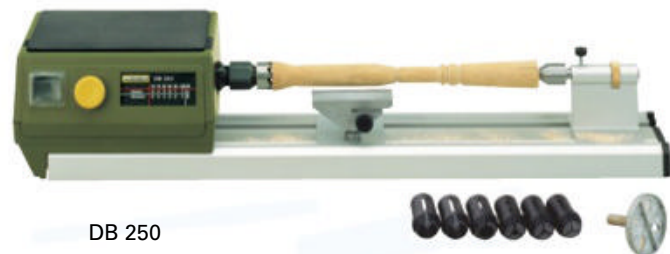
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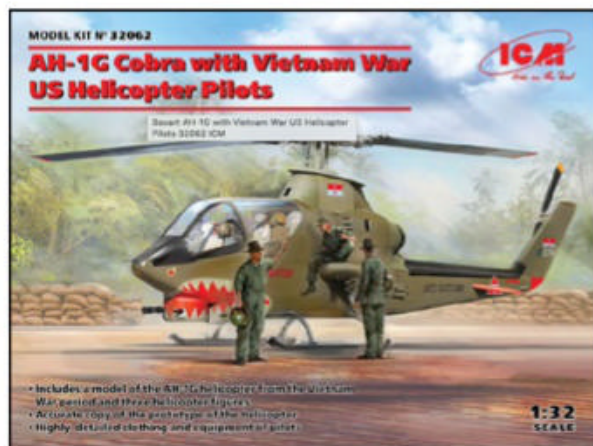
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1/48 SCALE



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1/16 SCALE



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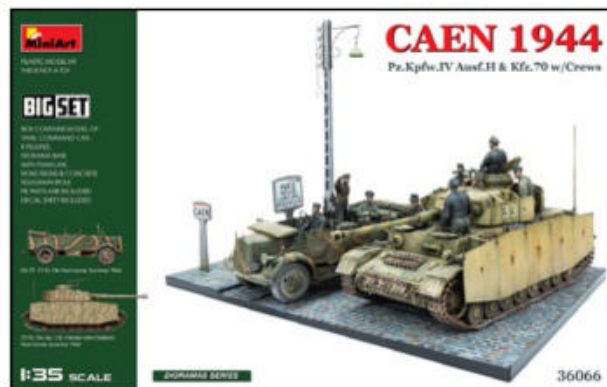
StuH 42 & StuG III Ausf G late production 2 in 1 from Takom, No. 8006, \$44.95.



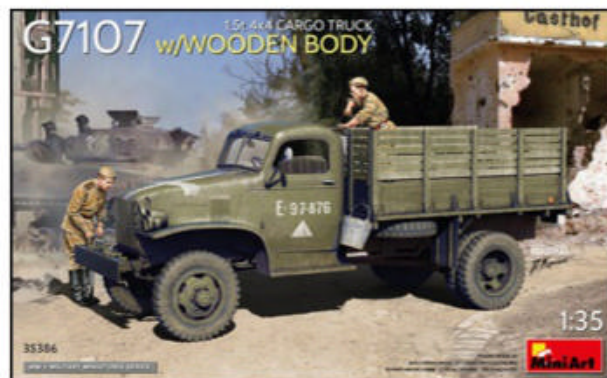
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1/72 SCALE



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1/100 SCALE



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SHIPS

1/72 SCALE



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1/700 SCALE



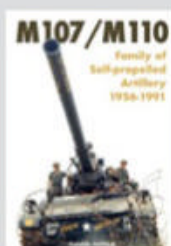
USS DD-743 Southernland 1945 Gearing Class Destroyer from Takom (Snowman Model), No. SP-7057, \$40.99. **WBR**



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FIGURES

1/35 SCALE



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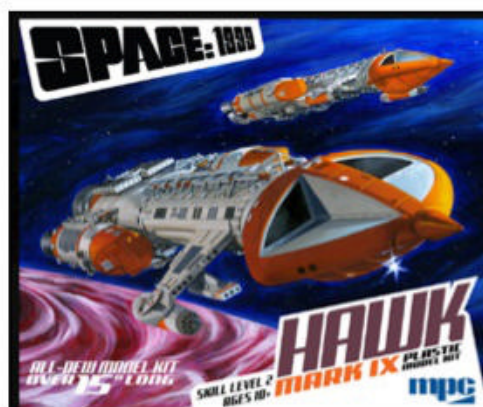
1/72 SCALE



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SCI-FI & SPACE

1/48 SCALE



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1/72 SCALE



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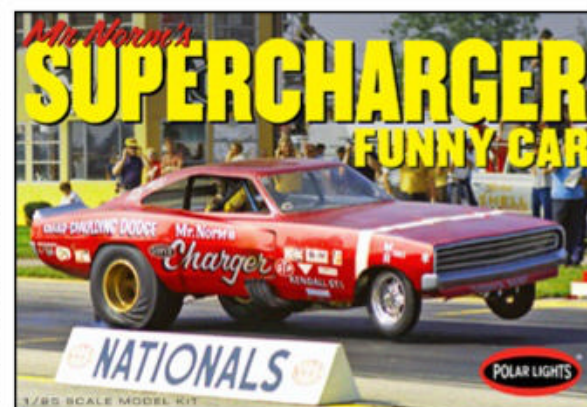
AUTOS

1/12 SCALE



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1/25 SCALE



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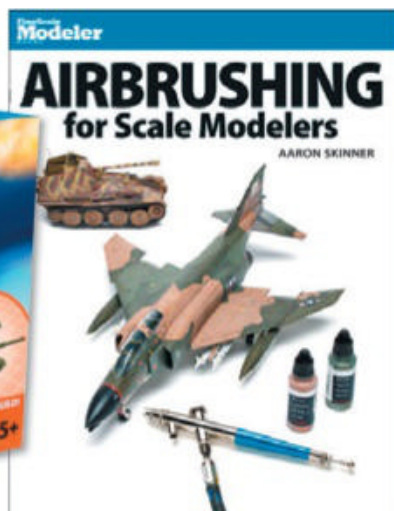
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More than and



an TANKS d PLANES

An unusual 1/35 scale military model makes an excellent focal point for a vignette

BY ANDERS ISAKSSON

The market for scale plastic models is quite alive and well, and new kit manufacturers continue to appear. Often, these new manufacturers immediately make a name for themselves by releasing a model of an unusual and odd subject.

Thunder Model, a recent addition to the model manufacturer roster, recently produced a model of an American-made tractor — a Case

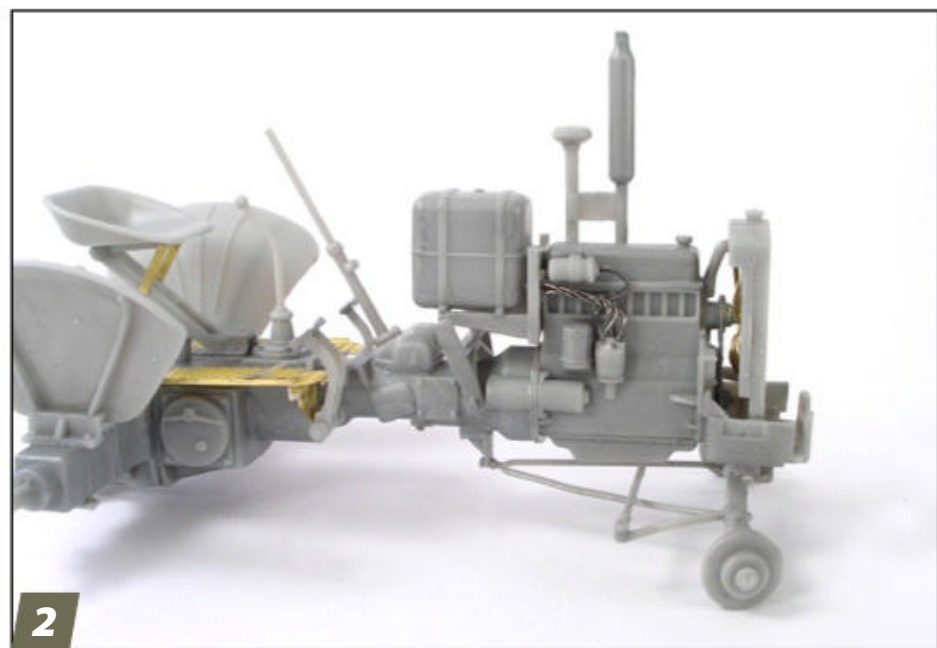
VAI — in service with the U.S. Army during World War II. Definitely a model of an unusual 1/35 scale subject. The Army used the tractor for towing, digging, and various engineering tasks.

So far, Thunder Model has released the tractor in two variants — I fancied the one equipped with a Hough Payloader. But what is a tractor without a place to work? If I was going to build the tractor, it needed to be part of a scene.



1

The kit came with plenty of details, including photo-etched metal (PE) parts, wire, and textile thread. While the decal sheet wasn't large, it had gauges and markings for three different vehicles. The vinyl tires could be off-putting for some, but car modelers will be familiar with them.



2

Complicated subassemblies needed attention, but fit together fabulously. The complex PE parts needed multiple bends, and a bending tool helped a great deal. So detailed was the kit that the only extras I added were ignition cables made of lead wire.



3

I thinned the front edges of the loader bucket's sides to give them a more scale appearance.



4

The loader had a lot of parts and needed patience and test-fitting all the way. The only technical pitfall I encountered was the transverse part that holds the two vertical beams together in the lifting rails was a little too long. I shortened it and kept going.



5

I replaced a few thin struts with lengths of round styrene rod mostly to speed construction so I didn't have to eliminate mold seams on the fragile parts. Soon enough, all the subassemblies were ready for painting.



6

Remember those vinyl tires? I hedged my bets and bought resin replacements from LZ Models. I'm more comfortable painting and weathering resin tires than I am vinyl. Yes, I did mount one of the tires with the tread pattern backwards, but I straightened it out later.



7

I primed everything Citadel Chaos Black straight from the spray can, keeping the subassemblies separate. The black gave the final color extra depth and did a good job of laying flat and revealing details.



8

I base-coated with MRP Olive Drab (No. MRP-217) and then mixed olive drab with a small amount of MRP Mid Green (No. MRP-178) for a bit of variation. The resin tires were painted Tamiya Rubber (No. XF-85), and I retouched the treads with rubber lightened with Tamiya Medium Sea Gray (No. XF-83).



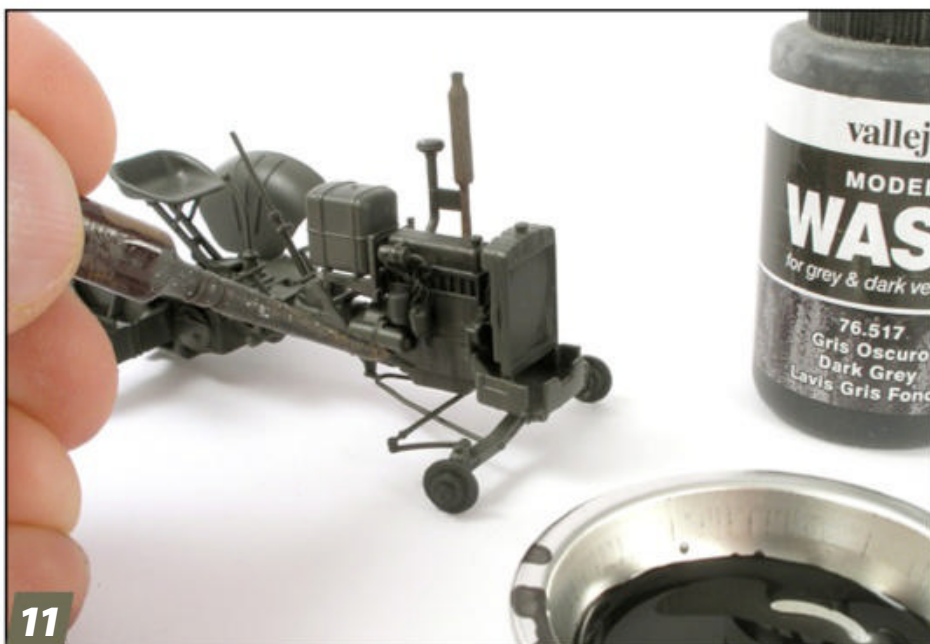
9

In preparation for decals and subsequent weathering, I airbrushed Tamiya Clear (No. X-22) to give everything a glossy sheen and protect the work done up to now.



10

When I sealed the decals under a second coat of clear, they wrinkled and cracked and became unsalvageable. I carefully sanded them off, repainted the damaged areas with olive drab, masked and painted new markings with Lion Roar PE stencils. Another coat of clear sealed it all.



11

As soon as the clear was dry, I went over all the details with a few coats of Vallejo Model Wash Dark Gray (No. 76.517). Water-based, it works well to give depth to the model's detail and simulate traces of oil stains and other wear.



12

At this stage, the lifting device for the loader was attached to the tractor. Then the tracks made by the loaders small wheels that run up along the two beams were simulated with the help of artist pencils to represent traces of oil and grease.



13

To show where the paint had worn away on the loader, I applied AK Interactive True Metal Steel (No. AK457) with an old paintbrush to the edges and corners of the loader bucket and allowed it to dry.



14

For mud accumulated around the wheels, lower parts of the chassis, and under the fenders, I tried Vallejo Environment Mud and Grass (No. 73.826) for the first time. Clay colored with strands of static grass, I was pleasantly surprised at how well this mixture worked to simulate thick mud.



15

To tie everything together and soften the contrasts with a layer of dust, I misted on heavily thinned Tamiya Buff (No. XF-57).



16

Lastly, I mixed together a clay-like pigment consisting of AK Interactive European Earth (No. AK042) and turpentine and flicked it on the lower parts of the tractor to simulate mud splatters.



17

The base for the vignette started as a round MDF pedestal with a shaped edge. I attached thin foam insulation to it and built up the groundwork with smaller pieces.



18

I surrounded the exposed edge of the insulation with plywood veneer for a more attractive finish.



19

The groundwork was further built up with papier-mâché clay. The product can crack as it dries, so it's sometimes necessary to patch spots with more clay afterward.



20

After the clay was dry, I cut the plywood veneer with a sharp hobby knife to follow the contours of the groundwork.



21

Another thin layer of papier-mâché clay went on top of the existing base. I made tire marks in it using the kit's vinyl tires.



22

When the top layer of clay had dried, I brushed it with diluted white glue and sprinkled decorative sand over it. The sand gives the groundwork a reasonably uneven and realistic surface.



23

I wanted the ground to be mushy. For that effect, I went back to the Vallejo Environment Mud and Grass and applied it with an old paint brush.



24

Pre-made flowers, shrubs, and lichen from Polák Model in the Czech Republic gave the groundwork variety and life.



25

A German-language sign made from wood strips and painted with a warning of minefields I thought added a bit of drama to the scene. The German helmet certainly makes a point.



26

Finally, a tiny amount of pigment powder brushed on the ground gave some variation to the landscape and visually tied the groundwork to the tractor.

FINAL THOUGHTS

THE LOADER AND ITS various cables were a challenge to assemble, but, with patience, everything ended up looking as it should. I had no illusions about making the loader movable — everything was superglued in place. The cables themselves are lycra cord. For a human presence, I painted an American Army mechanic from The Bodi with muddy boots and a far-off look on his face. To my surprise this vignette went by fast. Not surprising, I suppose, seeing that the subject matter isn't large. Still, patience and planning were necessary, and, in the end, produced a display piece I'm quite happy with. **FSM**



EASTERN FRONT *orphans*

Build a 1/35 scale winter scene with a
T-34 and boxcar

BY IVAN MOMCILOVIC

Orphaned children are a constant but often hidden repercussion of war, and I wanted to build an Eastern Front scene showing displaced children with ICM's 1/35 scale T-34/85 (No. 35367) and MiniArt's railway goods wagon (No. 35288) as the backdrop. Beyond careful planning for the scene's layout, a lot of the work focused on weathering to tie together all of the elements. I wanted the diorama to represent part of a train station but without any buildings or other large objects that might distract from the story it told.





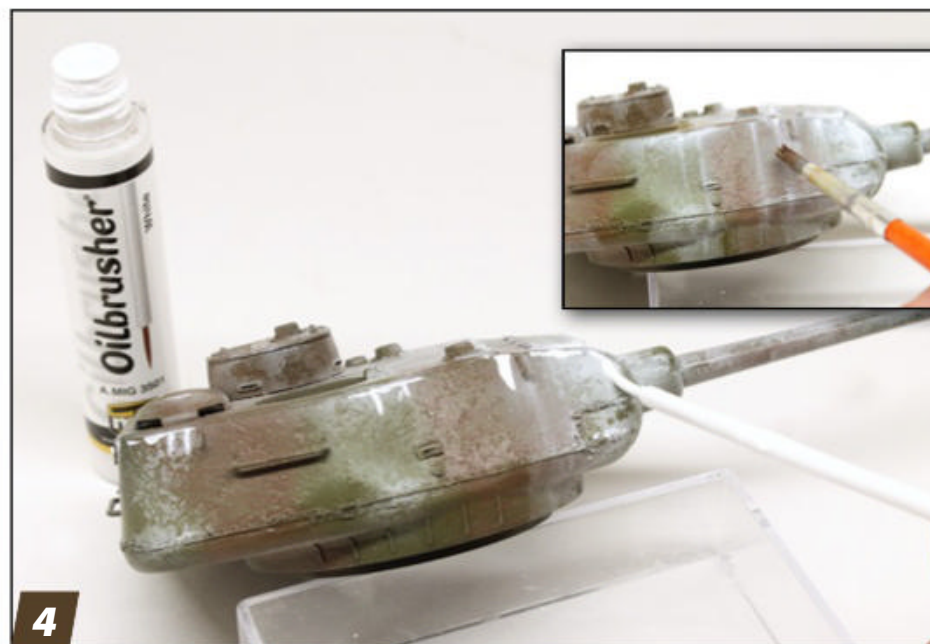
1 Since I planned to pose the T-34 on terrain, I wanted to be able to pose the tracks over groundwork. I trimmed off pins that anchor the road-wheel arms to the springs. Of the five wheels on each side, I modified the middle three using the front and rear wheels to fix the tank's final angle.



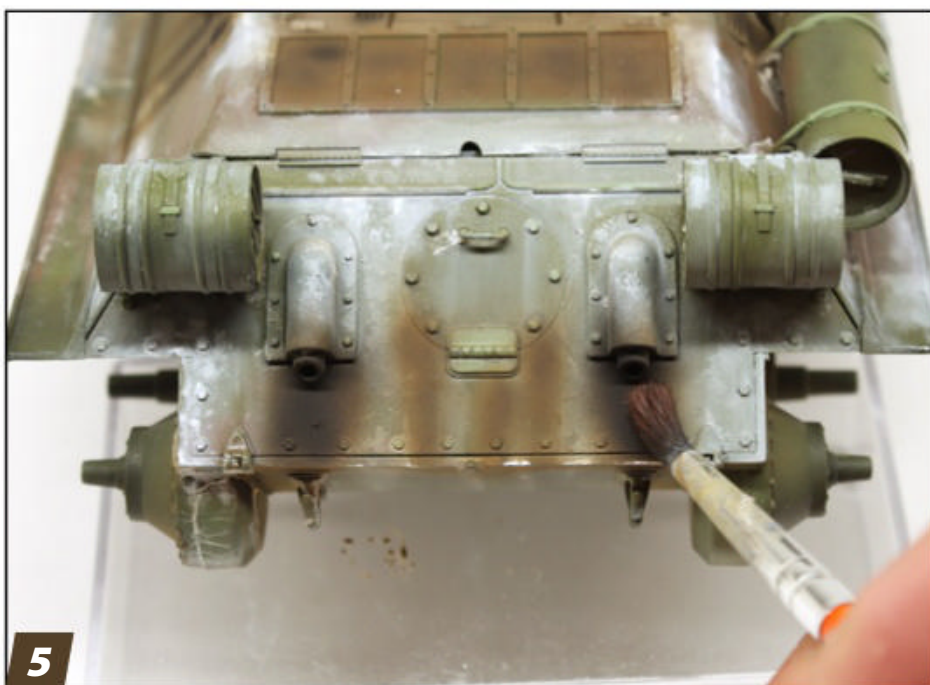
2 Over a base coat of Ammo by Mig Jimenez (Ammo) Black Primer (No. A.MIG-2005), I airbrushed Ammo Russian Base (No. A.MIG-0932). While most Soviet World War II tanks wore single-color camouflage, there were exceptions. For more color, I airbrushed Ammo Medium Brown Dark Earth (No. A.MIG-0070) freehand.



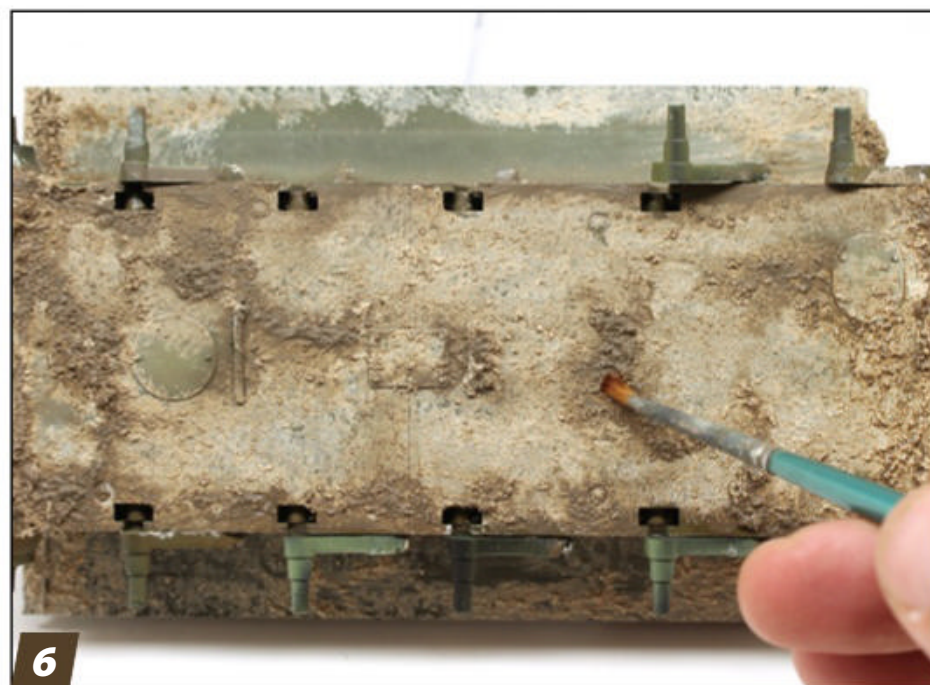
3 For interest, I added distressed winter camouflage. Over Tamiya Clear (No. X-22), I sprayed a generous layer of Ammo Heavy Chipping Effects (No. A.MIG-2011) followed by thin layers of Matt White (No. A.MIG-0050). Using a brush hot water, I began eroding the white paint.



4 I let the parts dry for 24 hours, then applied dots of Ammo Oilbrusher White (No. A.MIG-3501) to edges of the white. I blended these with enamel thinner on a fine brush, streaking top to bottom on vertical surfaces and using a tapping motion on horizontal surfaces.



5 On the hull, I added artist oil paints around crew and engine hatches. The front driver's hatch was a popular egress for the crew, so I blended dark brown around and down to represent dirt. At the rear I used brown around the transmission hatch and black for exhaust stains.



6 I added dirt and mud to the hull starting with the lightest shade, Ammo Acrylic Mud Arid Dry Ground (No. A.MIG-2100), which can be blended with water. When that dried, I used Ammo Heavy Mud Turned Earth enamel (No. A.MIG-1702) to add fresh mud to the lower hull.



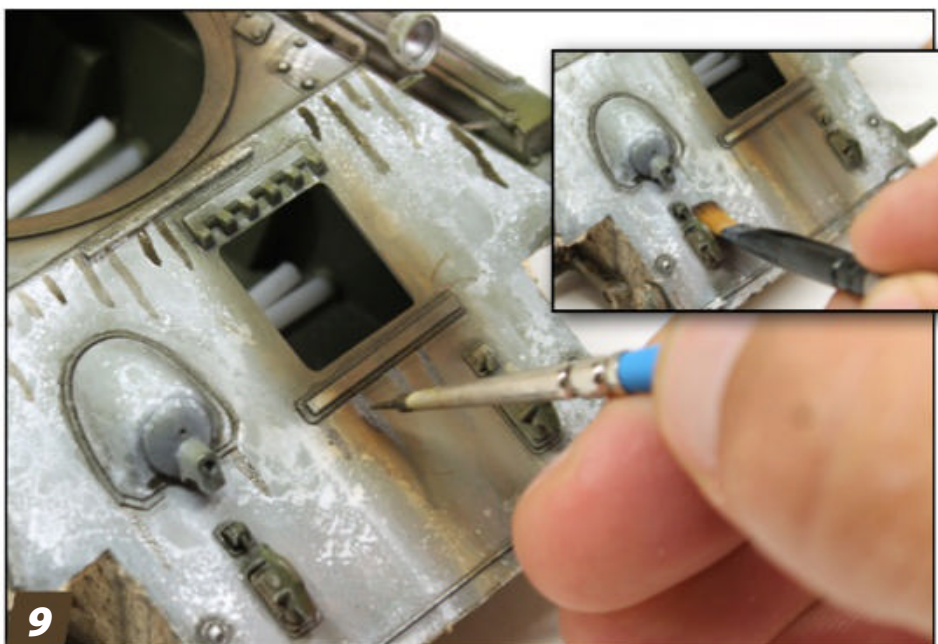
7

For a filter layer to blend the two colors, I applied Ammo Splashes Dry Steppe (No. A.MIG-1751), another enamel, with a fine brush.



8

I focused weathering around the suspension under the fenders, applying Ammo Heavy Mud Heavy Earth enamel (No. A.MIG-1704) over the Arid Dry Ground brushed earlier. I made thin lines and blended them with fine brush and enamel thinner.



9

To add contrast on sloping surfaces such as the front and sides, I mixed black and burnt sienna artist oils and applied thin streaks. These were then blended from top to bottom with a flat brush.



10

I used a fine brush to apply two layers of color for chipped paint on the base camouflage. Light green first and then dark brown give the damage a 3D appearance.



11

I wanted this winterized tank to have a muddier exterior. So, on the sloped sides, I applied streaks of light brown artist oil paint.



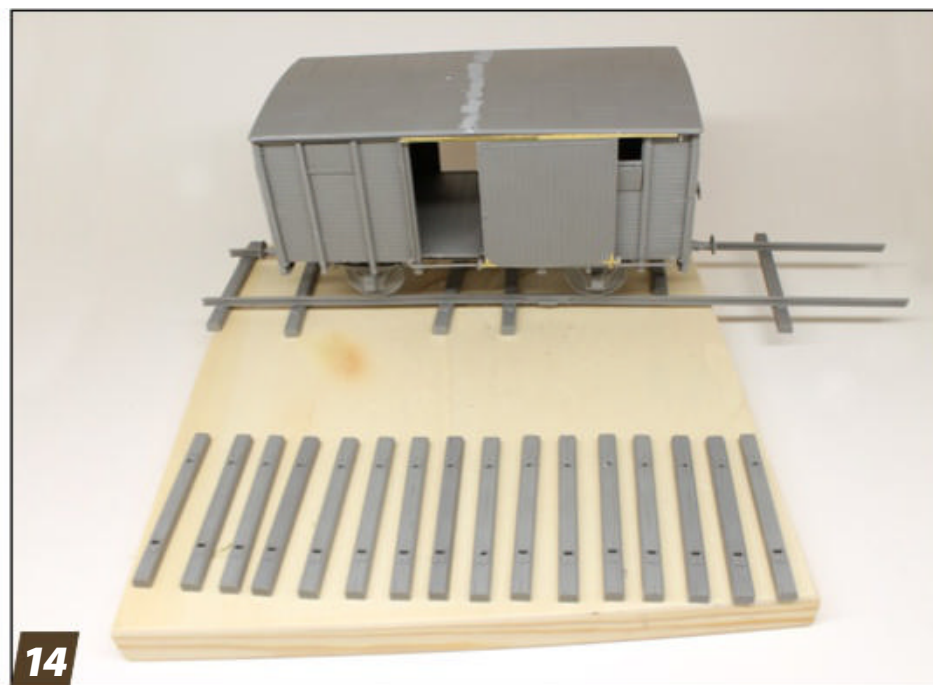
12

For accumulated earth and mud, I brushed on railroad scenery materials. Photos helped place these effects, and most ended up on the upper hull where it was tracked by infantry riding on the tank. To make it look more realistic, I applied a little Ammo Dry Steppe Effect.



13

I replaced the kit's vinyl runs with Friulmodel individual-link metal tracks, soaking them in burnishing fluid for a realistic finish. Then I weathered the track using the same process and materials as I had used on the lower hull. Sandpaper restored bare metal on salient features.



14

MiniArt's detailed railway wagon went together easily but needed care because many of the parts were fragile. I used a little putty to eliminate the seam between the roof sections. With the wagon together, I began to sketch out a rough plan for the diorama.



15

Over black primer, I airbrushed the wagon with Ammo Brown Oxide Primer (No. A.MIG-2026). Next, I sprayed Scale 75 Warfront Sahara Sand (No. SW36) in several extremely thin layers following the plank pattern. The roof was painted with mix of brown orange and red for rust.



16

For a worn paint scheme, I applied chipping fluid before airbrushing the body with Warfront SS Camo Light Green (No. SW11) and the roof with Light Sky (No. SW56). Using water and fine brush, I removed much of the top colors; I wanted the wagon to look quite worn.



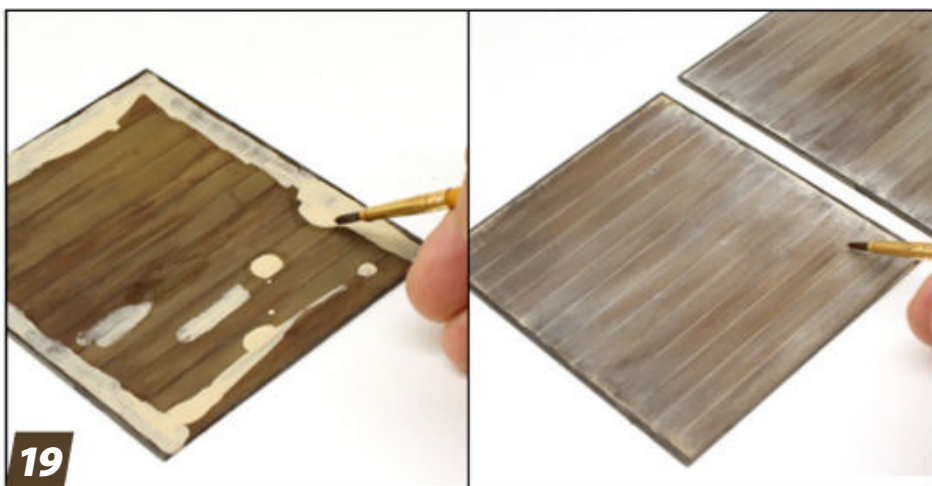
17

To pop details, I flowed on Ammo enamel U.S. Modern Vehicles Wash (No. A.MIG-1007). It not only deepened the gaps between the planks, but also added a used-wood tone to the walls.



18

I further emphasized details with a mix from black and burnt sienna artist oils. Using a fine brush, I applied this as a pinwash between the planks and corners between metal and wooden parts.



19

The next step added dust and helped the wagon look cold in keeping with the wintry setting. Starting with the doors, I applied Ammo Dry Steppe around the edges with a fine brush. To blend this toward the center of the doors, I used a fine brush and enamel thinner.



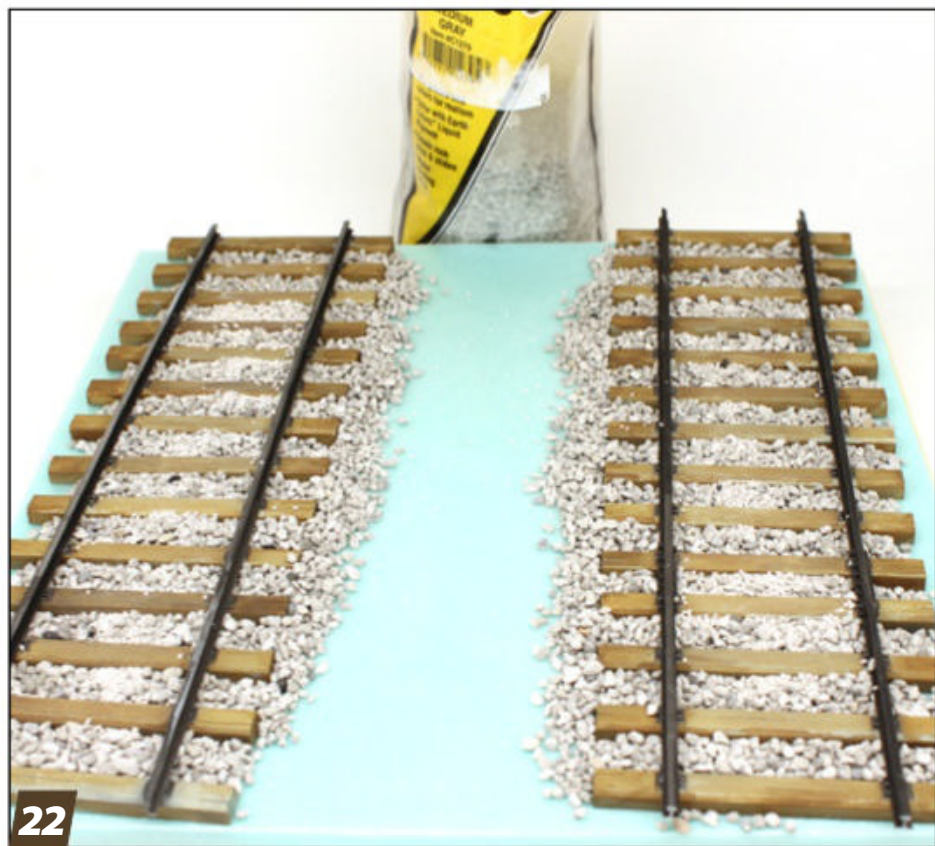
20

Before adding the same icy, dusty rime to the wagon, I added streaks of dark gray artist oil. After painting thin, random lines from top to bottom, I blended them down the surface with enamel thinner on a flat brush.



21

Then I weathered the lower sides as I had the doors, daubing on Ammo Dry Steppe along the lower edge of the car. I blended this the opposite way I had the streaks, pulling a brush damp with enamel thinner up the side.



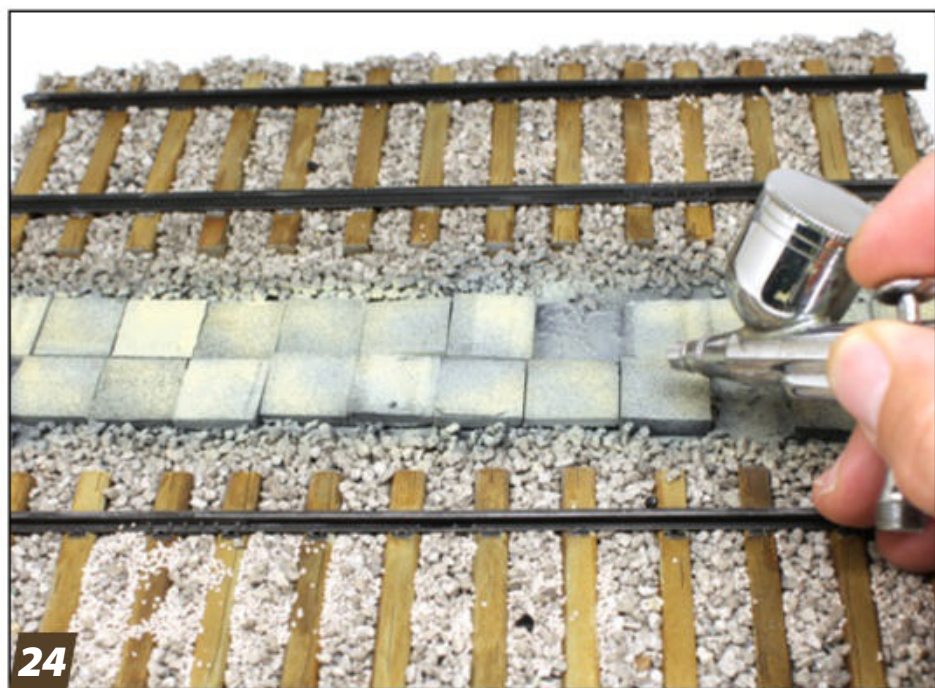
22

Since the tracks in the railcar kit weren't enough for the scene, I grabbed more from a second kit. I painted the ties with the wooden shades used on the boxcar; the metal parts were finished with dark gray. The tracks were placed on an insulation foam base with model railroad ballast.



23

I cut small squares of insulation foam and attached them between the tracks with Ammo Acrylic Mud Dark Mud Ground (No. A.MIG0-2104) to make a concrete walkway. They are intentionally uneven to look worn and damaged.



24

After the acrylic mud set, I airbrushed the blocks with acrylic sand and gray to look like concrete. I intentionally omitted some blocks to add drama to the scene.



25

Using a toothpick, I lightly scratched the surface of the foam to replicate cracks and chips in the concrete. This requires a deft hand as the soft foam is easily damaged.



26

To blend the blocks into the groundwork, I randomly brushed on more Ammo Dark Mud Ground. I wanted to partially, but not completely, cover the blocks, so I blended and worked the mud with water on a fine brush.



27

Over the dark gray base coat, I painted the rails with a thin mix of rust-colored acrylics. It was thin enough to act like a wash, but because acrylics dry faster than oils or enamels, I had to work quickly.



28

I airbrushed thin Warfront Flat Black (No. SW15) between the rails to replicate the stains commonly seen along railbeds. Warfront's flat colors have a dead flat finish, so they are perfect for this kind of weathering.



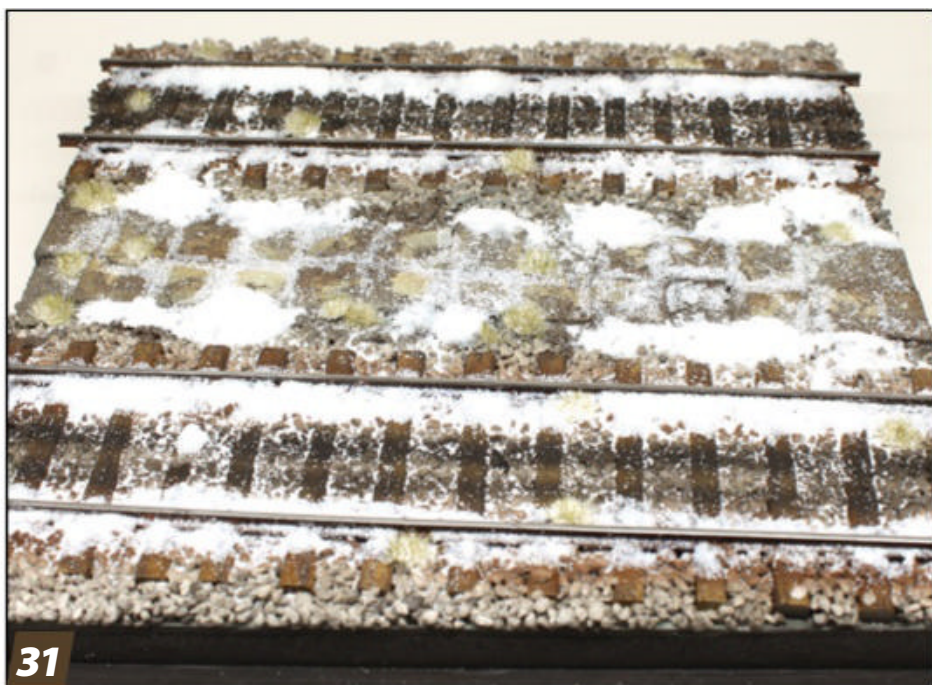
29

To highlight the top of the rails worn smooth by the passage of trains, I drew along their length a steel marker I found at an art supply store. These enamel pens don't leave streaks like Sharpies can.



30

For sparse vegetation, I glued bits of The Army Painter Battlefields: Frozen Tuft (No. BF4225P) randomly around the scene.



31

My favorite snow for large surfaces and dioramas is a mix of equal parts model railroad snowflakes and white glue. You can use any tool to shape deposits of snow on the base. Changing the ratio of flakes and glue will alter the consistency of the snow.



32

I used the same mixture to add snow to the roof of the railcar. For icicles around the edges, I superglued on bits of stretched clear sprue.



33

For accumulations of snow on other parts of the wagon, I applied Wilder Textured Snow (No. SN-01). It looks slightly different from the other snow, but works well for small areas.



34

For an icy sheen, I brushed Woodland Scenics Realistic Water (No. C1211) onto exposed sections of the railcar's roof.



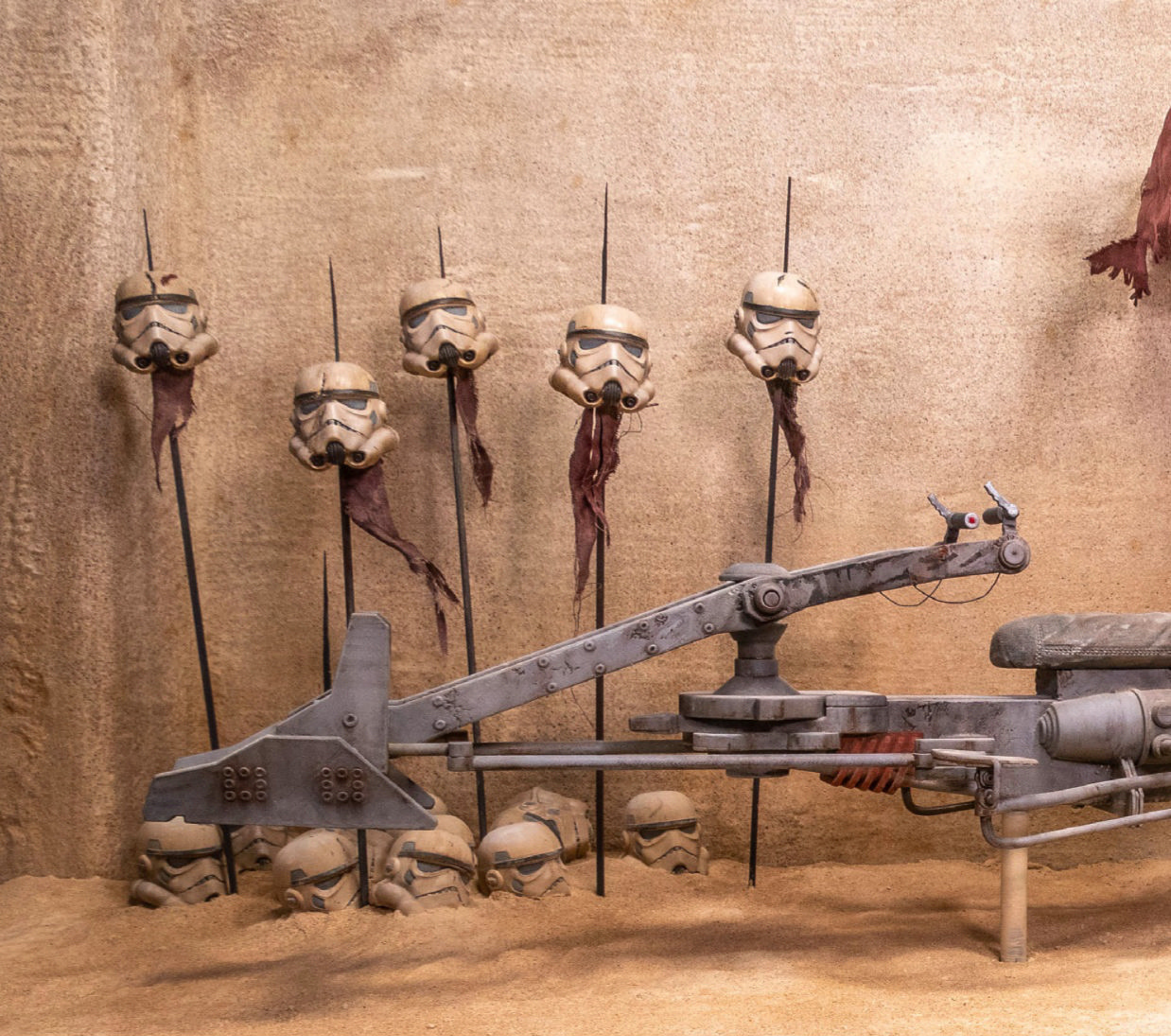
35

The Soviet soldiers in winter uniforms and the children in their care are all Stalingrad Miniatures figures. I painted them with Scale 75 and Warfront acrylics.



FINAL THOUGHTS

TO FINISH THE RAILYARD SETTING, I added a water crane from MiniArt (No. 35567) and a buffer from Armor 35 (No. ARM35029). I imagine the children have lost their parents and are left to fend for themselves in extreme conditions. This is, unfortunately, one of the most recognizable aspects of war and that's why I named this diorama *Orphans*. **FSM**



***This is the
modeling way***

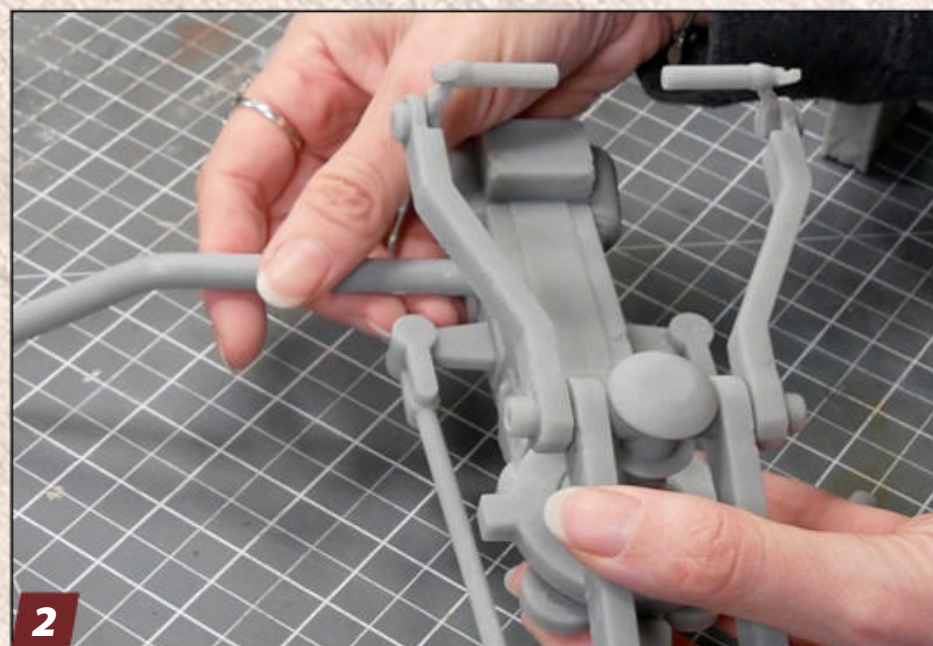


Building a *Mandalorian* diorama from 3D-printed components

BY KATHY MILLATT

The *Mandalorian* is an iconic addition to the *Star Wars* saga and brilliant for a lover of sci-fi like me. There are countless models and 3D-printing files to buy or download and 3D printing allows you to choose to print a model in any scale, perfect since I wanted a larger model. The Din Djarin pose I picked is based on promotional posters for Season 2, which I used as reference when painting. You can see how I did that in the April 2022 *FSM* DLC.

Since I wanted to place the finished figure in a diorama, I purchased files to print a speeder bike and planned a scene set on Tatooine. The diorama had to be large enough to fit the speeder bike and Din but small enough to fit on my bookshelf, so I settled on one 3 feet long, 16 inches wide, and 16 inches tall.



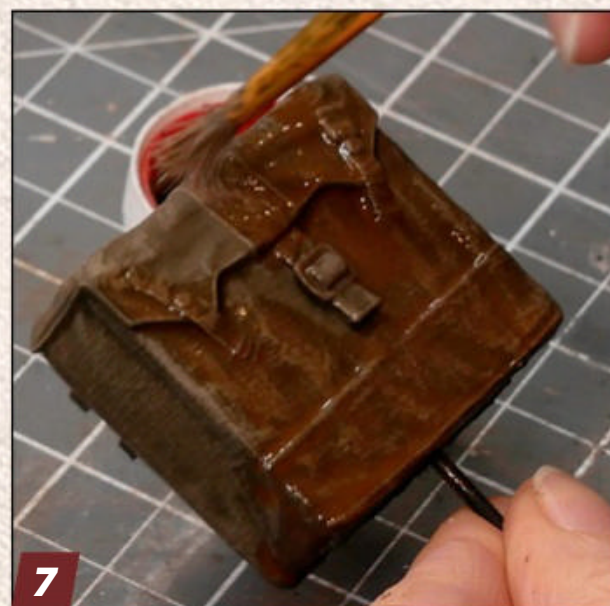
1 I printed the bike at a layer height of 50 microns on my Peopoly Phenom using Deft resin. It took two 28-hour sessions to print all the parts in 1/8 scale. After clipping off the supports, I wet-sanded the components with metal files to remove resulting nubs. Wet sanding cuts down on the resin dust which is not good for your health.

2 As printed, the bike's mount attaches from the side on the starboard side, but I planned on leaving the wall at the back of the diorama removable. Plus, the bike is quite heavy, and I didn't think the lightweight foam I was using for the wall would support it. Hedging my bets, I filled the hole on the bike and drilled a new one underneath.



3 The bike comes in two major pieces that I joined with 5-minute epoxy. Once the epoxy set, I filled the gap with acrylic putty and sanded it smooth.

4 For a little extra detail, I added brake and accelerator cables made from magnet wire superglued into holes drilled into the resin.



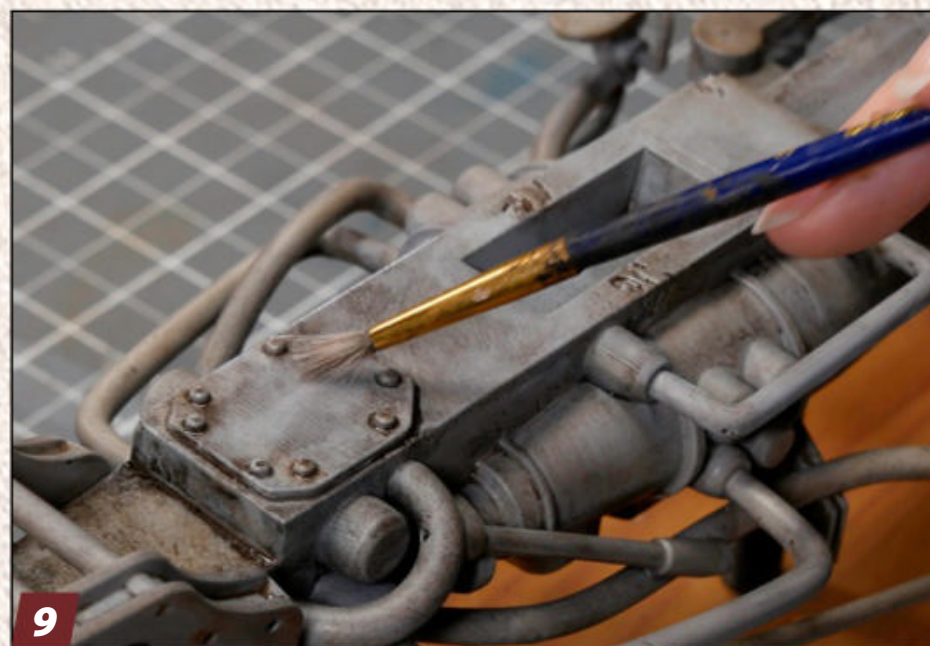
5 I sprayed the bike with gray Tamiya Fine Surface Primer (No. 87064); the other parts were primed with black automotive paint. Most of the parts were then painted with LifeColor acrylics. But I liked the color of the gray primer for the bike, so that became its base coat.

6 This bike is old and dusty, so I heavily dry-brushed the saddlebags and seat with a light brown to highlight detail, add depth, and create the illusion of wear.

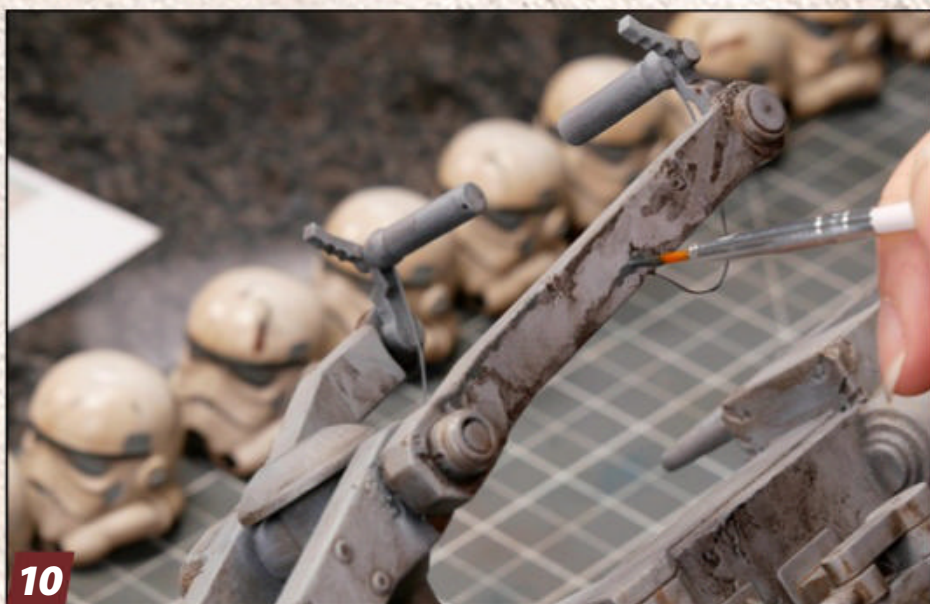
7 Finally, enamel washes — Mig Productions Brown Wash (No. P221) and Neutral Wash (No. P222) — further emphasized details on the bags and seat.



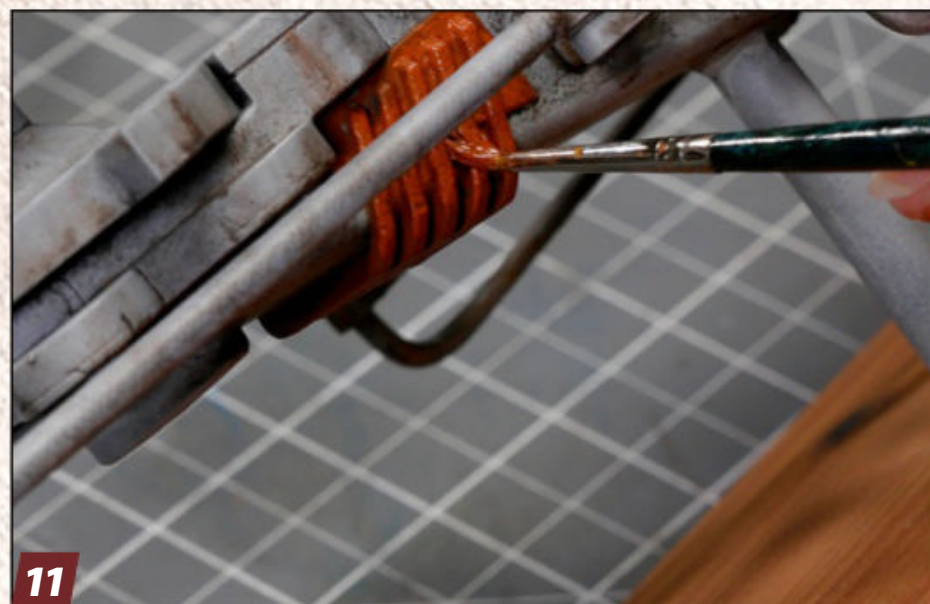
8 I followed a similar process on the bike, but started with a layer of dust airbrushed from underneath. Then I layered on multiple colors of Mig washes, starting with Dark (No. P220) followed by Neutral and Brown.



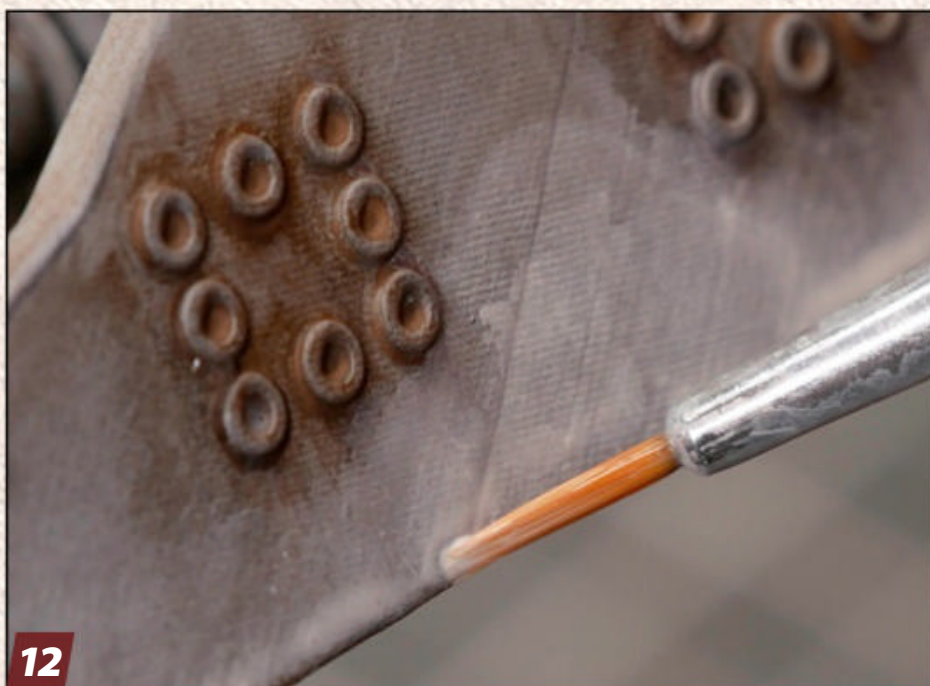
9 I took most of the washes off with a brush dampened with white spirit. The key is to keep grunge around the details and leave some discoloration over flatter areas. I added vertical streaks to the sides by removing excess wash.



10 I painted some of the details with the enamel washes and picked out others with acrylic dark gray, brown, silver, and red, including deep scratches and worn areas, all the while using images from the TV show for reference.



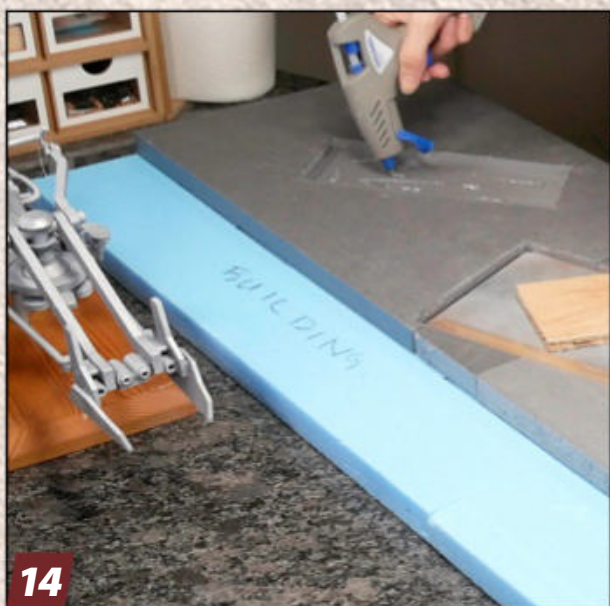
11 Underneath the bike is a large, rusty piece of equipment with heat-dissipating fins. I painted it a bright rust shade, then mixed darker rust-colored pigments with matte medium and brushed it on to texture the device.



12 I flowed brown enamel wash around details to add rust in some spots. When that dried, I used diluted acrylic paint to add dust on the upper surfaces and in other areas it would naturally accumulate. The acrylic paint was thin and did not sit well over the enamel washes, so it took a while to achieve the right result.

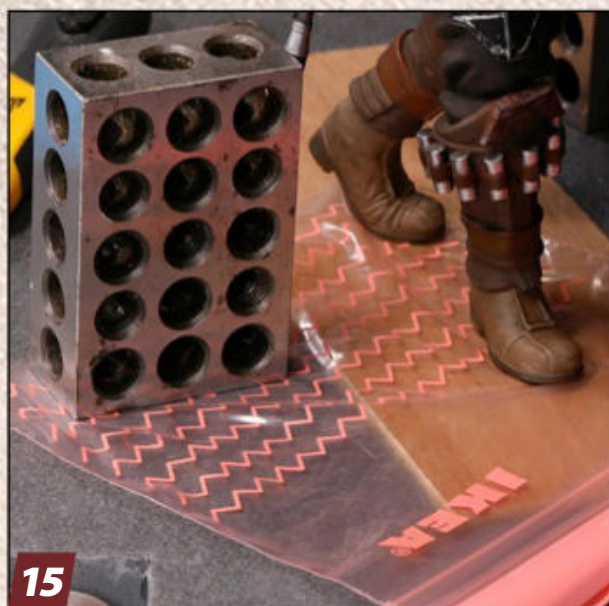


13 Finally, I used beige tile grout to add a dusty texture on upper surfaces. This is far cheaper than pigments in the quantities needed for this speeder bike and matches perfectly with the terrain, which I made from the same product.



14

For the diorama base, I used extruded polystyrene insulation foam. Holes cut in the foam will accommodate solid wooden mounts for the Mandalorian figure and speeder bike; I used hot glue to secure everything.



15

To make the figure removable, I glued magnets into its feet with 5-minute epoxy. After propping it upright, I attached matching magnets into the base starting with the front foot. The plastic bag prevented me from gluing the figure onto the base.



16

I covered the base, including the edges, with Sculptamold. The groundwork is generally flat, since it represents a road, but this layer firms up the foam.



17

I used foil-faced polyiso foam (recovered from a neighbor's house renovation) for the backdrop, peeling off the aluminum cover and carving the foam to shape. I didn't have any single piece big enough, so cocktail sticks and hot glue held the sections together. A massive piece of foamcore glued to the back added a bit more strength.



18

To make the building look like a typical adobe-style Mos Eisley structure, I made a slurry of equal amounts sand and beige tile grout mixed with a generous quantity of white glue. I didn't sieve the grout for this initial layer, so it was a little lumpy with visible brush strokes.



19

I sanded the first layer to eliminate bumps. This mix was fairly robust and sanded easily with a coarse grit paper.



20

I added a second, thicker layer, filling the uneven areas and trying to eliminate brush strokes. It ended up a little too smooth, so I painted on a mix of just sand and glue to increase the texture. Next, I applied a thin mix of white and beige tile grout to give that bloom you see on the buildings and sprayed on an acrylic brown wash for variety.



21

To add the iconic image of stormtrooper helmets on spikes seen in the first season, I found a full-size 3D file at prusaprinters.com. I thickened the walls so I could print then in 1/8 scale, printed several, cleaned them up, drilled holes in the tops to fit spikes, and added battle damage to a few.



22

After spraying the helmets with white Tamiya Fine Surface Primer (No 87042), I sanded them to remove revealed layer lines. I mixed Tamiya acrylics to produce a flat beige color on the lower parts for an aged and discolored appearance before spraying gloss white from above.



23

I hand-painted the gray and applied Vallejo Black Grey (No. 70.862) for the black to lend more fading to the helmets. I added a black enamel wash to all the cracks and details, removing excess with a brush dampened with white spirit.



24

I followed up with scuffs and marks painted with Vallejo Black Red (No. 70.859) and Black Grey before brushing on Mig Neutral enamel wash to discolor some areas and add streaking to the helmets.



25

I built several 28mm MDF wargaming terrain pieces to fill the diorama's right side, painting them with beiges and browns before adding neutral enamel wash and beige tile grout to tie them into the base.



26

As I filled the gap between the backdrop and base with Sculptamold, plastic cling film prevented both from sticking to each other and allowed me to disassemble them when needed.



27

I carved square wood sticks into rough spikes and painted them black gray before weathering with a rust enamel wash. After impaling some of the helmets on them, I pushed them into the foam base.



28

I painted the base with a thin mix of neutral and buff titanium artist acrylics and sprayed the front section with a brown acrylic wash for weathering. To build up sand drifts, I scattered a mix of beige tile grout and sand.



29

I test-fitted the figure using cling film to protect him from the dusty base and cleaned off the magnets to ensure a snug fit. I also added Woodland Scenics' fine grade talus to the mix for variation in the ground.



30

I arranged some of the helmets at the base of the spikes before adding more of the grout and sand mix. The tops of the helmets were cleaned off and the mix was teased into place. I added scuff marks and footprints to the rest of the base as well as attaching the 28mm wargame pieces.



31

Now, I spritzed a mixture of 1 part 99% isopropyl alcohol and 2 parts water onto the groundwork to hold it in place. Then I flowed a 5:1 water/Modge Podge mix to hold it all in place. The layer of sand and grout was quite deep, so I dripped on quite a bit of glue. A little more tile grout scattered onto the wet glue helped fill thin areas.



32

For a tarpaulin covering some of the boxes, I covered them with cling wrap and draped cloth over the top. To stiffen this, I applied the same thin alcohol and Modge Podge layers used for the groundwork. It dried stiff and removable. I painted the tarp Tamiya Deck Tan (No. XF-55) off the model, then weathered it with beige tile grout in place.



33

I made a canopy and the rags dangling from the helmet spikes from cotton fabric cut into pieces and distressed with a brass brush.



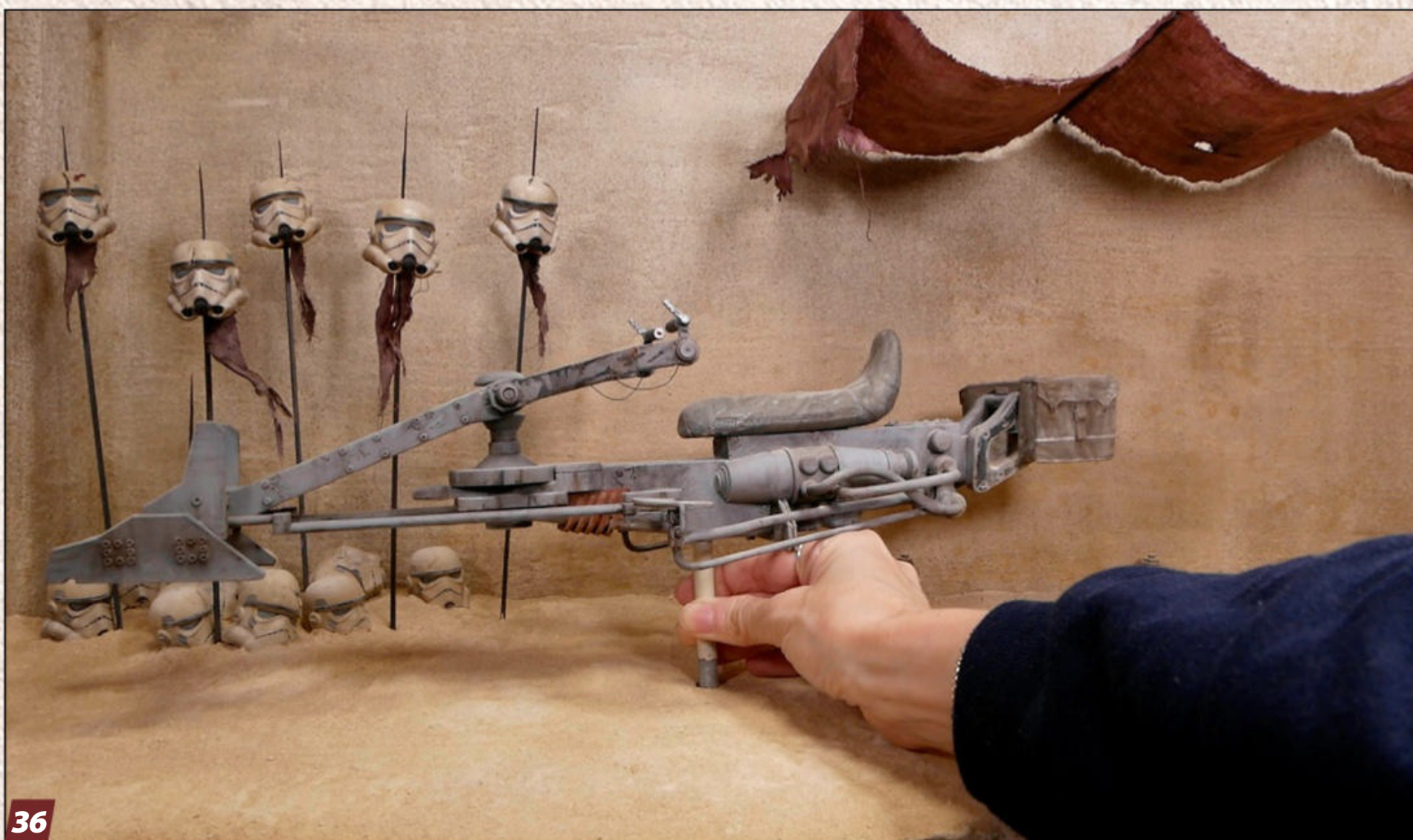
34

To dye the fabric, I soaked it in thinned red and black artist acrylic paints in a plastic bag and spread it out to dry. It needed several dips to produce a deep enough color; I added more black to the final dip on the spike rags.



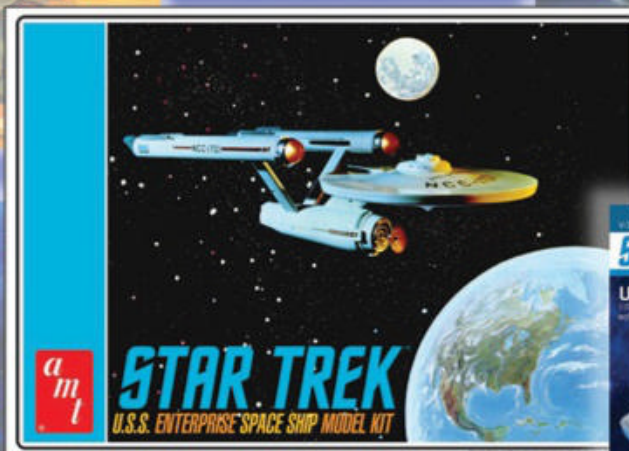
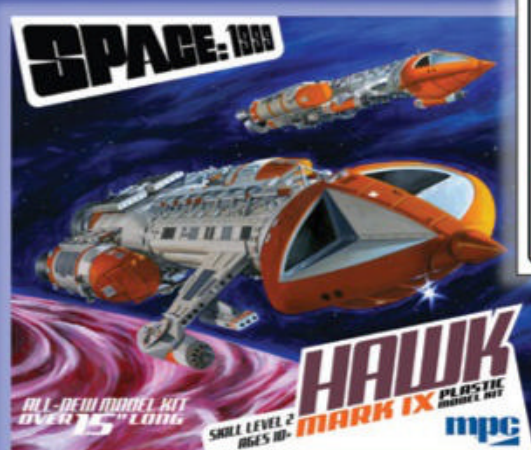
35

I mounted the canopy on bamboo sticks painted black grey and inserted into holes drilled into the backdrop. After fixing its shape and position with thin Modge Podge, I dusted it with beige tile grout.



36

I placed the rags and helmets and painted the speeder-bike mount beige to match the base. Finally, I brushed some tile grout onto Din Djarin's boots. I can lean his jetpack against the bike to hide the mount. **FSM**



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The more details you add to a model, the more interesting it becomes. You can measure a model's success by how long it maintains viewers' attention.

For aircraft, a pilot and/or ground crew can serve that purpose; for armor, interesting or unusual stowage might make the difference; and for model cars it could be a superdetailed engine or rust effects.

The environment in which a subject operated is also vital to displaying it in historic operational context. I kept those things in mind as I set out to replicate a entrenched, immobile Panzer IV in a Berlin street.

Although smaller and less complex than a diorama, a vignette

still needs an initial vision. Decide what the main idea is and if it needs any secondary supporting elements such as a figure or historical prop. Are you telling a story? Are you replicating a historic event?

This project started with a single photo in the book *Panzers in Berlin 1945* (Panzerwrecks, 978-1-908032-16-4), showing a Panzer Stellung (dug-in tank) on a Berlin street. Devoid of running gear and half-buried in the pavement, a far cry from early days of the war and Blitzkrieg, I felt the image epitomized the dramatic collapse of Hitler's war machine in its futile attempt to stem the Soviet onslaught.

I wanted to replicate the original photo as closely as possible,

REMAINS OF WAR

Create a simple vignette of a panzer after the Fall of Berlin

BY HARVEY LOW



including the tank's camouflage and position of the groundwork.

I always start with the base because the terrain creates context for the vehicle's modifications, colors, and weathering. Arts and crafts stores are a great source for inexpensive frames and shadow boxes. Choose a frame with room to display the model and space to add interesting terrain. Placing the model at an angle to the sides makes it more interesting, and I often choose bases that provide height for better eye-level viewing and prominence on show tables.

For this project I used a dark brown 8- x 10-inch shadowbox by Studio Décor. At 2½ inches tall, it offers a good viewing height and the space underneath can accommodate wiring and batteries for lights.



Panzerwrecks

Inspired by a post-war photo of a PzKpfw IV that had been used as a defensive position during the Battle of Berlin, Harvey built this simple but effective vignette.



THE BASE



1 I removed the glass from the frame (it will make a clean cutting surface later) and replaced it with a thin piece of wood locked in place with wood pegs. This will serve as the foundation for the groundwork.



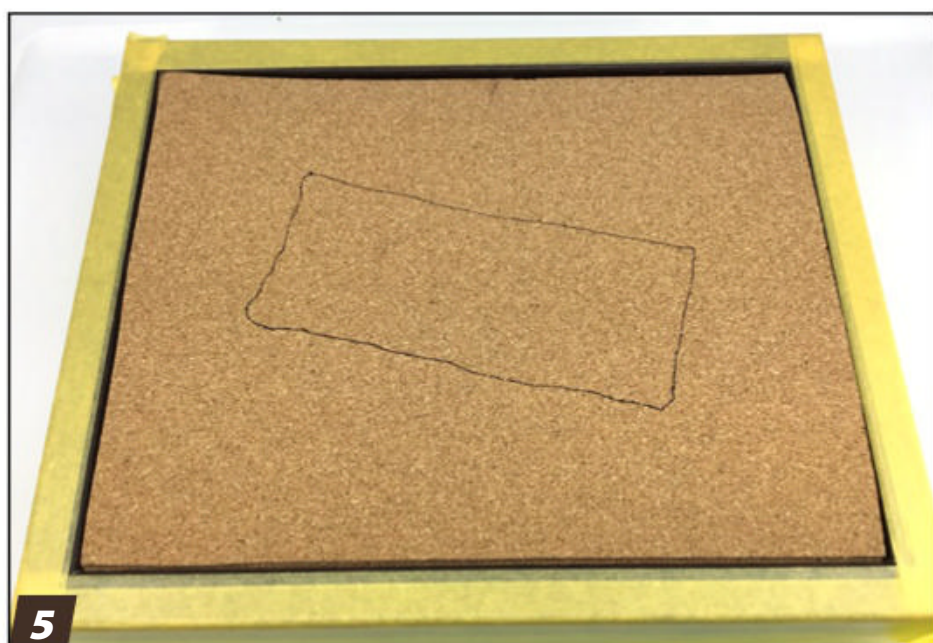
2 Flipping the base right side up shows how the shadowbox frames the scene. The hole will allow the wiring to pass from the tank to the battery pack when it's installed.



3 For relatively level terrain like a street, cork sheet works perfectly. It is easily cut and can be layered to produce gradually undulating slopes; use a sharp blade for precise edges or tear edges for a rugged effect and excess can be turned into rubble and rocks.



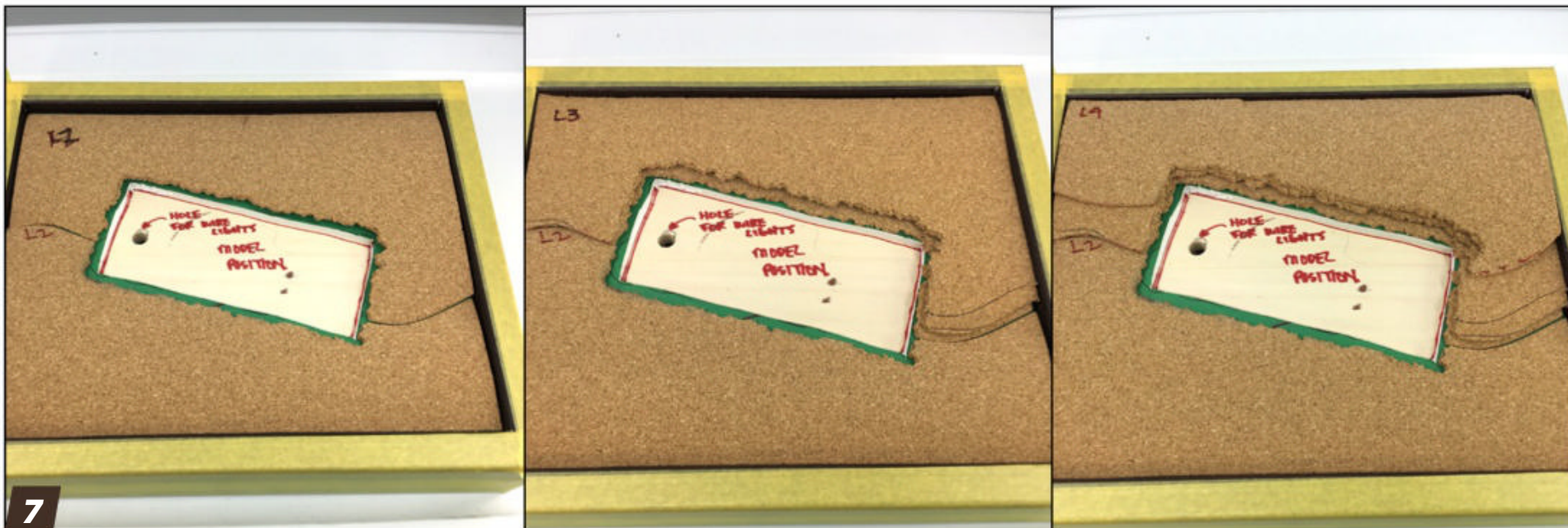
4 I started the groundwork with a foamcore foundation and cut out the location for the tank. I did not glue the foam board to the wood initially because construction and painting are easier without the added weight of the base.



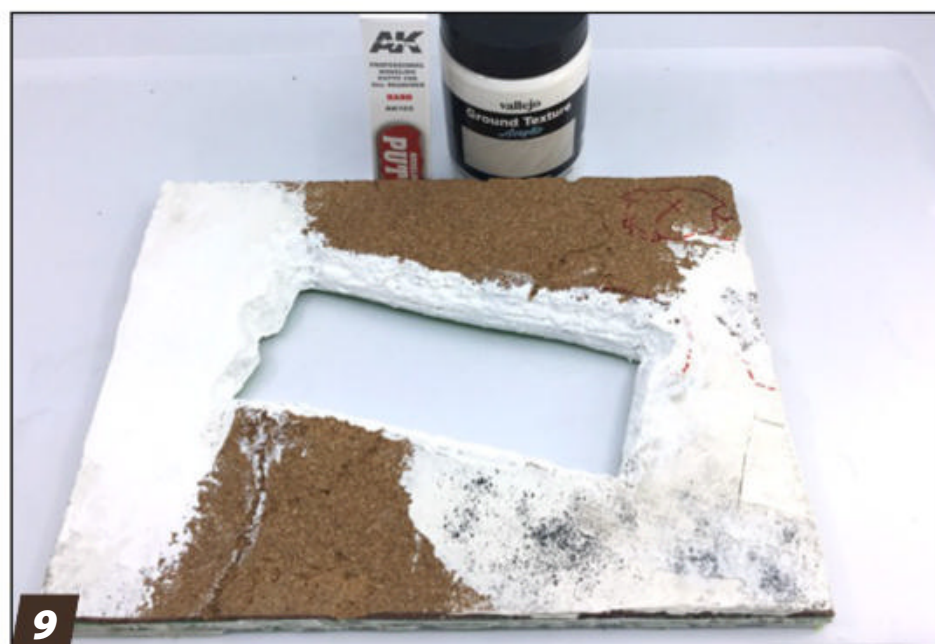
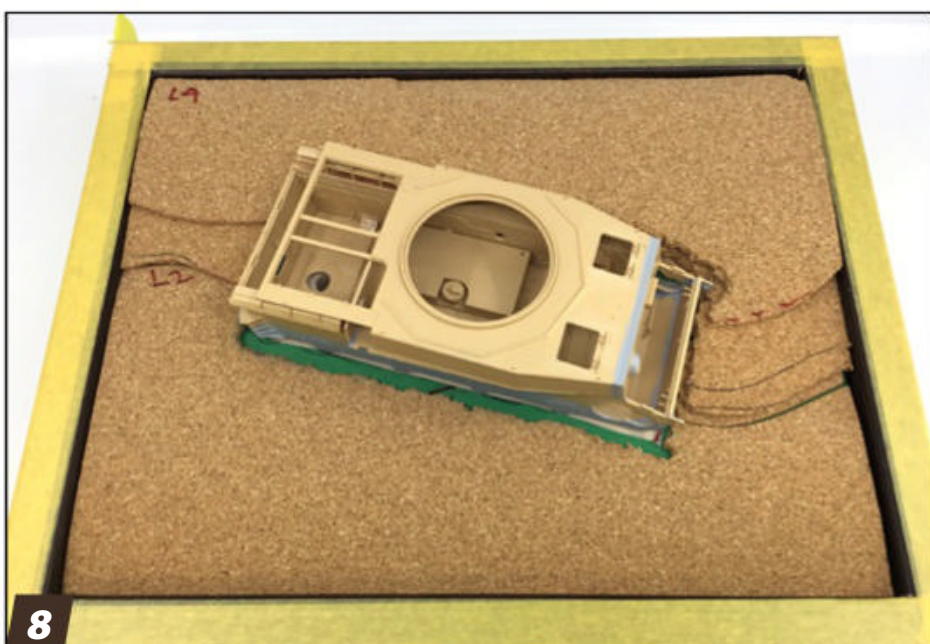
5 Since the tank sits quite low in the ground, both the foam board and cork needed a cut-out across all layers.



6 I placed the partially assembled hull on the cork to get a sense of its position and begin considering the placement of other items.



To fully establish the terrain, I used four layers of cork with a break across the middle that produced a gradual slope. Features like this add interest when compared to a perfectly flat surface. Incidentally, throughout this project, I used Llorell $\frac{3}{32}$ -inch cork that comes on a 24- x 48-inch roll.



I attached the first layer of cork to the foamcore with 3M Super 77 spray adhesive. I placed the partially built tank to check the position in relation to the groundwork. Using a knife and engraver, I drew cracks in the pavement.

I brushed on Vallejo Ground Texture White Stone (No. 26.211), a dense water-based acrylic paste that goes on smooth. It can be colored with acrylic paint, is workable, and dries in 48 hours. AK Interactive Hard Putty (No. AK103) works well for refined texture work like cracks.



I blended and smoothed the cork layers with more putty. Now, the groundwork is beginning to look like real pavement.

I followed up with a few layers of AK Terrains Concrete (No. AK8014) using a roller wrapped in tin foil to texture the material.



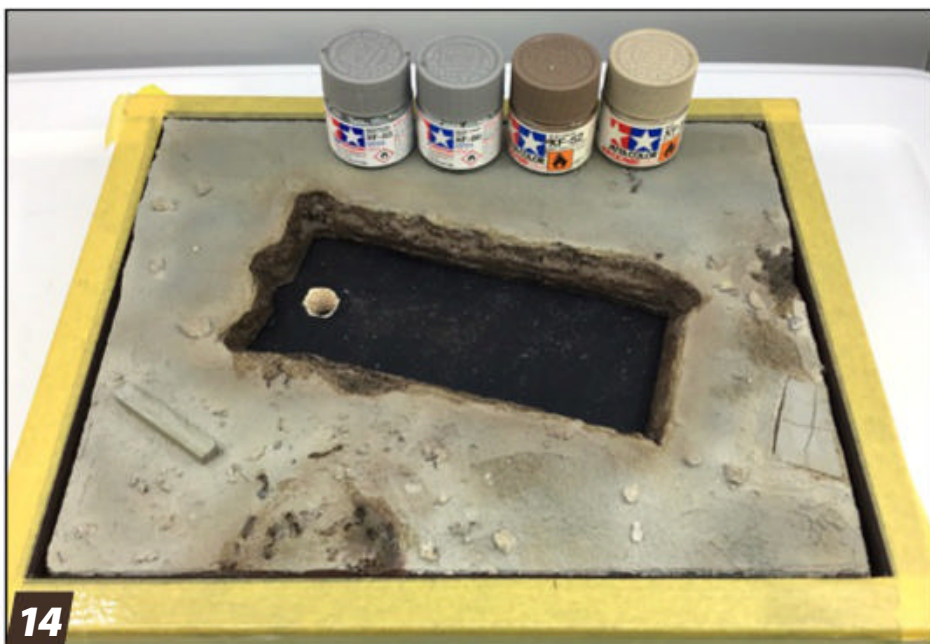
12

Rubble is essential for any urban battle setting. I recommend using debris of various sizes and shapes. You can find some appropriate items at model railroad shops, but I find the second-best source is my backyard! Use a strainer to sift-out unwanted dirt and debris.



13

Photos show unique building debris around the tank, especially large square concrete pillars or slabs. Unable to find suitable shapes, I made my own from several sizes of Evergreen styrene, cut and sanded to replicate torn and worn edges and painted shades of gray.



14

I airbrushed the road surface with Tamiya gray, brown, and tan acrylics. These colors add depth and interest to the otherwise boring neutral concrete.



15

Weathering takes time to ensure you get the effect you want; don't be afraid to experiment with colors by blending various browns and grays. I use a combination of weathering powders and enamel washes and filters; each produce their own effects from dry dust to wet effects.



16

The devil is in the details — items and features that help retain the audience's interest. I added pools of water with AK Puddles (No. AK8028), vehicle tracks airbrushed through Vallejo Hobby Stencil Tire Markings (No. ST-TX002), and period posters and magazines from Duplicata (Nos. 41D-35 and 32B-35).

Vignette vs. Diorama

LET'S DISCUSS TERMINOLOGY. While they are similar, in modeling, there are differences between a vignette and a diorama. Typically, a vignette is small and focused on a single subject, character, or idea. A good example would be an aircraft on a carrier deck with deck crew. Dioramas typically tell one big story or several smaller ones that tie into an event, for example, infantry struggling up the beach. Another way of looking at it is that a vignette sets the scene and places the subject in context; a diorama tells a story. With that said, the differences between them can often be subjective, so many contests will define the differences based on size or number of vehicles and/or figures.

BUILDING THE TANK

I used the excellent Ryefield Models Panzer IV Ausf J with interior (No. 5043). While most of the hatches will be posed open, I did not add all of the interior details, focusing instead on the those that can be seen through the open hatches, **17**.

I drilled two holes through the firewall, **18**, to accommodate two LEDs from a Bandai lighting set, **19**. The engine was omitted to make room for the wires and lights. Other alterations inside include a scratchbuilt commander's seat back more accurate than the kit part, and omission of the transmission as the full-size tank didn't have one.

I painted the interior in steps, starting with a primer coat of Tamiya Flat Black (No. XF-1), **20**, followed by Royal Light Gray (No. XF-80), **21**, and Flat White (No. XF-2), **22**. The gray and white layers were applied only to the highlights, and then more white was misted on to blend it all together.

I painted the main floor with Tamiya Hull Red (No. XF-9) to simulate red oxide primer and then hand-painted details with Vallejo acrylics.

Other details, such as the seats, were hand-painted with Vallejo colors in varying shades of brown.

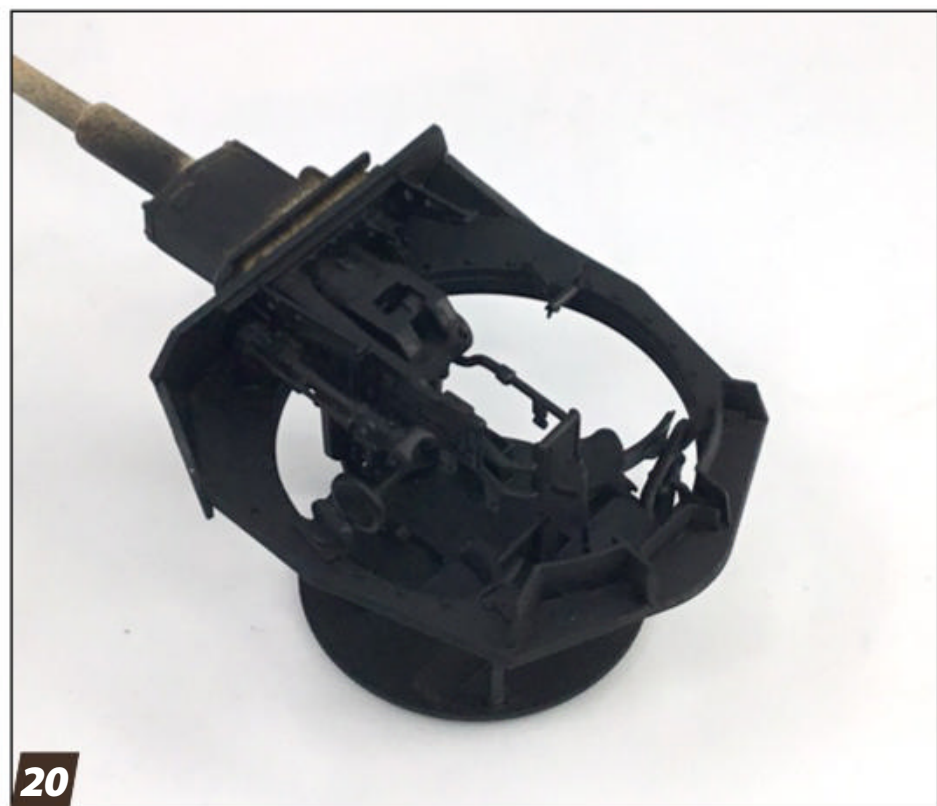
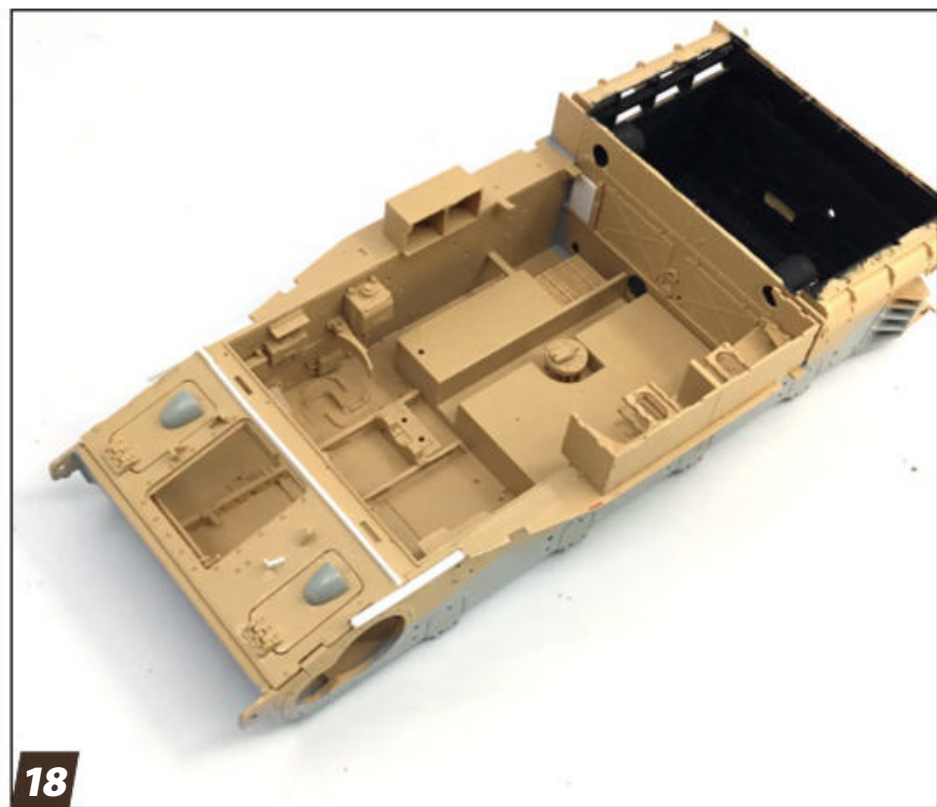
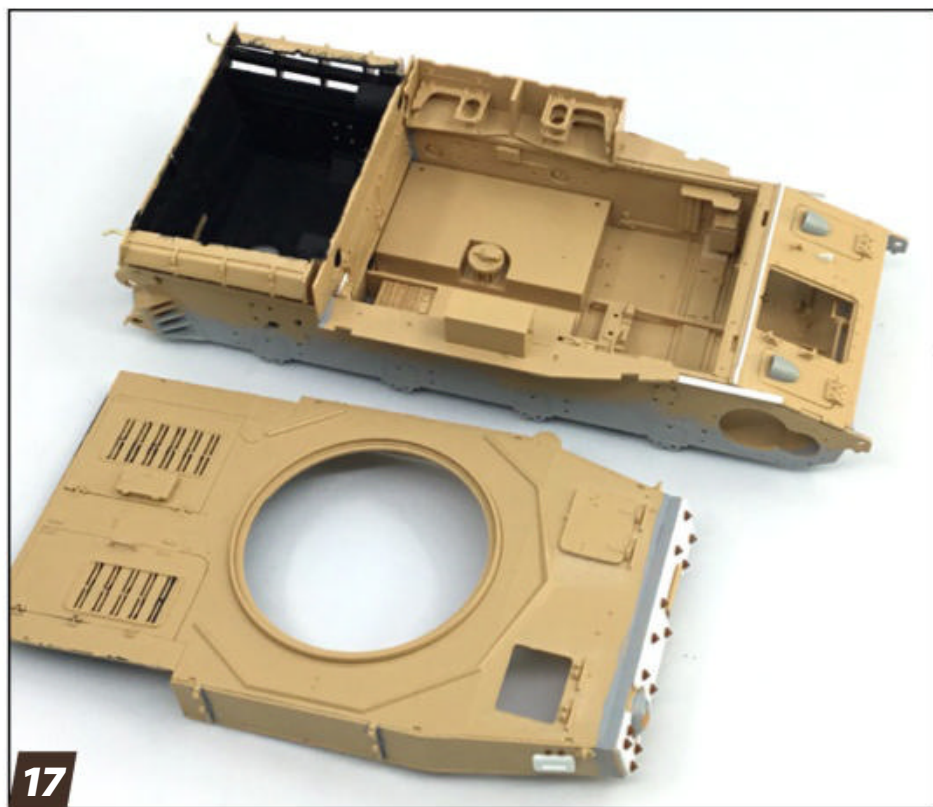
The details that “keep the viewer’s eye on your model” included the German *Signal* magazine discarded on the crew seat and a crewman’s wrench left on the floor, **23**.

A wash of Winsor & Newton raw umber artist oil and light dry-brushing of white oil paint finished the weathering. Don’t forget to include dirt and mud where the crew would track it from outside, **24**.

The tank in the photo is a “hybrid” with a Panzer IV Ausf H hull and an Ausf J turret. Rather than combining two expensive kits, I backdated components as follows, **25**:

Turret

- Removed the splash guard over the mantlet’s left telescopic sighting hole.
- Added partially worn away Zimmerit on the left side of the mantlet.
- Replaced the side doors with Tamiya Panzer III turret side doors from my spares box with hatch vision slots. They fit perfectly!
- Added broken mounting brackets for the missing rear stowage bin.



Hull

- Drilled out the locating holes for only four return-rollers as indicated in kit instructions.
- Added brake cooling air-intake guards on the brake access hatches.
- Relocated splash guards around the hull hatches with styrene strip.
- Omitted all running gear, drive sprockets, idlers, wheels, and return-rollers.
- Made extra 30mm frontal armor with 1mm styrene held in place with Tichy Models hex-bolts (No. 8080).
- Omitted all rear hull detail, including the exhaust.
- Removed all of the fenders (Parts G1 and G2), leaving only the parts attached directly to the hull, and added L-shaped brackets on either side to replicate brackets
- Replaced rear tow hook with an earlier version supplied in the kit.
- Added hull-side vision slots and rivets.
- Applied styrene rod to simulate welded-over vision slots.
- Cut and bent kit photo-etched metal side engine grilles and posed them at odd angles to match photo.

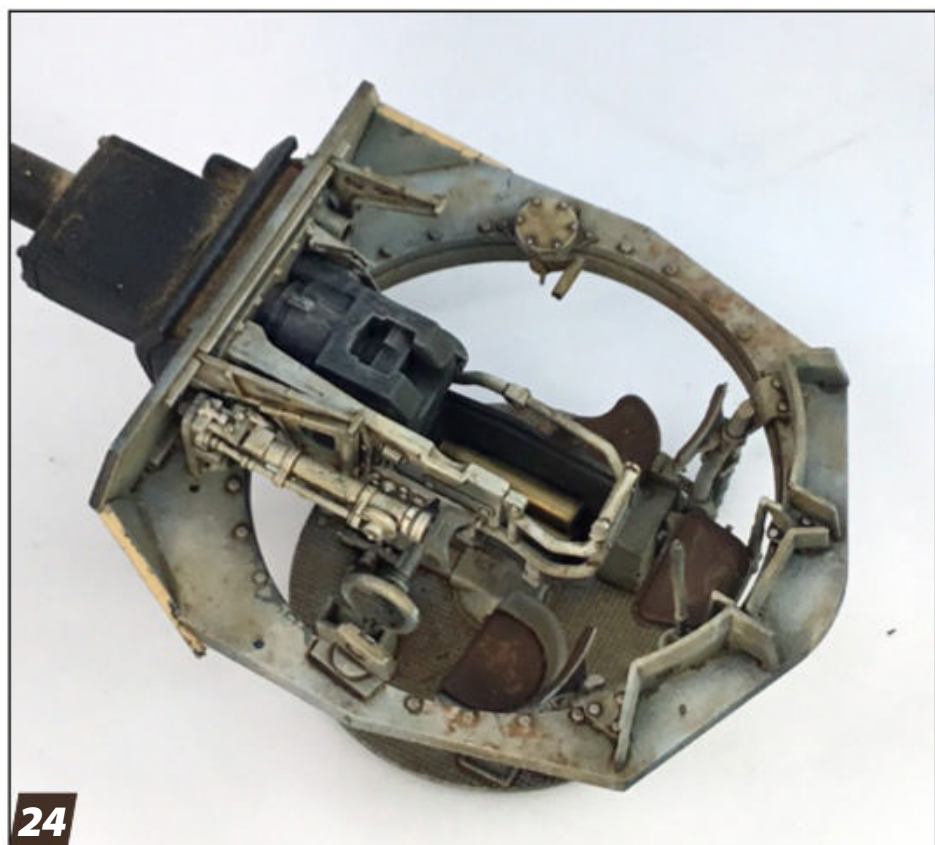
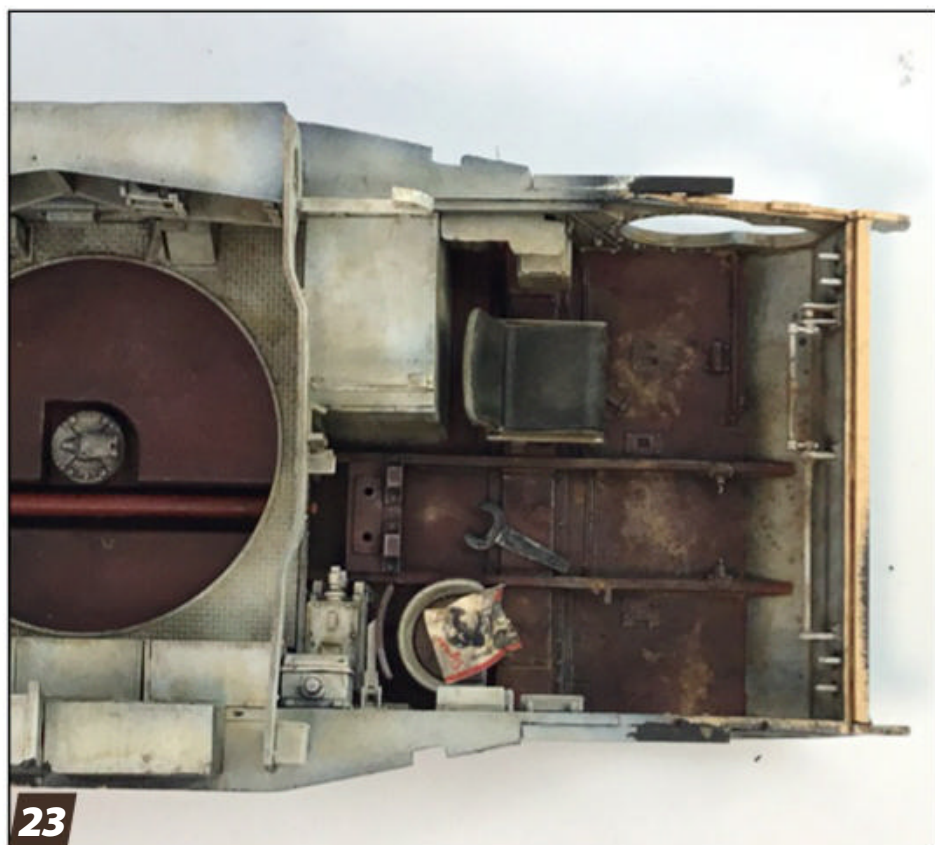
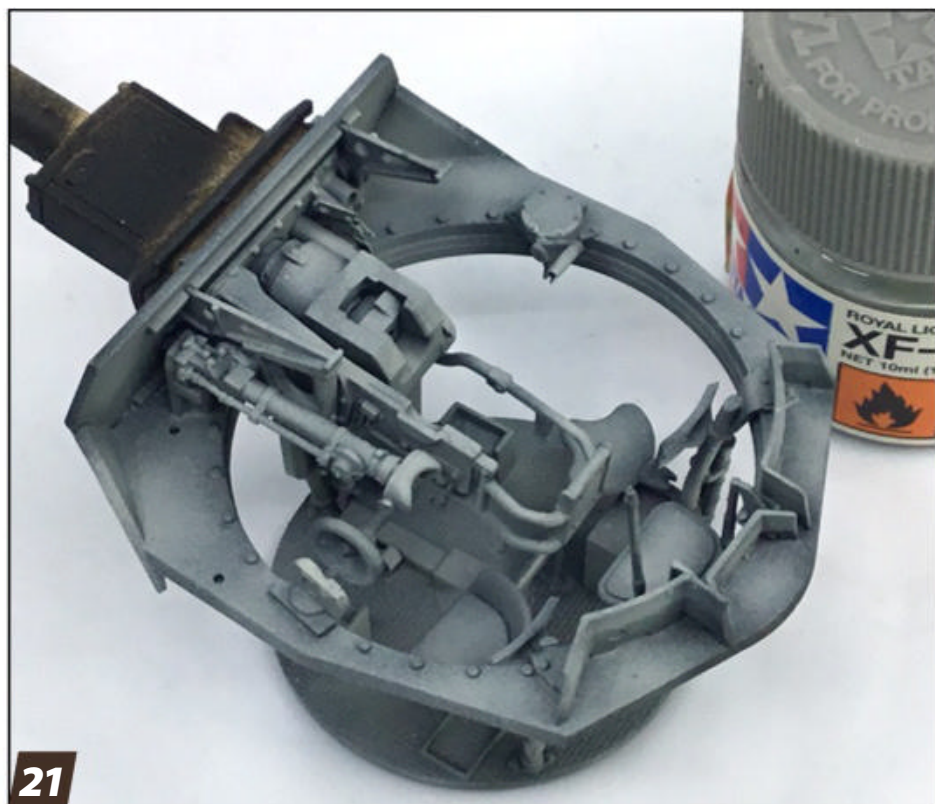
Painting the panzer

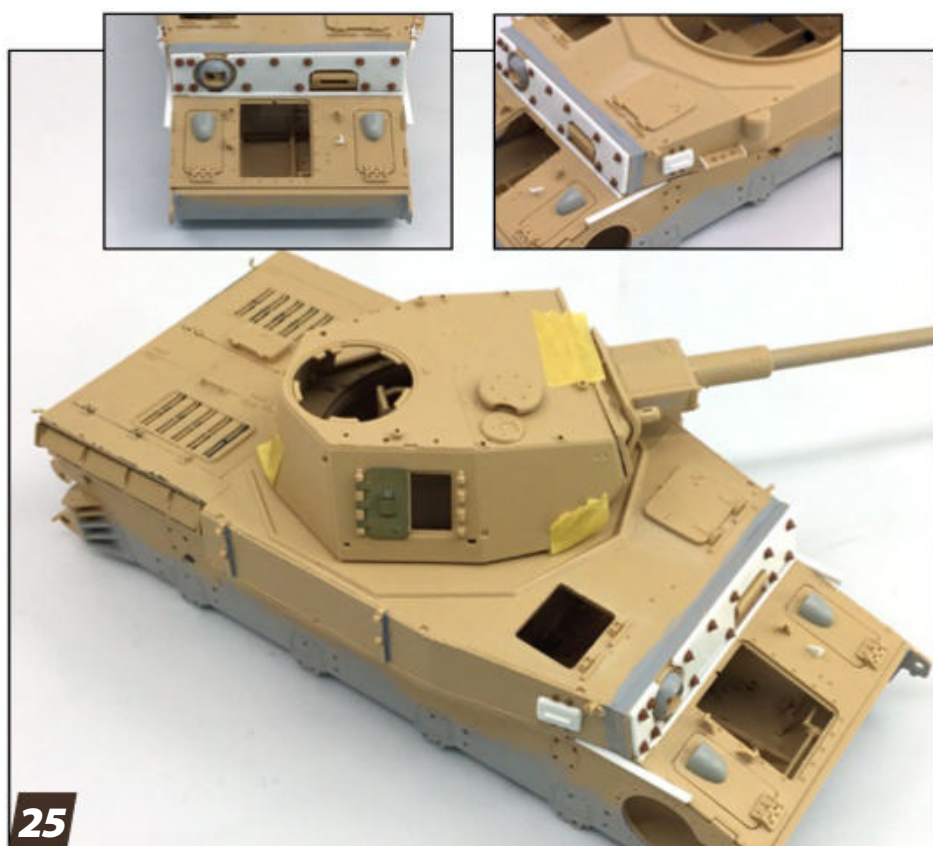
After masking the open hatches, I airbrushed a primer coat of flat black followed by random patterns and squiggles of white, **26**. This provides a modulated effect when I lightly layered subsequent colors over it and added interest to the finish.

For the camouflage, I used AK Interactive 1945 German Late War Colors (No. AK554). This set's acrylics airbrush nicely out of the bottle with no thinning. They look vibrant when applied — maybe too vibrant — but weathering washes and filters muted the contrast for a realistic finish.

After applying an overall raw umber wash, I layered on weathering products including artist oils, dry pigments, filters, and various stain and spill effects. I didn't follow a specific sequence, instead layering and re-layering these products until I got the look I wanted. Since this was a static, non-moving tank, I added debris on the vehicle but little mud underneath, **27**. Oil and grease stains were concentrated on the engine deck using Wilder and Mig engine weathering products, **28**.

I used a white Prismacolor pencil to replicate the manufacturer's number stamps on the hull, **29**.





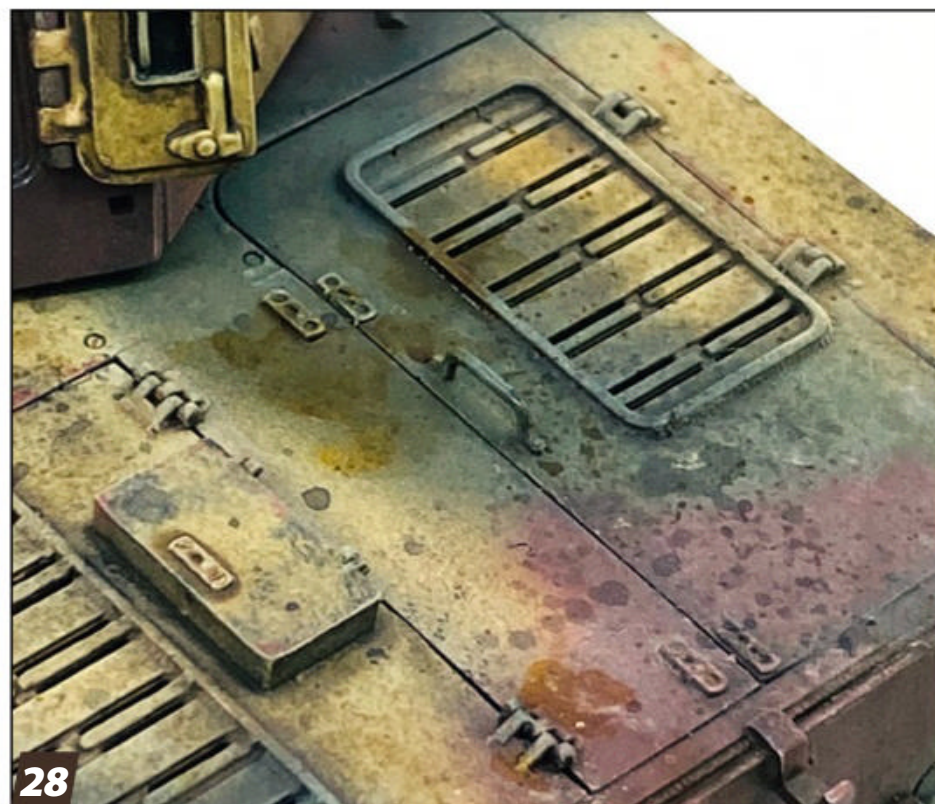
25



26



27



28



29

FINAL STEPS

WITH THE MODEL PAINTED, I attached it and began positioning the debris around it matching the photo as closely as possible. Then came the rubble and debris, ranging from tiny rocks to large slabs. I added a broken Nazi eagle on the ground, along with discarded objects like an axe, empty shell casings, bottles, and torn newspapers. The tiny objects add a human element viewers can relate to. Finally, I added two figures — a child with a helmet nearby for scale and a dog doing his business on a Waffen SS flag. Both were painted with Vallejo acrylics. This was a fun project for a model that really needs a base to give it context. **FSM**





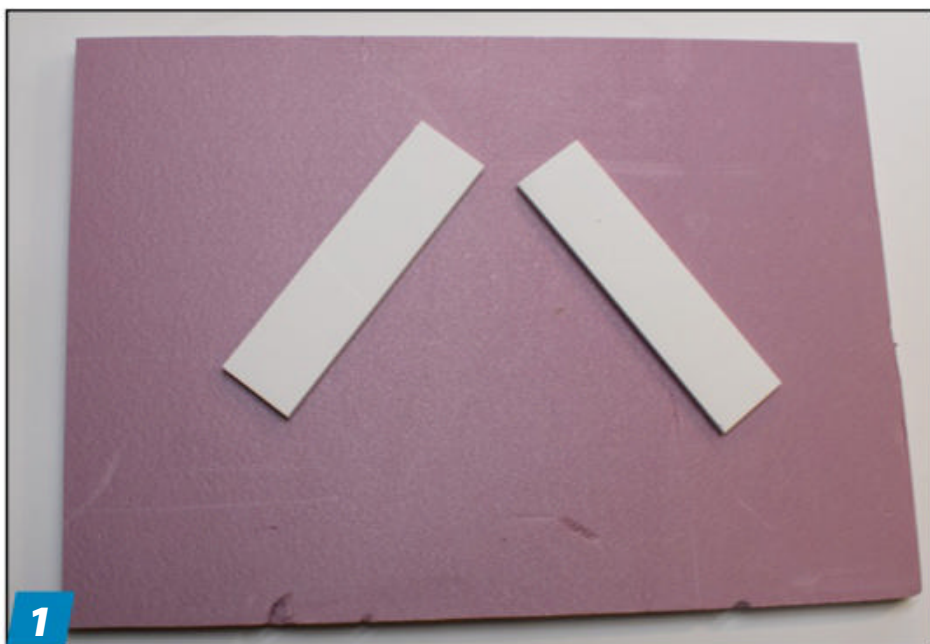
on AUTOMOBILE
ET

A place for No. 1

Build an easy, no-muss-no-fuss display for a Le Mans racer

BY ERIC WHITE

After recently finishing Meng's 1/24 scale 1966 Ford GT40, I wanted a little more than just an open spot on the shelf for it. While doing research for the build, I came across a photo of Ken Miles and Denny Hulme's No. 1 car sitting on the starting grid just before the race. Fans milled about and both they and team members were checking out the cars. I thought this could be just the spot to display the car — still clean before the race, but ready to go.



A piece of 1/2-inch foam insulation served as the vignette's base. Seen in reference photos, concrete panels separated the pits from pit lane. I cut these from 3/16-inch foam core. By comparing the panels to the people in the photos, I figured the panels were about 3 feet tall.



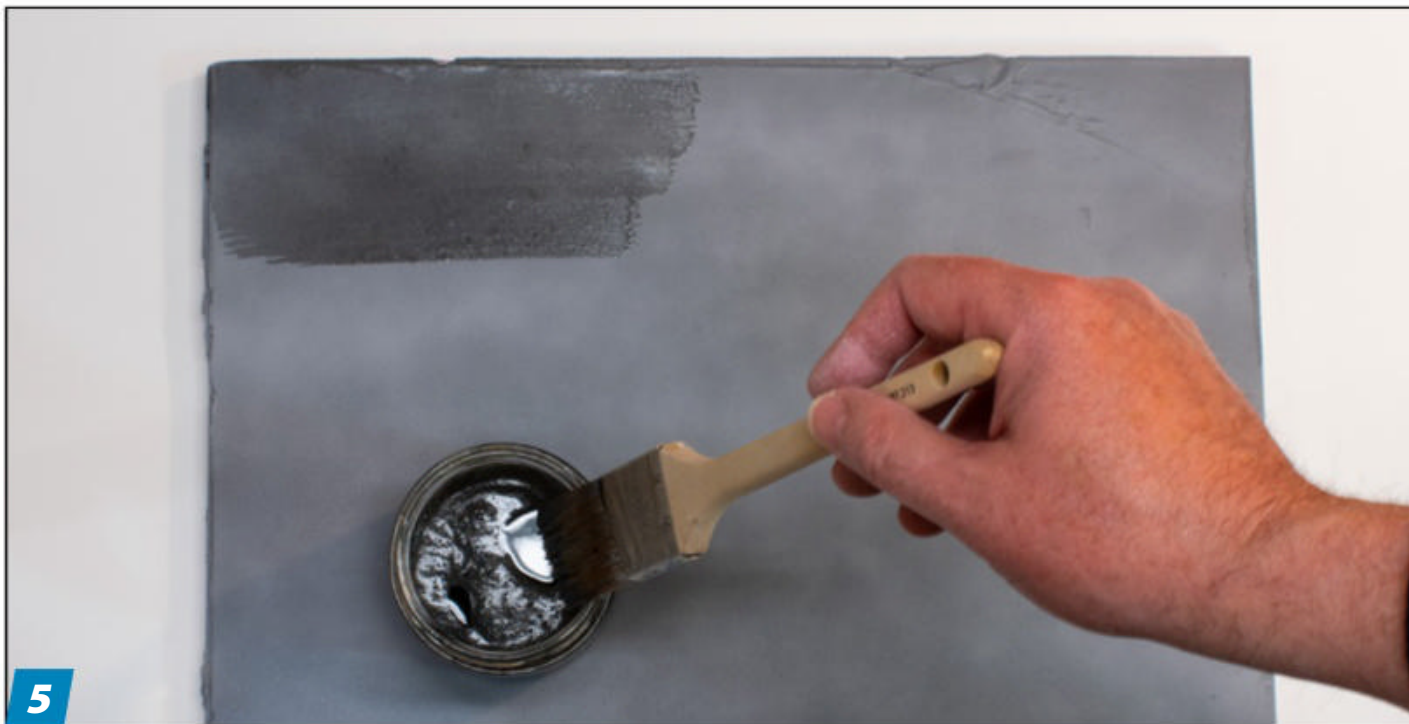
To get the finish I wanted for the road surface, I coated the foam board with joint compound, making sure to spread it in thin layers to prevent cracking.



With a thin layer of compound on the foam board, I used a wide spackle knife to make the surface as smooth as possible, consistently working from one side toward the other. Don't sweat every line. A few swipes with a sanding sponge will get that smooth surface you're after.



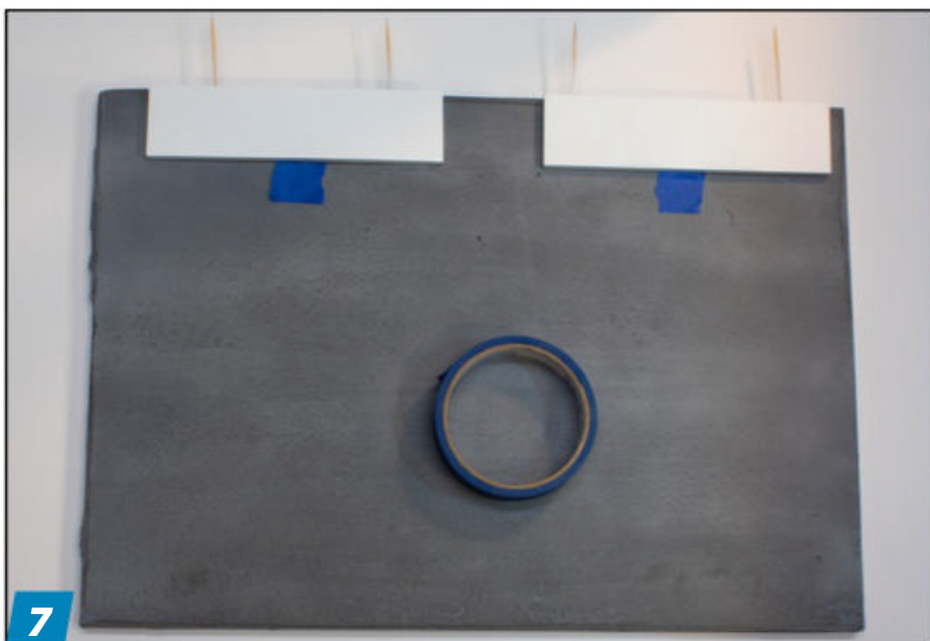
Once the joint compound was dry and smooth, I sprayed it with Rust-Oleum Automotive Filler Primer from the can. When that dried, I used Rust-Oleum Painter's Choice 2X Gray Primer and alternated back and forth until I got a blotchy gray surface that resembled reference photos.



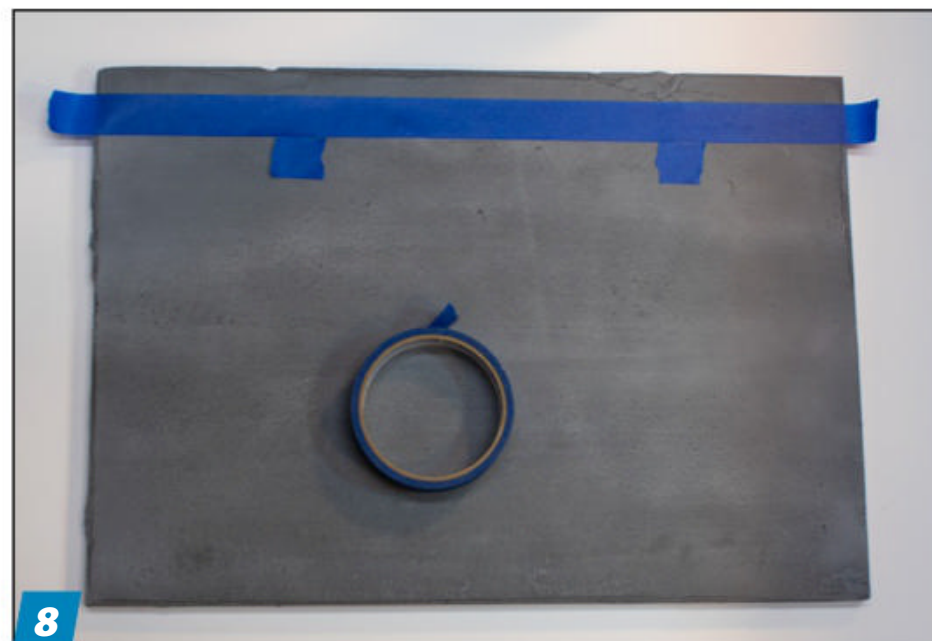
To darken the color a bit more, I applied a wash made from black acrylic craft paint and water with a wide brush. Again, I worked from one side to the other, making consistent passes across the base each time.



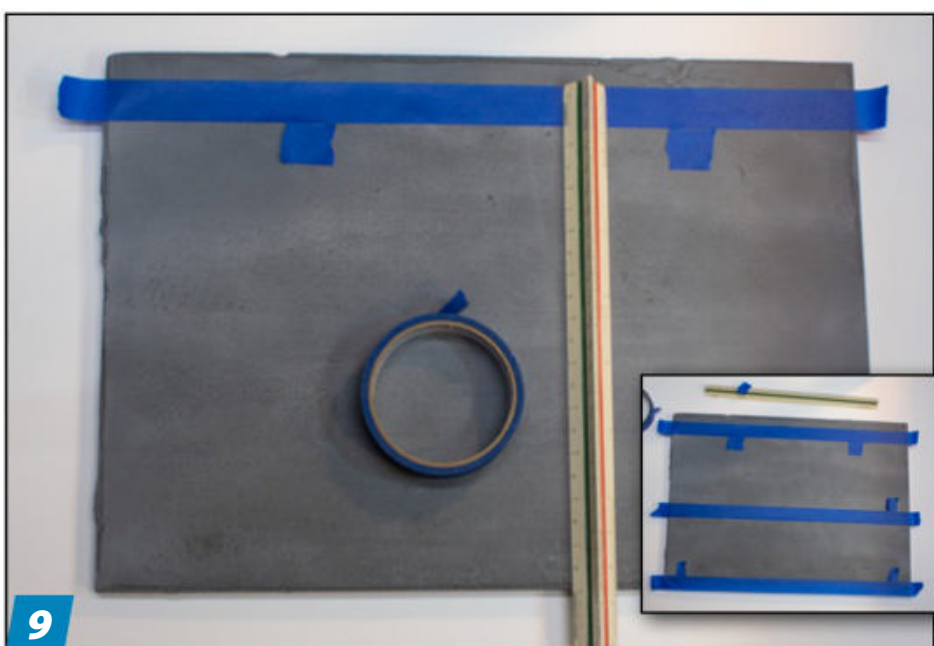
I covered my foamcore panels with .020-inch sheet styrene for a nice base for decal signage. In preparation, I painted the walls white Tamiya Fine Surface Primer (No. 87044) and followed with a coat of gloss white on the front where the decals would go.



To paint the pavement markings, I used the pit walls to judge the distance for the edge of the track and marked the spot with masking tape.



With the walls out of the way, I marked the track edge, placing a line of tape against my tabs. I didn't want to draw on the finished surface of the track, so the tape was used to plan and place different features.



Using an architect's scale, I marked out a pit lane 20 scale feet wide and divided it in half to indicate stopping and passing lanes.

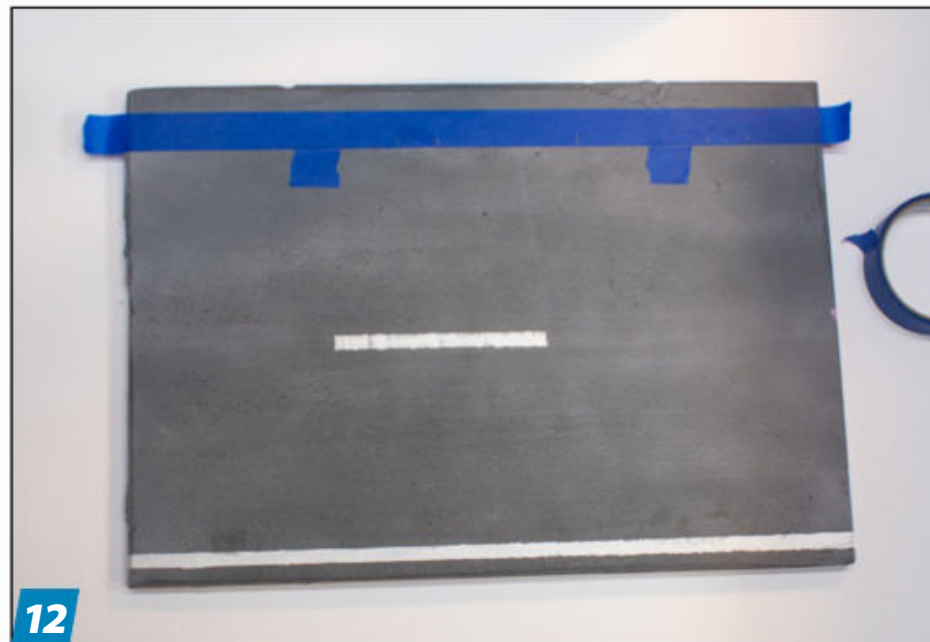


I used more lengths of tape to measure out lane markers 8 scale inches wide and placed another line of tape. No expensive model paint here, just good ol' latex ceiling paint for my lane markings.



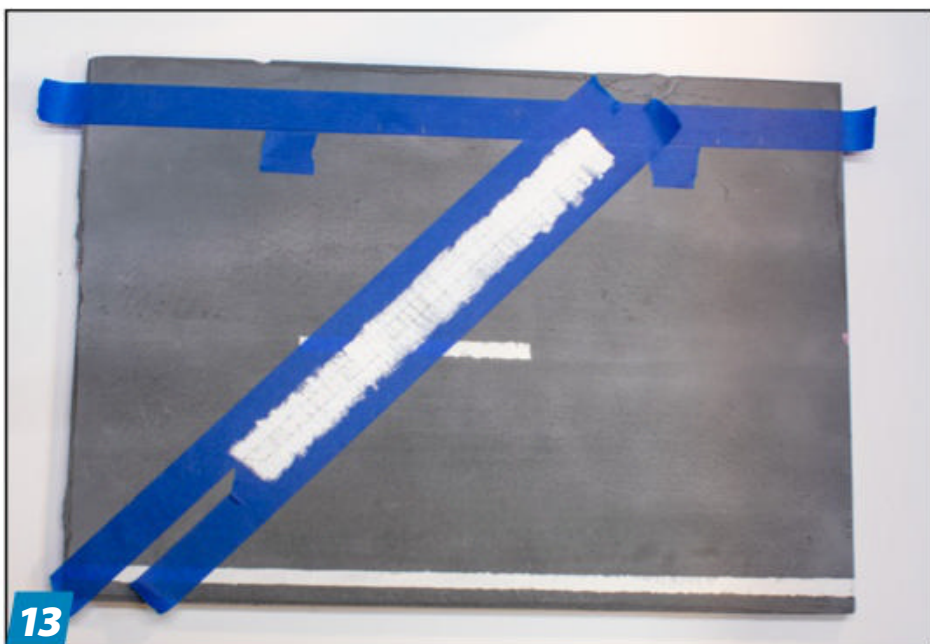
11

The markings at Le Mans that year (or any for that matter) were worn. To simulate the look, I dabbed the paint on with a foam brush.



12

With the tape pulled up, I had slightly fuzzy-looking pavement markings. Exactly what I was looking for!



13

I finished the markings with the diagonal start position line for Ken Miles' GT40.



14

For the backdrop, I used Photoshop to remove the perspective skew and an unfortunately placed gendarme from the original photo that inspired the display. Then I printed it out on a laser printer and mounted it with spray adhesive to a foamcore board.



15

In the photo, there appear to be a series of fuel tanks behind the pit walls. I made a solid piece to act as the bottom of the photo, cut trim pieces from .020-inch styrene sheet to finish off the edges of the backdrop, and painted the top of the "fuel tanks" and trim pieces Tamiya NATO Black (No. XF-69).

FINAL THOUGHTS

THE PROJECT WENT EXACTLY as I'd expected. Quick, easy, and gives my Ford GT40 a place that looks more at home than a bare spot on a shelf. I tried to find photos of the sponsor logos behind Miles' GT40 and was able to turn up Mobil. However, I had to make the L'Action and Mintex signs in Adobe InDesign with fonts that approximated the right look. Now, all I need are a couple of mechanics tweaking the engine before race time. **FSM**



TIGER

After I built Dragon's 1/35 scale Tiger I as the tank under the command of the leader of the 101st SS Heavy Panzer Battalion, I wanted a base that clearly placed the big vehicle in France in the weeks after the D-Day landings. To do that, I added figures and built a simple base. You can read how I modified the kit in *FSM*'s December 2021 DLC, available for download at [FineScale.com/Feb2022DLC](https://www.finescale.com/Feb2022DLC).



BASICS

Scene places a German tank in location and history

BY ARNALDO D'ORAZIO





1 The three figures needed to look slightly different to add interest. The Scharführer about to jump from the turret wears the summer variant of the so called Erbsenmuster, commonly called "Pea Dot Pattern Camouflage." I modified his pose to reflect movement.

2 Here are all three figures ready for the painting. The Oberscharführer (right) who leans forward over the loader's hatch ready to re-enter the tank wears the autumn variant of the Erbsenmuster.



3 Before painting the crew, I tested their fit on the turret and made any necessary adjustments.

4 I dressed the commander in the standard panzerjacket, which I painted with a mix of 3 parts Humbrol Black Matt (No. 34) and 1 part Humbrol Flesh Matt (No. 61) over Tamiya white primer.



5 Over white Tamiya Fine Surface Primer and Humbrol Desert Yellow (No. 93), I hand-painted the other two crew members with Vallejo Model Color Middle Stone (No. 70.882). I painted the shirt of one with LifeColor RAL8002 Signalbraun (No. UA209) and started the camouflage pattern by hand-brushing Model Color German Camouflage Dark Green (No. 70.979) or German Camouflage Extra Dark Green (No. 70.896). Next came tiny dots of yellow, dark brown, and bright green. For the flesh, I applied a base coat of Model Color Iraqi Sand (No. 70.819) as foundation for artist oils starting with burnt sienna, followed by raw umber and ochre, then highlights of titanium white.



I painted the helmet covers with summer and autumn variations of the oak leaf pattern. For the former, I started with Vallejo Model Air Light Green Chromate (No. 71.006) over Ammo by Mig Jimenez RAL9001 Cremeweiss (No. A.MIG-0017). Then, I hand-painted Model Color Middle Stone and outlined the pattern with Model Air Green Brown (No. 71.020). On the latter, I started with a mix of Model Color Dark Yellow (No. 70.978) and Model Air Light Green Chromate followed by a sap green wash. I hand-painted the pattern with a mix of Model Air Mud Brown (No.71.037) and Model Color Green Brown (No. 70.879) and finally Model Color German Camouflage Dark Green.



As a focal point on the turret, I gave the commander navigation tools — a map, set square, and a measuring compass. I scratchbuilt the last with styrene sheet and fine hypodermic needles for the points.



The groundwork is topsoil from my garden, sifted, and sprinkled over thin white glue on a wooden base. I impressed Tiger tracks into the wet ground with kit tracks; plastic wrap prevented the tracks sticking.



I added a roadway to the corner with a piece of printed cobblestone paper from Verlinden. After attaching the paper with white glue, I added weight to hold it in place as the adhesive set.



The embossed mortar pattern didn't match the printed cobblestones, so I brushed on several layers of a mix of white glue and Model Color Middle Stone to soften the paper and eliminate the impressed lines. Then I traced the printed outlines with strips of styrene in a pin vise.



After the paper was dry, I picked out some of the cobblestones with Ammo acrylics to add realism and break up the monochromatic street.



I painted on a mix of Mig Productions Rubbel Dust pigment (No. P234) and ochre oil paint to tone down the contrast and give the mortar a dusty patina. Finally, I highlighted individual stones with gray and raw umber and added oil stains.



In preparation for foliage, I brushed the groundwork with thin wood glue ...



... and sifted on several colors of static grass ...





15

... using my homemade static grass applicator built from a modified handheld bug zapper. I made sure to spread the grass evenly in several thin passes to control the dispersion of vegetation.



16

To firmly establish the tank's location, I added a sign damaged by the tank. Scratchbuilt from balsa wood, it took me a few attempts to get right.



FINAL THOUGHTS

WITH THE DOOMED SIGNPOST and the tank putting it in jeopardy in place I called the model done. A base, even a simple one, goes a long way to putting a model in context and giving it meaning. **FSM**



Arma Hobby P-51B/C Mustang

Right out of the gates: This is the best “fullback,” Merlin-powered Mustang in 1/72 scale — possibly in ANY scale! Arma Hobby is a relative newcomer to plastic model hobby, but this Polish company is producing quality kits that rival long-standing leaders in the industry.

Arma’s Mustang features the finest recessed panel detail and excellent cockpit equipment, including separate radios and choice of two seats. Outside, you get a choice of fins: standard and with the leading-edge strake. Clear parts include camera windows for the F-6C, along with closed

and opened versions of the standard canopy and the retro-fitted “Malcolm” sliding hood. Separate flaps are intended to be in the dropped position, but you can clip off the attachment tabs and raise them if you like.

Options include three sets of lower-nose “breathers,” paper or metal drop tanks, and 250-pound bombs. There is also a choice of exposed or hooded exhaust stacks. Photo-etched metal (PE) parts are provided for the seat harness and grilles for the under-fuselage radiator. Decals are given for six Mustangs, including four American, one RAF, and one RAAF. One American aircraft has an option of overpainted Japanese hinomaru after its capture in China.

The well-detailed 27-step instructions require careful study to understand the positioning of the available detail parts. Step 1 erroneously shows the frame posts of the armored seat back going into depressions in the cockpit floor too far forward of where they should go. This will cause the seat to sit over the mounting hole for the control stick. The armored plate should be placed against the raised portion of the cockpit floor and is shown correctly installed in Step 2 and 3.

Small illustrations in Step 2 show optional arrangements of the fuel tank, radios, and equipment. Arma even provides tiny labels and stencils for these items and many more on the cockpit sides. Decals also decorate the instrument panel and the PE brass seat harness. I’m not a fan of PE parts, and I found that placing the decals without the PE are sufficient in this scale. In fact, I used none of the dozen PE parts in this kit. The others are grilles for the radiator and intake — all but invisible



when the fuselage is closed. Two large molding pins must be removed from the radiator floor insert (Part A30) for fit.

Once the interior is finished, the real fun starts. The fit of the three-piece wing assembly is outstanding, and so is its fit to the fuselage. However, I found the plastic so soft that even cutting with a brand-new parts clipper they left substantial divots that required filling.

Arma provides a separate windscreen, a set of closed or opened standard canopy, and two Malcolm hoods (one slightly larger to fit over the rear fuselage in the opened position). Separate slide rails for the Malcolm hood come attached to the lower rim of the canopy. Full disclosure: I completely forgot about using the kit’s pre-cut vinyl masks for the canopy framing and wheels. Doh!

I painted my model with Gunze Mr. Color lacquers then used the perfectly printed kit decals for James Howard’s “Ding Hao!” (By the way, photos of this aircraft show it with either the standard or Malcolm canopies.) The decals laid down beautifully.

I spent 23 hours on my P-51. It was slow at first because of all the interior detail, but quickly accelerated with the excellent fit of the major assemblies. Wow! What a kit! Arma has announced a bubble-top P-51D coming, too! Tamiya: Check six!

— Paul Boyer



Kit: No. 70038 **Scale:** 1/72

Mfr.: Arma Hobby, armahobby.com
(Sample courtesy of mfr.) **Price:** \$39.99

Comments: Injection-molded plastic; 115 parts (12 photo-etched metal); decals; masks **Pros:** Excellent exterior and interior detail; excellent fit; lots of optional parts; dropped flaps; choice of drop tanks or bombs; opened and closed standard and Malcolm hood canopies; alternate fin with leading-edge strake; excellent decals

Cons: Instructions require careful study; soft plastic tears at sprue attachment points even when cut with sharp tools

Academy Panzer II Ausf F “North Africa”



Academy has just released a new 1/35 scale plastic model kit of a fairly uncommon armor specimen: the Panzer II Ausf F in North African service. “Uncommon?” you ask. Well, by the time the Panzer II Ausf F began production in late 1941, the tank’s role had been switched primarily to reconnaissance. Only about 500 were built by the end of 1942 when Germany started using the chassis solely for self-propelled guns, like the Marder II.

The kit includes markings for six North African vehicles, including one captured by U.S. Rangers. The instructions have clear assembly diagrams, but because of all the available options in the kit, they can get a bit complicated. I suggest you pick the version you want to build and go through the instructions crossing out the steps you won’t need. Disappointingly, the painting guides lack top views for the camouflaged vehicles. Also, the two colors for the camouflage are so close in tone it is difficult to make out the pattern; the box art will be some help for a camouflaged vehicle.

Overall, the kit features cleanly molded parts and excellent detail, but you’ll want to fill the three ejector-pin marks on

each of the drive sprockets. I was tempted to build the captured vehicle, but photos of the real tank showed an unusual stowage rack and box not included in the kit. Instead, I opted for markings for the 7th Panzer Regiment.

The multipart hull assembles without difficulty. Fitting the running gear to the hull, I noticed the road wheels, drive sprocket, and idler were tight, but the return rollers were extremely loose. The link-and-length tracks’ upper run is molded in one piece with correct sag. I used it to make sure all of the other track pieces fit properly before all the glue set. The number of links shown in the instructions fit perfectly. When the tracks were dry, I was able to remove the tracks and running gear from the hull, making painting easier.

I did wind up with an unfilled locator hole on the front right fender because the vehicle I was building had the jack mounted where a short pry bar (Part D26) would normally go. I filled the hole by clipping the front bracket off the pry bar and installing it. (It may not be correct, but it worked). Also, the thread provided for the tow cable is poor quality and fuzzy. Even soaking the thread in diluted white glue failed to work get rid of errant strands. Fortunately, the spare wheel hides much of it.

The turret took no time to build. I left off the vision block ring (Part D18) to install after the turret was painted and avoided masking or painting the vision blocks in place. Vinyl bushings allow the gun mantlet to raise and lower. The

slide-molded main gun barrel has a hollow muzzle, but I had to drill the machine gun barrel to improve realism.

After paint and a coat of Tamiya Clear (No. X-22), I applied the decals with some help from Micro Set and Micro Sol. The yellow markings are a bit transparent and don’t show up well over the dark yellow underneath. A flat coat sealed everything to finish.

Thanks to the excellent fit of the parts and one-color paint scheme, I only spent about 17 hours building my North Africa Panzer II Ausf F. The finished vehicle matched the dimensions in the *Standard Catalog of German Military Vehicles* (David Doyle, Krause, ISBN 978-1-1440203-55-8). Academy has produced another fine plastic scale model kit any modeler that has a bit of experience should be able to build.

— John Plzak



Kit: No. 13535 **Scale:** 1/35

Mfr.: Academy, academyhobby.com (Sample courtesy of Model Rectifier Corp., modelrectifier.com) **Price:** \$44

Comments: Injection-molded plastic (tan yellow); 281 parts (13 photo-etched metal; 8 rubber; thread); decals

Pros: Well-molded link-and-length tracks; slide-molded barrel **Cons:** Fuzzy tow cable; unclear camouflage painting diagrams; differences in fit for running gear parts



Polar Lights Star Trek USS Grissom

The *Oberth*-class science vessel USS *Grissom* appeared in *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock* and was promptly destroyed by the Klingons. The filming miniature did survive and was remarked and appeared in several episodes of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and *Deep Space Nine* as well as the films *Generations* and *First Contact*.

Polar Lights' 1/350 scale *Grissom* comprises 79 parts, but almost two thirds of them are clear parts for windows and lights. Also included is the Polar Lights' standard domed display base. The parts are designed with holes and supports for wiring and lights, a nice touch. Photos on the box are useful for painting and decal placement, but the actual color and marking guide is printed on the sides of inner tray. That makes the diagram small and difficult to follow exactly. Also, lines linking the decal numbers to the marking locations are missing adding to the problems.

On the primary hull, I skipped adding the windows to the domes so I could add them after painting. The parts mostly fit well, but I had to fill small gaps at the rear of the hull. Paint the rear plate (Part 6) before attaching; it's difficult to paint on the model. The clear impulse engine part was left off for painting.

The warp nacelles have recessed panel lines molded on the upper surfaces but not the sides; decals are given to replicate them. I left the nacelles separate for painting.

The secondary hull It required filling of the bottom seam as well as around the deck. Diverging from the instructions, I did not add the pylons as shown in Step 1; they are easy to slide in place later and will be in the way for painting and decals.

After spraying the subassemblies with Mr. Primer 1000, I painted the recessed panels on the primary hull and pylons with Tamiya Light Blue (No. XF-23). The inserts on the secondary hull, the finned radiators on the nacelles, and the center of the upper dome were painted with Tamiya Gunmetal (No. X-10). I masked all f the panels and airbrushed the entire model with Tamiya Flat White (No. XF-2).



Then came the fun part — masking and painting all the trim. I mixed 4 parts Flat White and 1 part Tamiya Light Grey (No. XF-66). This was a little darker than I wanted, but I lightened with a mist coat of flat white. Other Tamiya colors used were Chrome Silver (No. X-11) on the center of the dome on top of the primary hull, the underside dome, two small domes under the warp nacelles, and on the secondary hull's metallic domes. I applied light streaking to the secondary hull with gun metal. The greeblie behind the saucer, the small rectangle behind it, and the center of the rear plate were also painted gun metal. I sealed the paint with clear gloss in preparation for decals.

The decals are nice and thin but are a bit brittle and can tear or break if handled too much. I recommend cutting some of the larger decals into smaller pieces to minimize damage. Decals 22-31 are only used if you build one of the Next Generation ship. I installed the blue striped decal on the bottom of the primary hull slightly off center. Cutting it into smaller sections would have made it easier to install, but you cannot overlap the parts because the background color is transparent, and any overlap would show. I tried installing one of the panel line decals on the warp nacelles, but even though I worked hard to match the dimensions of the lines on the decal, you could see where I missed even by a slight amount, so I decided not to use them. If I were to build another kit, I think I would scribe these lines and match the painting to the lines.

The warp nacelles were added to the pri-

mary hull, some small gaps were filled with perfect plastic putty and the excess was removed with a damp cotton bud. The clear parts were added to the domes and the upper dome was glued in place. After the pylons were added to the secondary hull, the primary hull was glued in place.

I spent about 37 hours on my *Grissom* — about seven on construction and 30 masking, painting, and decaling. A beginner can easily build this kit, but it will take someone with painting skills to do the subject justice. Despite a few negatives, I think Polar Lights did a great job on the kit.

— John Plzak



Kit: No. POL991M **Scale** 1/350

Mfr.: Polar Lights, round2corp.com
(Sample courtesy of mfr.)

Price: \$55.99 **Comments:** Injection-molded plastic (white, black, clear); 79 parts (1 metal); decals **Pros:** Parts set up for lighting; good fits; decals include several optional ship names and registry numbers **Cons:** Painting and marking guide on the box sides can be hard to decipher with a lack of location lines and optional decals not explained well

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By Tim Boyd

AMT 1964 Buick Wildcat

A one-year wonder marked a change for AMT



Buick's Wildcat debuted in 1962½ in answer to the Oldsmobile Starfire and Pontiac Grand Prix. It continued as a performance-enhanced mid-market offering positioned between Buick's mainstream LeSabre and its luxury-focused Electra 225 until being superseded by the Buick Centurion in 1971.

For 1964, AMT, as Buick's kit maker of record, switched from producing replicas of the Electra 225 to the sportier Wildcat, which presumably would appeal to young kit buyers everywhere. Also, in 1964, AMT adopted entirely subject-specific box art for its annual kits. In keeping with this change, AMT's art department developed a box top graphic treatment using Buick's Wildcat badge in both outline and silhouette.

Inside that box, modelers found a precisely rendered two-door hardtop body (a companion convertible kit was also offered). The pristine white styrene was highly polished and the lower bodyside moldings and three front fender strakes were crisply molded.

The chassis was the typical "promo-style" one-piece molding with metal axles representing the last year of GM's X-type frame with side rails that joined together under the center of the car. The simplified Buick Nailhead V8 was rendered in 15 parts, including a separately molded oil filter.

A simple interior bucket replicated the Wildcat's narrow seat and door panel pleats, while bucket seats, an instrument panel, a steering wheel, and a floor shifter accompanied the molded-in console. Builders then added a firewall, radiator, windshield washer jar, battery, and AMT's metal hood clip that was difficult to install but worked well if used on the model as designed.

The showroom stock version assembly finished with beautifully engraved and plated

single-piece grille and tail-panel assemblies, clear red taillight inserts, and those four metal screws that now signify what collectors call a "screw bottom" model car.

However, the biggest attraction for many AMT annual kit buyers was the treasure trove of parts for the custom and racing versions. Here, the engine option was a 4-71 blower case with a side-mounted carb, custom air cleaner, and racing headers with optional exhaust side dumps. Interior options included a six-part racing roll cage, custom bucket seats and console plate, an accessory instrument panel, and a deeply dished steering wheel. Beyond the stock wheel covers, AMT added the new-for-1964 Buick five-spoke imitation mag wheels and a racing wheel setup with an outer ring mating to an inner wheel half engraved with finned brake details.

For the body, racing additions included a large hood scoop, headlight covers, and plated racing mirrors. Custom options offered builders a large open grille assembly with separate headlight pods split by a narrow bumper and a complementary rear panel with two custom taillights, faux side exhausts, fender skirts, and rectangular spotlights.

Portions of AMT's 1964 Wildcat kit tooling were derived from the earlier 1963 Electra annual kit (including the engine and the slightly shortened chassis representing the Wildcat's 3-inch wheel-

base reduction), but the remainder was mostly new. AMT started entirely from scratch for its 1965 Wildcat kit. The company went on to produce yearly replicas of the 1966, 1969, and 1970 Wildcats. Only AMT's 1966 and 1970 kits have seen reissues in the ensuing years, thus turning the 1964 Wildcat into one of those "one-year wonders" that make kit collecting such a fascinating hobby. **FSM**

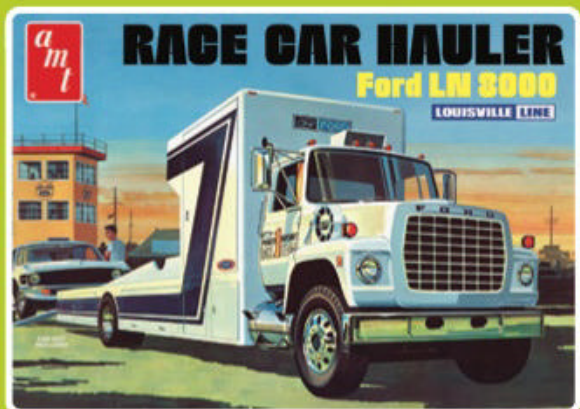
AMT 1964 BUICK WILDCAT

Kit No.: 6524-150

Introduced: 1964, never reissued

Present Value: \$115

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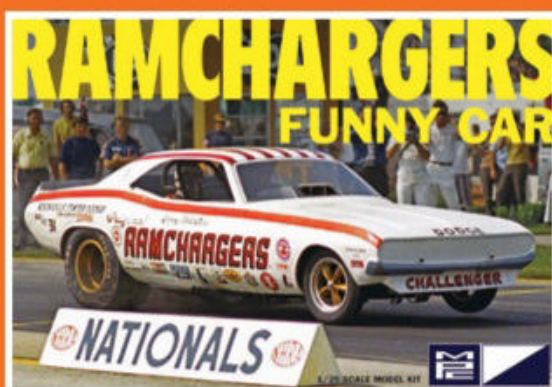
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KV-2

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Russian Heavy Tank KV-2 (Item 35375)

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★Choose between open or closed hatches. ★Assembly type tracks feature one-piece straight sections and recreate upper run "sag" in style. ★Comes with two marking options.

The massive turret depicts rough cast surfaces and weld lines.



Wehrmacht-captured vehicle
★Length: 204mm ★Width: 95mm

Painting the Russian Heavy Tank KV-2

(Tamiya Color Acrylic Mini Paints/ Tamiya Color Enamel Paints (XF))

🟢XF-58 (Olive Green) 🟡XF-4 (Yellow Green) ⬜XF-2 (Flat White)

Victorious Russian Vehicle Model Line Up - 1/35 Military Miniature Series



Russian Heavy Tank KV-1
Model 1941 Early Production (35372)

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Russian Tank T34/76
1943 Production Model (35059)



Russian T34/76 Tank "ChTZ"
Version 1943 Production (35149)



Russian Heavy Tank JS-2
Model 1944 ChKZ (35289)



Russian Tank BT-7 Model 1937
(35327)



Infantry Tank Matilda Mk.III/IV
"Red Army" (35355)



M3A1 Scout Car
(35363)