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FROM THE EDITOR

By Tim Kidwell

Summer's here, so get modeling!

Welcome to July and August, typically the height of summer outdoor recreation in the Northern Hemisphere. Grilling, baseball, the beach. But there's the other side of that coin — summer chores. Hot, sweaty, usually dirty, replete with wheelbarrows, mulch, shovels, and rakes. I propose you forget the second, not-so-fun list, and steal off to your workbenches for modeling time.

I know. I know! There will be those around you who will be disappointed, angry, or downright furious you've decided to take this time for yourself and say to heck with cutting in that new

flower bed. Your city or town might be a little unhappy about your front yard trying to trip unwary passersby and turn them into fertilizer. But that's OK. You owe this time to yourself. You have important things to do that require calm, concentration, and clean hands.

So, don't wait. Let us help you focus on finishing your armor projects, from paint to weathering to bases. *Psst!* Remember, mix and match the skills and techniques you learn from one genre and use them on another. It's summer. Explore!

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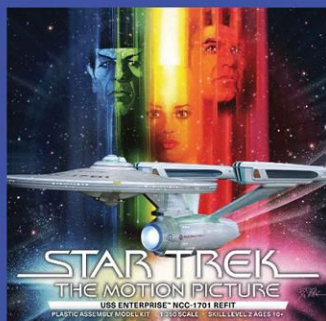
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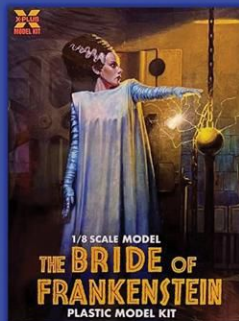
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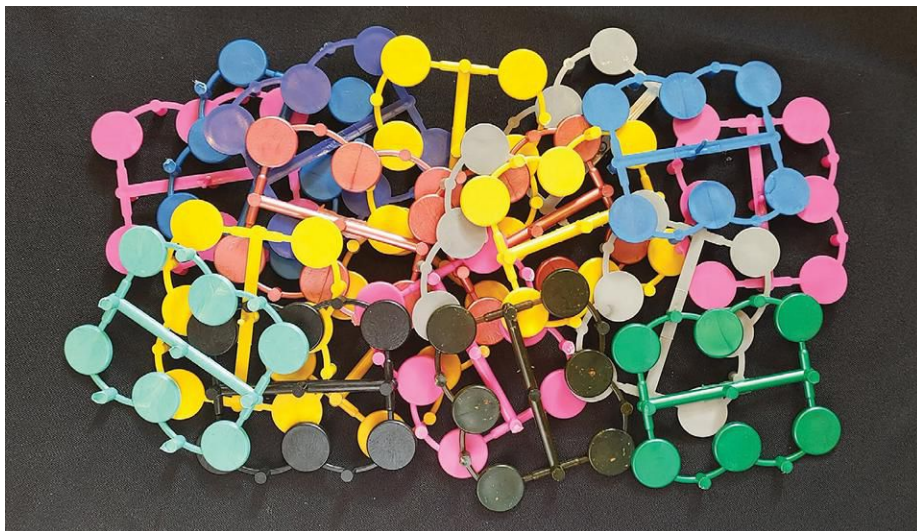
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Recycle sprues for something new

A small Minnesota company shoulders a big task

By Tim Kidwell



Replay Workshop gives new life to old plastic, including model kit sprues, perfect for wargaming bases and other tabletop game accessories that hobbyists might paint. Photo/Replay Workshop

Anyone who has built a plastic model knows that after finishing, you're left with a pile of sprues (also known as runners or parts trees). More often than not, these sprues end up in the trash where they are delivered to landfills. Most recycling operations can't recycle the type of styrene plastic used in sprues and are particular on the sorting end. Even if you were to throw sprues from a model kit into your recycling bin, they'll be rejected at the collection facility and sent to the landfill anyway.

This waste may not be top of mind for many hobbyists, but a growing awareness of plastic pollution in oceans, waterways, and landfills has some people thinking. In April 2021, Japan-based Bandai Namco Group (Bandai) started the Gunpla Recycling Project to collect sprues from its model kits and reuse the recovered material in new products called ECOPLA.

Bandai runs nearly 200 collection locations throughout Japan and hosts an event to promote its recycling initiative. In fact, Bandai has started using alternatives to plastics in some of its models, including upcycled tea leaves, eggshells, and a limestone derivative called LIMEX. Even Bandai's technology to produce multicolored parts on the same sprue was designed to minimize negative environmental effects.

The U.S. has yet to see such a concerted effort by model manufacturers to address the waste plastics that come in kits. However, Atlas Games in Duluth, Minnesota, has launched the Replay Workshop to take the first steps toward recycling plastics from hobby products and giving them a second life outside of a landfill. Owned by Michelle and John Nephew, Atlas Games has been implementing more ecologically friendly processes and materials for the past decade.

"I've always had a wide environmental streak," Michelle Nephew says. "I was a founder of our eco club in high school and haven't let John eat beef in years!"

Atlas Games has eliminated all one-time-use plastic from its latest games, replacing shrink wrap with sticker tabs and using paper bands to wrap card decks. The company pays extra in materials for paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). It reuses boxes for shipping, and when those boxes are no longer viable, Atlas Games turns them into packing material with a cardboard perforator, making packing peanuts a thing of the past for the company.

"So, Replay Workshop didn't come out of nowhere," Michelle says. "It was building for decades, actually."

John Nephew was inspired by Precious Plastic, a recycling nonprofit in the Netherlands helping with micro-recycling and making new products from old plastic.

"In terms of business strategy, it makes sense to focus on the tabletop-game field where we're already established," John says.

Initially funded as a division of Atlas Games, Replay Workshop headquarters is located in Proctor, Minnesota, in a building once used as a boxing gym. While hopeful there would be some funding help, that was far from assured at the beginning. Builders + Backers awarded Atlas Games a \$5,000 Idea Accelerator grant, which helped buy some of the hobby-grade equipment to build Replay Workshop. In 2024, it was a \$100,000 grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency that allowed the company to scale up operations to "manufacturing-level" with a new extruder delivered in March 2025.

How to recycle sprues with Replay Workshop

THERE ARE A COUPLE OF WAYS hobbyists can participate in Replay Workshop's Sprue Recycling Program. Individuals can ship sprues to the facility, or if local to Proctor, drop them off.

"We're not able to pay for shipping, for obvious reasons," Michelle Nephew says. But Atlas Games will offer a 10% discount for online orders that include a Replay Workshop item to those who do ship sprues to them.

Another option is to find a participating store in the Duluth, Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Madison, WI, areas. Those stores will collect sprues and arrange pickups with Replay Workshop. For stores outside of those areas, Atlas Games has a program for retailers who ship sprues to Replay Workshop to get free shipping on store orders. Atlas Games details the entire program on its website (atlas-games.com/sprues).



After the plastic is shredded, it can be made into dice and other products or sold to crafters for their own projects. Photo/Replay Workshop

"We've worked the most with HDPE and polypropylene (the No. 2 and No. 5 recycling symbols), which are used in a lot of consumer goods and packaging," John says. Those plastics work well for many things, but not for glue and paint, a requirement for wargaming accessories. That's why their sprues recycling program focuses on high-impact polystyrene (HIPS), the very styrene used in plastic model kits.

The recycling process is simple: the plastic is power washed and ground up in a plastic shredder. Having started with hobby-grade machines, Replay Workshop now has commercial machines, but Michelle says taking the next step to industrial size is beyond their scope.

"Right now, if someone is interested in micro-recycling, you sort of have to be vertically integrated — capable of going all the way from raw plastic waste to a finished product," John says. "That means ... collection, identifying, sorting, shredding, just to get a raw material."

While Replay Workshop focuses on its own products, it also supports other businesses with recycled plastic.

"We sell that shred to hobbyists online, on sites like etsy.com," Michelle says.

Currently, Replay Workshop offers general-interest items made from its recycled plastic, like earrings, coasters, and key chains. For hobbyists, it makes dice, bases for miniature figures, and condition markers for roleplaying games.

"Terrain tiles are in the works for release very soon," Michelle says. "We're hoping to have one or two releases each month for [Replay Workshop] this year."

The obvious goal being to build a market for the recycled products and convince retailers to carry it.

"That's the best way we can sell the recycled sprues back into the market and give them a second life."

Replay Workshop's InFUNity Tiles freeform puzzle, made from recycled plastic, is a finalist for the Origins and Green Games Guide Sustainable Production Award presented by the Game Manufacturers Association.



Photo/Replay Workshop

EXCLUSIVE CONTENT AT FINESCALE.COM



Roscoe Turner Invitational photo gallery

The Roscoe Turner Invitational in Lebanon, Indiana, continues to be a hallmark IPMS/USA competition. This year it saw nearly 600 aircraft, armor, auto, sci-fi, and figure models on the contest tables. Of course, *FineScale Modeler* was on hand to shoot video and pick the models that caught our eye and take photos of them for you to enjoy. Visit [FineScale.com/show-galleries](https://www.finescale.com/show-galleries) and plan to be there next year!



FineScale Modeler Weekly is back!

After a brief hiatus, join us as we return to finish Season 4 of *FineScale Modeler Weekly*. Don't miss opening and looking inside the latest kits, discovering (or rediscovering) tools and techniques for use at your workbench, and hanging out with the *FSM* staff as we discuss what scale-modeling news has us buzzing. Join us at [FineScale.com/videos](https://www.finescale.com/videos) for all the latest *FSMW* fun!



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Let's hear it for Going Merry!

Thank you for sharing the *One Piece* build in the May/June 2025 *FineScale Modeler* and treating it like it's "real" modeling.

I'm a 70-year-old woman who's been modeling for 20 years. Almost everything I build is glueless because of the superior engineering I've found in those kits, because of the variety and subject matter of the available kits, and because they're largely made to not need painting. (Painting is WORK!) The *One Piece* ships are amazing kits (I think I have them all), and they're fun!

Modeling is supposed to be fun, right? I build as relaxation. I like taking tiny pieces and making a coherent whole out of them. I also like building LEGO, quilting and costuming, and doing jigsaw puzzles. Sensing a theme?

Thanks! (The Meng SD aircraft, ships, and Toon Tanks are pretty cool, too.)

– SueAnne Merrill
Lakewood, CO

Ed.: Thank you so much for your thoughtful email. At FSM, we have always enjoyed modeling in all its forms, right from the very beginning. The subjects and building styles the scale-modeling universe encompasses is enormous, and in our view, it's all "real" modeling. Everyone models at the level they are comfortable with, from snap kits to superdetailing, and we all model the subjects we like.

We're traveling a lot to contests and shows this time of year, and one of the things we are gratified to hear from many attendees is how modeling clubs and contests are increasingly open to different model genres and styles of modeling than they have been in the past. It is also nice to hear that FSM has been a catalyst to help that change (shameless plug!).

I do sense a theme in your hobbies, and scale models fit right in. I agree, the super-deformed ships, aircraft, and tanks are very cool, too! We see them at contests quite a bit, sometimes in quite realistic finishes. Happy modeling and consider sharing photos of your models with us. We'd love to see them. – Tim Kidwell

Where are the reviews?

What? No Workbench Reviews in the May/June 2025 issue? Not everyone wants to go online all the time. There's something called "instant gratification."

– Eric Berg
Santa Cruz, CA

Ed.: Eric, that's the first time I think I have ever seen a print product of any sort referred to as "instant gratification." The web, now that's something different.

Here's the deal: Manufacturer release calendars do not coincide with print production calendars. That means a model we receive in January might be completed and reviewed by February, but it won't see print until May. In that time, everyone and their third cousin has either built the kit and reviewed it or read an online review of it.

In 2020, we decided we wanted Workbench Reviews to be more timely and moved them, in large part, to FineScale.com. Ever since, when space allows, we'll put them in print. – TK

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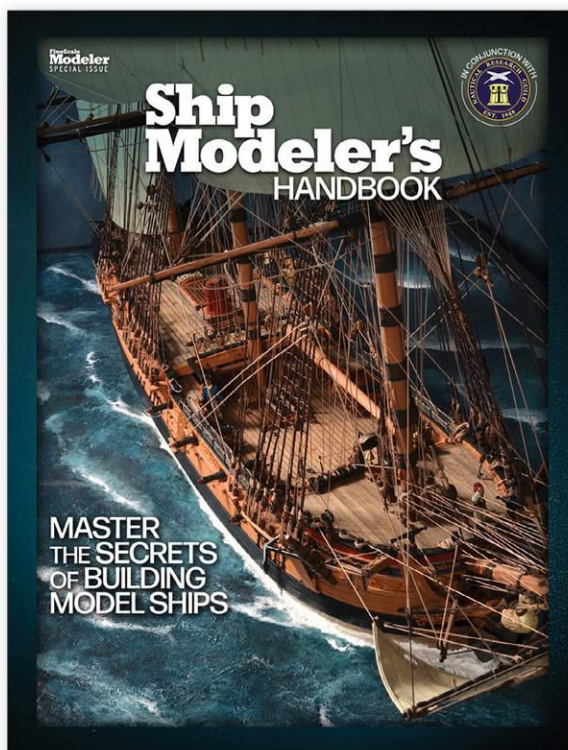
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SNAPSHOT

HOW TO MAKE SCALE-MODEL SANDBAGS

ON SCALE MODELS, sandbags can be part of a scene or an extra detail added to a vehicle. Injection-molded and resin sandbags can work, but getting them to look right for your subject can be challenging. Sometimes, the best solution is to sculpt your own with epoxy putty.

By Robert Raver



1 Mix equal parts of your two-part epoxy putty (like Aves Apoxie Sculpt), making a flattened snake shape approximately the width of the sandbags. The putty is tacky, so shape it on a hard surface, like glass, and smear a little petroleum jelly to keep it from sticking.



2 Using a ruler and a sharp hobby blade, cut the putty into equal-sized pieces appropriate for the sandbag length. Cut the top corners off each rectangle to start shaping the tops of the bags.



3 Next, with a bladed sculpting tool, define the basic shape of the tied-off end of the bag. It does not have to be too precise at this point; the final shaping will happen after the bags are placed where you want them on your model.



4 Position the bags considering how you want them to realistically sag. If you're placing more than a few, work in layers to avoid ruining the details when placing one sandbag on another. Once placed, you can further work the shape of the sandbags with a rubber shaping tool.



5 Once the first layer of bags has dried, clean them with a cotton swab coated in isopropyl alcohol to remove residual petroleum jelly. Doing this will allow the next layer of bags to stick in place and will let primer and paint to adhere without interference.



6 Repeat the process as many times as necessary. When the putty sandbags are completely dry and cleaned, you can do additional shaping with a hobby knife to sharpen details or smooth surfaces — like removing pesky fingerprints from initial sculpting! **FSM**

AIRCRAFT

1/35 SCALE

UH-60M Black Hawk No. 12135 \$64 from Academy/Model Rectifier Corp.

1/48 SCALE

Hurricane Mk.I Aces No. 2838S \$51.99 from Italeri/Model Rectifier Corp.

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P-47D-26RA Thunderbolt (advanced kit) No. 48003 \$81.99 from MiniArt.

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B-26G Marauder WWII American/France bomber No. 48323 \$99.99 from ICM.

1/72 SCALE

Fiat CR.42 CN "Falco" Night Fighter No. 1485S \$26.99 from Italeri/Model Rectifier Corp.

RF-4C/E Phantom II No. 1477S \$49.99 from Italeri/Model Rectifier Corp.

P-51D Mustang Aces No. 1484S \$28.99 from Italeri/Model Rectifier Corp.

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ARMOR

1/35 SCALE

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Stuart Mk.I "Honey" Early Prod with sun shields No. 35423 \$TBA from MiniArt.

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1/72 SCALE

German PzKpfw IV Ausf H No.13432

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FIGURES

1/35 SCALE

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1/12 SCALE

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1/24 SCALE

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1/35 SCALE

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Sunbathing
SHER

A tour de force of tools and techniques beach an M4A3

BY ROBERT RAVER

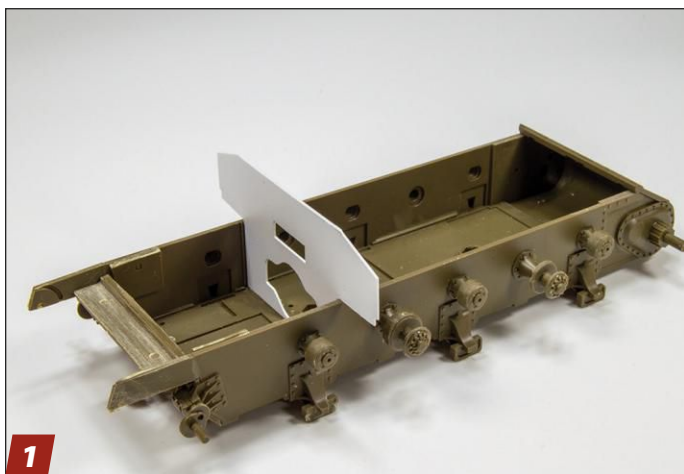
A few years ago, while I was researching details for an M4 Sherman project, I stumbled across pictures of a heavily damaged and graffitied M4 sitting on a beautiful beach. The dichotomy of this trashed weapon sitting on a pristine beach was intriguing, and the graffiti made it all the more interesting. Digging deeper, I discovered this M4 sits on Flamenco Beach on Caldera Island off the coast of Puerto Rico, left by the U.S. Navy after it stopped using the island as a location for target practice. People have painted the Sherman again and again as it slowly deteriorates to

eventually be claimed by the sea. I saved a few images, filing them away and making a note the tank would be an interesting subject for a modeling project one day.

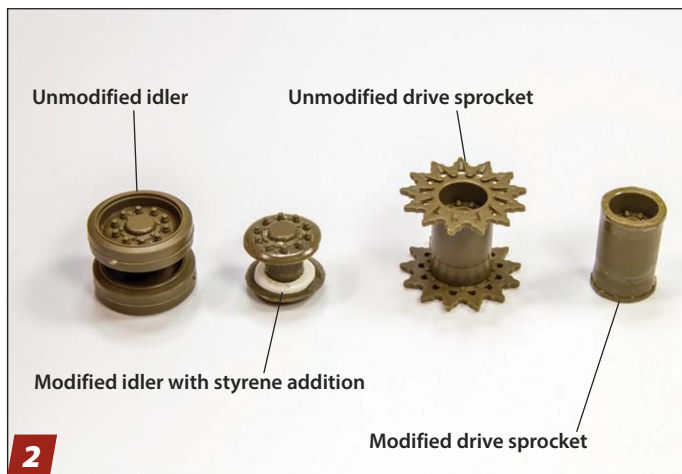
The photos of the M4 on Flamenco Beach kept calling me back. The Sherman has a 105mm gun and an HVVS suspension. I didn't have a kit like that in my stash, but I could make one from a Tamiya M4A3E8 "Easy 8" Sherman (No. 35346) and a Tamiya M4A3 Sherman 105mm howitzer (No. 35251).

I was going to have to modify a kit and use multiple textural, color, and finishing techniques to get it right. What could be more fun than that? So, I dove in!





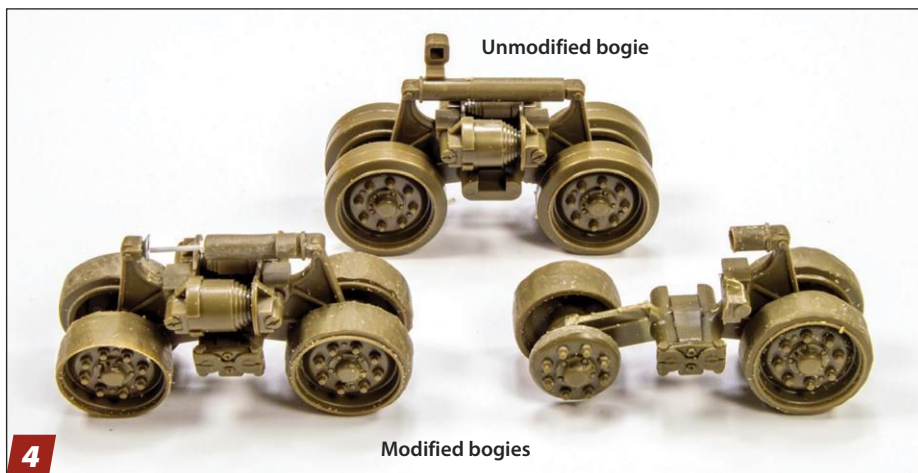
1 I started with the hull and HVVS suspension from the E8. I scratchbuilt a firewall for the engine compartment from styrene sheet. I also modified the back end of the hull a bit by removing areas not needed.



2 To replicate the serious corrosion, I used a rotary tool to grind the idler wheels. I also added a circular hub part made from styrene sheet. The drive sprockets were a simpler modification where I removed the plates that form the teeth until I was left with just a hollow drum.



3 The suspension bogie assemblies were the next items to get the major damage makeover. I cut the tires away from the wheels where the rubber was gone and only a small disc of a wheel was left. A 220-grit sanding stick ground it down further.



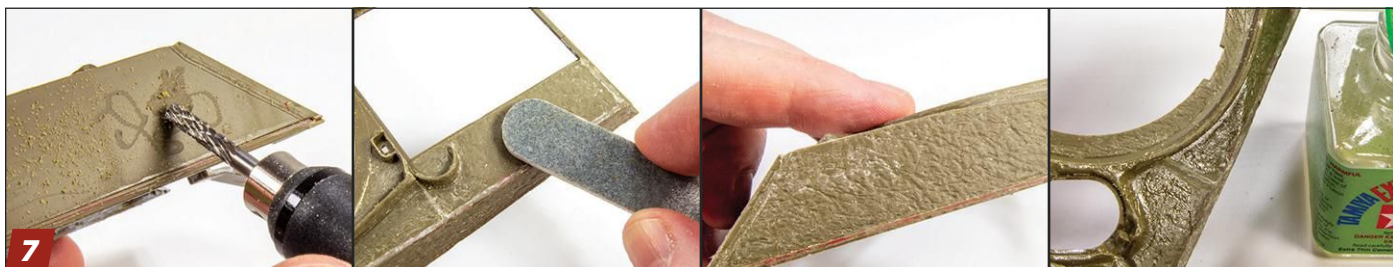
4 A bit of modification to replicate the parts of the bogies corroded away was also needed, including what was left of the shock absorbers. Here you can see the modified bogie assemblies with an out-of-the-box one built up to show the difference.

I attached the few suspension components required to the hull. The hull would be filled with sand and rusted metal. I replicated this with Vallejo Thick Mud (No. 26.812). This product has a rough texture that I thought would be good for the effect.





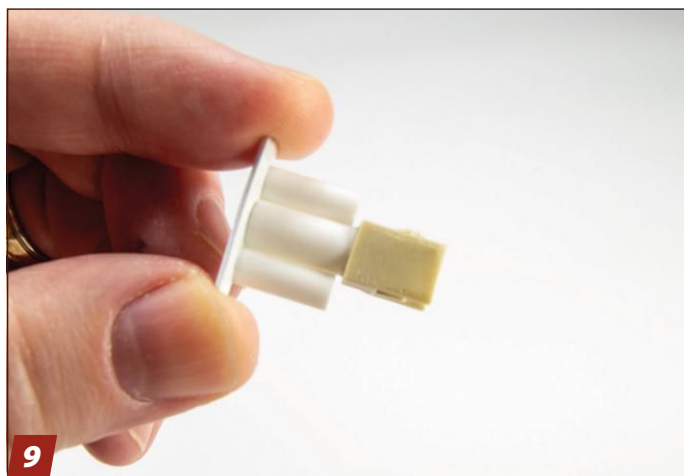
The weld seams molded on the kit hull top didn't look comparable to my references. To rework them, I first used a razor saw to cut a groove through the weld seams, **A**. I then used a Tamiya scribing tool to dig them out and leave a channel into which I could put epoxy putty, **B**. I rolled out thin snakes of epoxy putty, laid them into the channel, **C**, and sculpted a better-looking texture with a color shaping tool, **D**.



Now, it was time to address the hull texture. I started by creating random gouges all over the cast armor with my rotary tool. Then I sanded this to knock down burrs and round the edges of the gouges. The resulting texture did a good job of simulating the extreme pitting in the metal. A coat of Tamiya thin cement helped smooth things out a bit further.



I finished texturing the hull with Vallejo Thick Mud. This would serve to achieve the flaking, rusty appearance. Now, I could turn my attention to the turret.



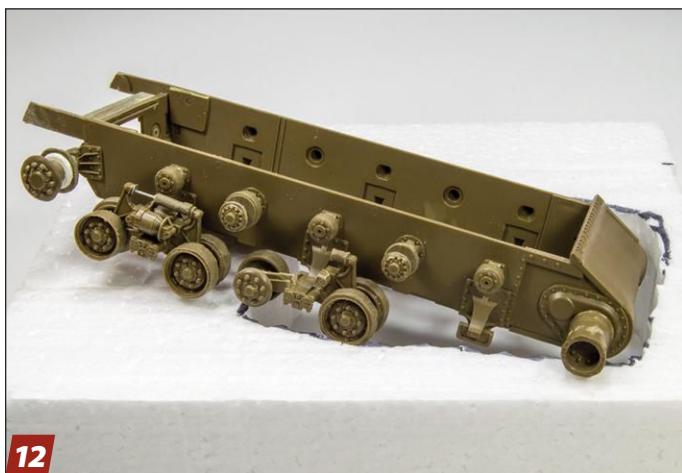
The Tamiya kit does not include a gun breach, but I could see one in the photos. However, it was heavily rusted (go figure!), so mine did not need to be very detailed. I used some resin bits from my spares box, styrene tube, and styrene sheet to make something representative.



10 I stippled Mr. Surfacer 500 to roughly texture the turret's insides, ground the vision block off the cupola, removed most of the commander's hatch, and chewed away other components or melted them with plastic cement for a deteriorated appearance.



11 With the tank modifications finished, I started on the base. Starting the base now meant I could create it and ensure I wouldn't need to make more changes to the tank to get the look I wanted. Traced the outline of the hull's bottom on a block of EPS foam.



12 I then cut and dug out the hole for the hull to fit into, adjusting it so the hull would sit at the desired height and angle.



13 I glued the foam block to a plaque and placed it on an old glass cutting board. I covered the edges of the plaque with Sculptamold to make it look like built-up sand. After drying for a day, I removed the base from the glass. The Sculptamold dries hard and doesn't damage easily.



For the sand, I brushed a coat of Mod Podge onto the Sculptamold and sprinkled sand over it. After that dried, I clad the sides of the foam with thin bamboo and applied Vallejo Desert Sand Diorama FX (No. 26.217) to coat the base and fill in the gaps under the bamboo.



15

To paint the green and yellow graffiti, first I enlarged a reference image to match 1/35 scale and carefully traced the pattern off my computer screen. I made a new drawing from the rough tracing, shading the green areas.



16

Homemade light table! I taped my drawing to an LED light and taped a section of Tamiya Masking Sticker Sheet (No. 87130) with the backing still on over it. This let me transfer the drawing to the masking sheet from which I could cut the masks.



17

After painting a base of rusty colors, I coated the whole model with hairspray for the chipping to come. (Remember, for hairspray chipping to work, use acrylic paint over it.) Then I masked everything and painted the sides yellow acrylic before applying the graffiti masks.



18

I airbrushed green acrylic paint on the sides and proceeded to use Tamiya masking tape, an airbrush, and acrylic paint to go around the rest of the hull and turret to complete the graffiti.



19

Instead of a toothbrush, I turned to chunks of a Scotch Brite pad wet with water for chipping. Afterward, I went over the whole model with Vallejo Dark Grey (No. 76.517) and Dark Rust (No. 76.507) washes to enhance the texture and create a rusty coating over the graffiti.



20

With the initial painting complete, I set the hull into the foam base and filled the space around it with Crayola Model Magic, a soft, spongy, clay-like material meant for kids (so it's perfect for me!) that dries to a hard, rubbery consistency.



To get a sandy surface around the M4, I used Vallejo Desert Sand Diorama FX and spread it with a color shaper. This smooths out the product and looks more like beach sand in 1/35 scale.



To smooth it out even further, I mixed Vallejo Matt Gel Base (No. 26.216) with a small amount of Vallejo Model Color German Beige (No. 70.821) and applied it with a color shaper.



I masked the base's bamboo surround and painted the sand a grayer tone based on my references.



With the tank attached to the base, I prepped a wet palette of various Vallejo acrylics in multiple yellow, orange, and red colors to paint rust. I used a sponge to apply these working from dark to light. The goal was to reinforce shadows and highlights and create a textured appearance.



I used Wilder Aqualine colors Dark Track Rust, White Winter Camo, and Common Dust (all out of production; you can achieve similar effects with enamel products) to reinforce the shadows and add the effect of blown sand and bird droppings on the hull according to my references.



I dammed the "seaward" end of the base with styrene sheet held in place with masking tape and sealed the corners and edges with acrylic gloss medium gel. I mixed a small amount of Ammo Streaking Grime for DAK (No. A.MIG-1201) enamel into Unreal Details Magic Water.



27

Magic Water is a thin, two-part resin, and it is important to precisely follow the directions. It took a couple of pours to build up the water on the front and another pour with the turret off to get water inside. I built up the waves with acrylic gel medium. Woodlands Scenics Snow (No. SN140) and white paint on the wave edges created the foam.



FINAL THOUGHTS

A FEW FINISHING TOUCHES — seaweed made from Scotch Brite pad, streaking — this project was finished. The Flamenco Beach Sherman stands out in my display case as something unique among shelves full of military hardware and figures. I had a lot of fun re-creating the vehicle in this state matching my references. The serious state of deterioration and the graffiti presented challenges I might not have otherwise attempted without those photos. If you have a saved photo that you thought would be cool to one day replicate in scale, today could be the day to make it happen. **FSM**

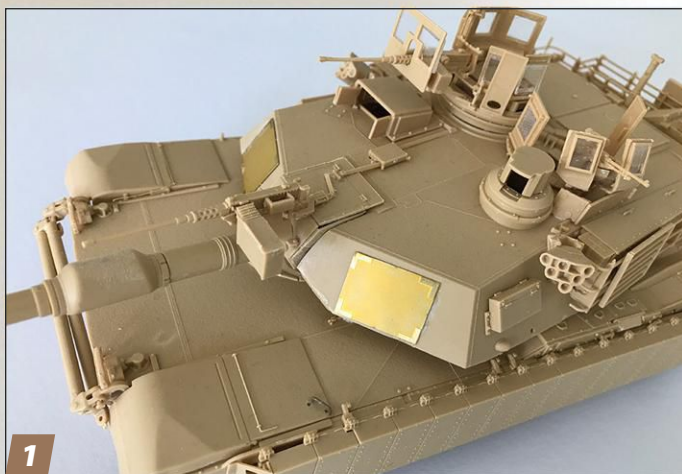


Finish a concrete-jungle **ABRAMS**

Build and paint a 1/35 scale Academy M1A2 TUSK II fast

BY RAÚL CORRAL





1 Academy's M1A2 kit looks good when finished and ready for painting. Of course, Abrams experts can find things to improve, but that wasn't my intention. I want this MBT on my shelves, desperately. Time to get painting!



2 After masking the bullet-proof glass on the turret, I started with the main 120mm gun. I painted it Tamiya Japanese Army Green (No. XF-13) and used the lighter NATO Green (No. XF-67) to vary the color and add interest.



3 I masked the gun with metal foil and tape before base-coating the turret and hull Vallejo Model Color Chocolate Brown (No. 70.872). While that dried, I went hunting for the perfect main color for the Abrams yellow sand. I found it on the FSM Forum (forum.finescale.com).



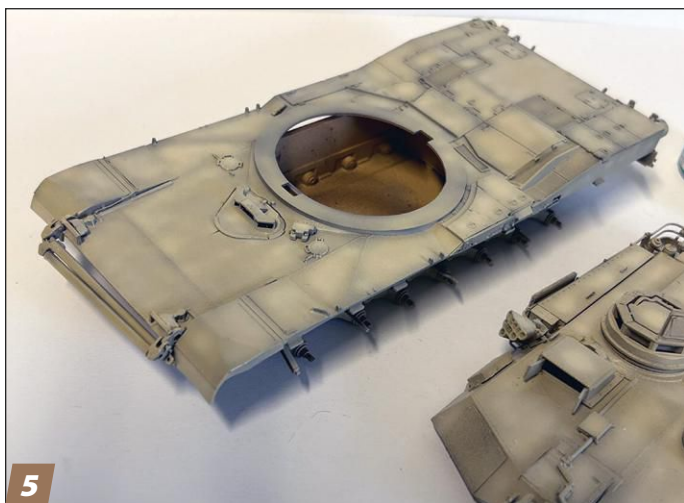
4 In 2004, a post by user "HeavyArty" said Model Master Sand FS33531 was a "perfect match" for sand CARC paint. I found Hobby Color Yellow FS33531 (No. H313), thinned it with Tamiya Thinner (No. X-20A), and lightly airbrushed it, letting some of the brown base show through.

The U.S. main battle tank (MBT) looks cool in its standard sand color, and few tanks can stack up a resume as impressive as the Abrams. A marvel of military engineering and considered by many experts to be the most effective MBT in modern times, the U.S. Army and Marine Corps operate 4,400 M1s according to Army.mil, including numerous variants for specialized uses. And I've always wanted an Abrams in my scale-model armor collection.

The idea was to build an Abrams quickly, without a lot of fussing around. My research pointed toward the Academy 1/35 scale U.S. Army M1A2 TUSK II (No. 13298) as the best quality-to-price compromise. It didn't hurt that it came with the Tank Urban Survival Kit, depicting a series of improvements to allow the Abrams to fight better in urban environments. The imposing turret with protection glass and panels around the commander and loader's hatches and the three machine guns make it even more threatening.

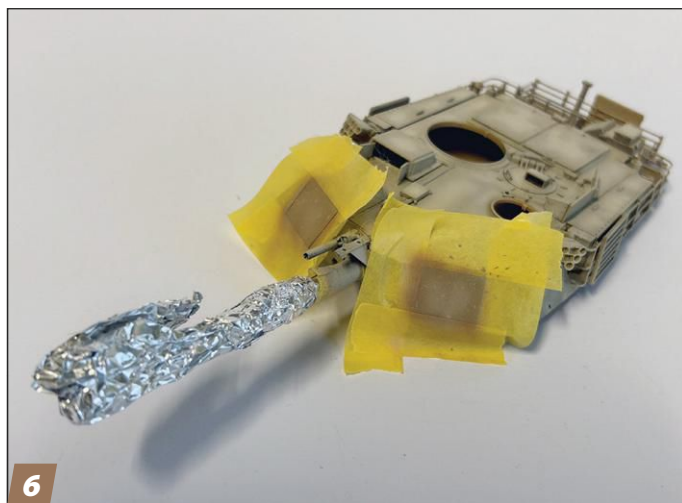
Searching for reference photos on the internet, I found many interesting possibilities for my M1A2. What really attracted my attention was a sandy yellow Abrams with an all-green M256 120mm gun (a licensed-built, German-designed Rheinmetall Rh-120 L44). I modeled it on my Abrams and left off a unit emblem. Rather than building a M1A2 TUSK SEP in "that unit and that place in that year," I went for having an Abrams my way.





5

To post-shade, I mixed a few drops of Tamiya Flat White (No. XF-2) with the Hobby Color Yellow and airbrushed it on panel centers. It provides a good contrast with the darker yellow and shading near panel lines and edges from the brown underneath.



6

I attached the combat identification panels (CIPs) to the turret, masked around them, and painted them Hobby Color Brown (No. H310). A few drops of flat white added to the brown allowed me to post-shade the CIPs on the turret front.



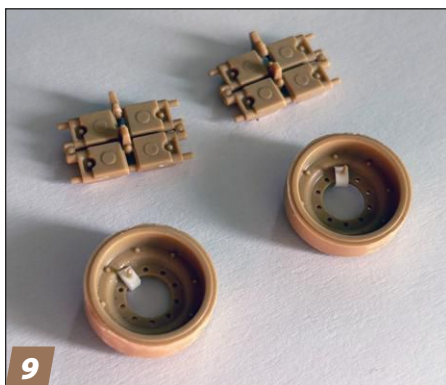
7

Masks off! The hull, turret, and explosive reactive armor (ERA) for the sides have been painted. The visual interest is easy to achieve by pre-shading with brown and post-shading with lightened yellow. And the contrast with the green, 120mm gun is striking.



8

For the wheels, follow the same steps and colors as with the hull and turret: brown base coat, yellow, lightened yellow. I hand-painted the rubber tires with Hobby Color Tire Black (No. H077). I used a wooden toothpick to scrape off errant black paint on the wheels.



9

No, I'm not changing my mind about upping the detail. However, I did make a mount from plastic sheet for the spare wheels on the turret. I modified two wheels, but only used one on the finished model.



10

I painted two jerry cans Tamiya NATO Green (No. XF-67) and weathered them slightly with Vallejo Game Color Wash Black (No. 73.201). For the turret straps, I painted standard copy paper Revell Mouse Grey (No. 32147) enamel, cut strips, and white-glued them in place.



11

The machine guns were all brush-painted with an 8:2 mixture of Tamiya Flat Black (No. XF-1) and Chrome Silver (No. X-11). The ammo boxes were painted Hobby Color Yellow and Tamiya NATO Green. Ammo Acrylic Brown Wash for Sand (No. A.MIG-0707) and Vallejo Game Color Wash Black (No. 73.201) delineated details. The metal parts were dry-brushed after final assembly with Revell Metallic Silver enamel (No. 32190).



12

To keep the weathering "quick and dirty," I opted to use Ammo Earth Natural Effects (No. A.MIG-1403). I applied it to the wheels, hull, skirts, and turret, picking out panel lines, bolts, and other salient details. Excess wash was removed with cotton swabs, and then I used the dirty swabs to apply a mud effect over the hull and turret.



13

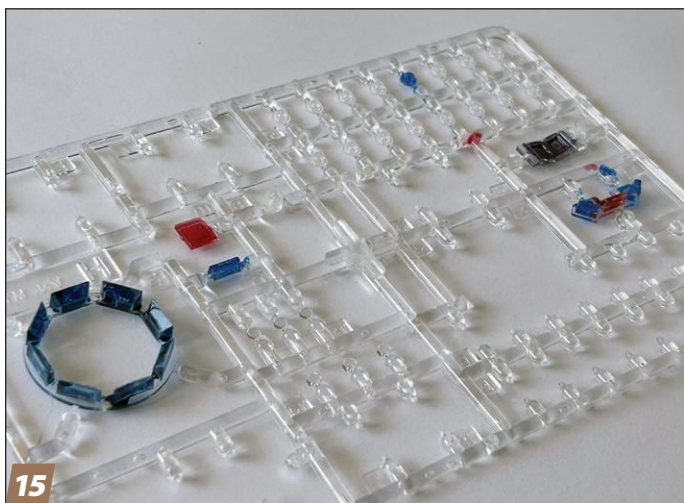
A thin wash of Revell Flat Black enamel (No. 32108) and Humbrol Enamel Thinner was applied to specific areas like the engine grilles and turret to darken shadows. The more I used the Earth Nature Effects, the more I liked it. My homemade mixing days might be over!



14

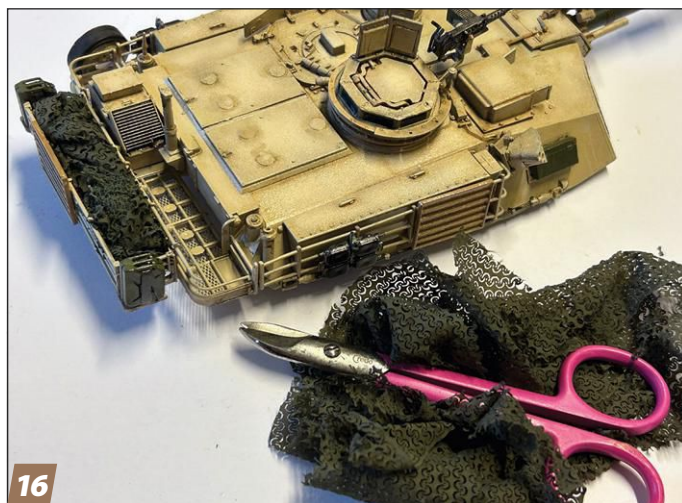


Applying dirt with a used cotton swab can be very effective. And if you're not happy with the result, simply apply more Earth Nature Effects and clean up the excess with a new swab. Then use that dirty swab to place more dirt somewhere else.



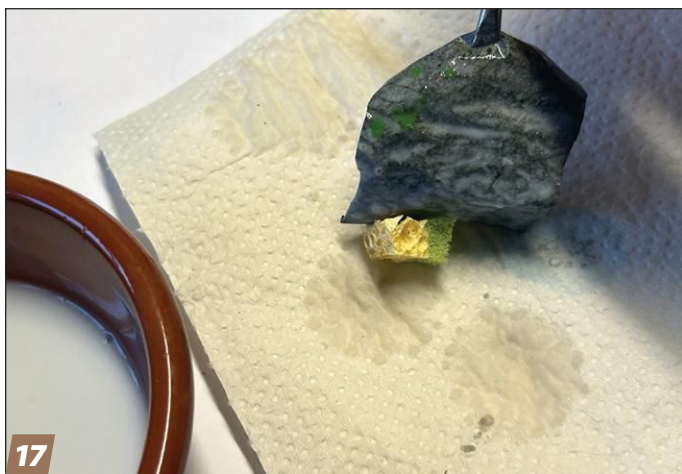
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All clear parts for the optics were hand-painted while still on the sprue with Revell Clear Red (No. 32731) and Clear Blue (No. 32752) enamel. I also mixed the two for a not-quite violet color and then let it all dry.



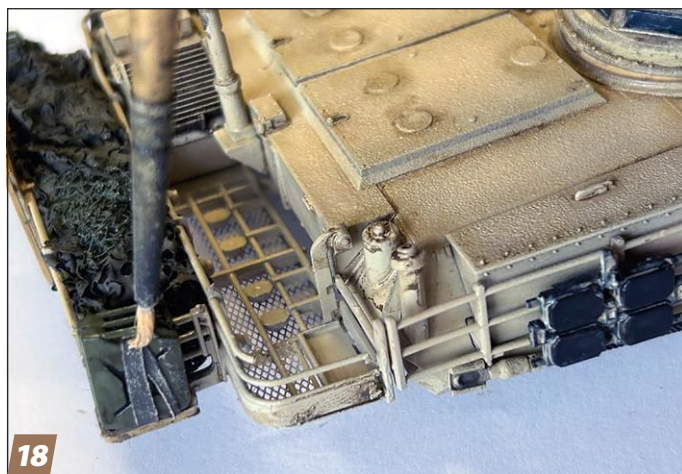
16

I glued the optics with Revell Contacta Clear (No. 39609) and added life to the turret baskets with a camo net made from AK Interactive Mimetic Net Type 1 (No. AK8066). I applied white glue thinned with water over the net to stiffen it and attach it to the baskets.



17

For the tarp on the small basket, I soaked tissue gift wrap previously painted with Revell Dark Green (No. 32168) enamel in a thin mix of white glue and water. While the tissue was soft and pliable, I put a bit of sponge in the basket for volume and spread the tarp over it.



18

After applying decals and sealing them with a flat clear coat, I mixed Revell Flat White (No. 32105) and Flat Sand (No. 32116) enamels in an 8:2 ratio and dry-brushed spots I thought needed to catch light, like my homemade straps on the jerry cans and other raised details.



19

After a final coat of VMS Varnish HD Top Coats Mat (No. VMS-AX05M) I filled the remaining turret baskets with paper boxes from my spares.



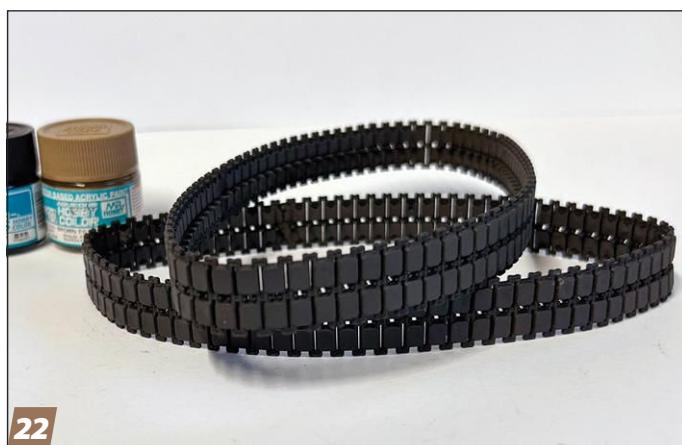
20

For the final touch, I turned to Ammo Dark Earth Modeling Pigment (No. A.MIG-3007) and Pigment Fixer (A.MIG-3000). I applied the pigment with a cotton swab around the side skirts and focused on the wheels and inside the wheels. A few drops of fixer kept the dirt in place.



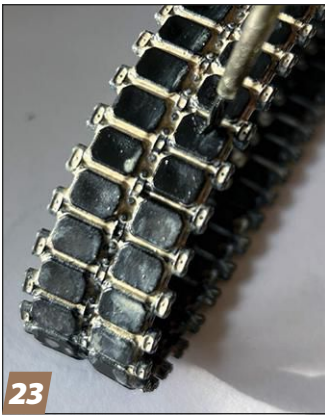
21

I used the same process to give the exhaust a suitably sooty appearance. However, this time I used the black pigment from a Revell Weathering Set (No. 39066).



22

My quick and dirty solution for the vinyl tracks was to first airbrush them with a 8:2 mix of Hobby Color Flat Black (No. H012) and Brown.



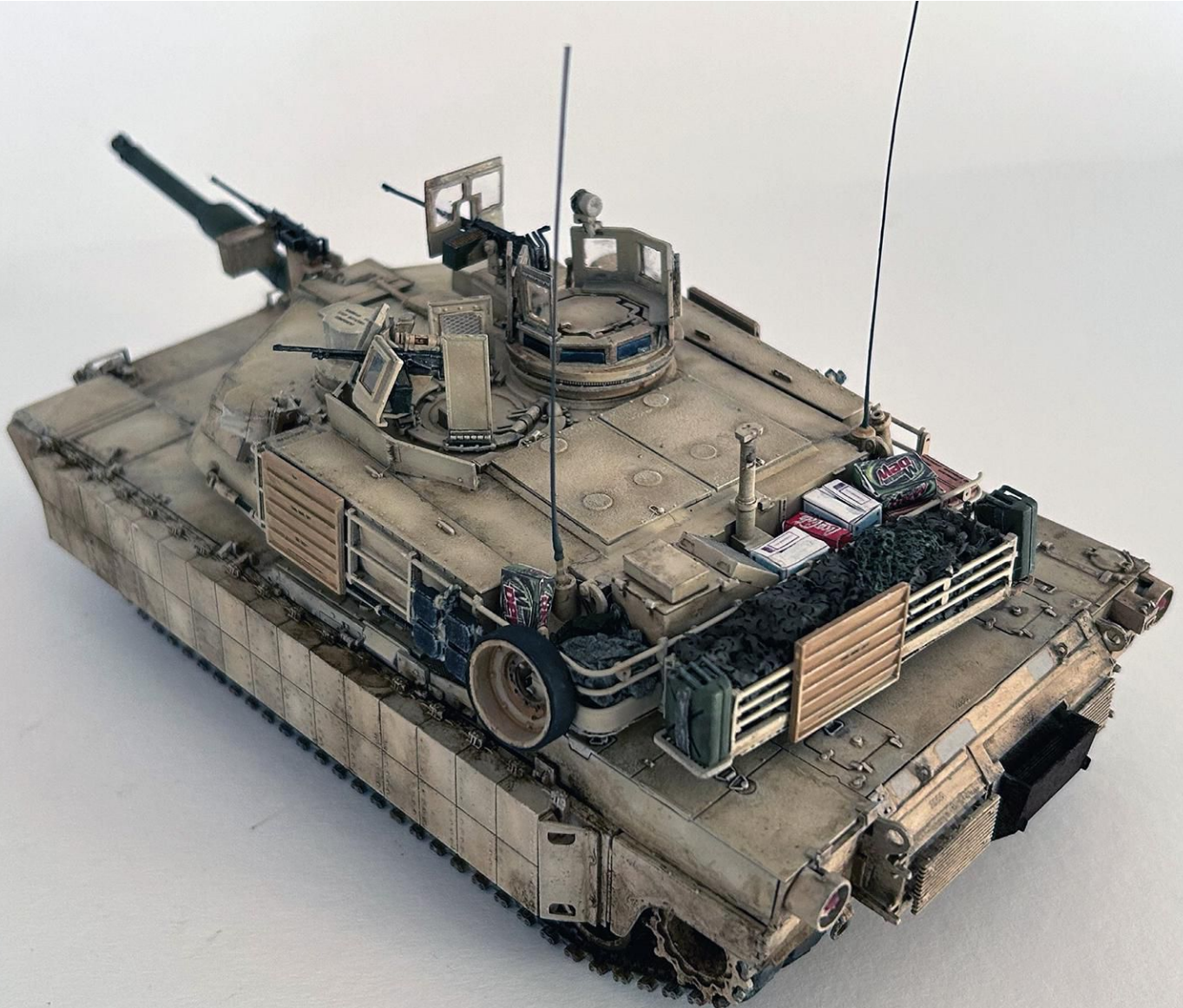
23

After the paint had dried, I brushed thinned AK Interactive Rainmarks for NATO Tanks (No. AK074) thinned with Odorless Thinner (No. AK049). When dry, it provided a convincing effect of dirt accumulated in the treads.



24

Last, I dry-brushed the rubber pads on the tracks with Revell Mouse Grey enamel. Then they were ready to put on the Abrams, and I was ready to assemble all the various subassemblies.



FINAL THOUGHTS

WITH MY M1A2 TUSK II TOGETHER, I made antennas from stretched sprue and painted them flat black. Now, the model was ready for inspection. Eager as I was to have an Abrams in my collection, my whole agenda was to build one and not sweat every little detail and build it quickly. When you want to superdetail, do it! But sometimes quick and dirty is just the thing. **FSM**



Kaiju killer

Model the *Shinden* from *Godzilla Minus One* in 1/48 scale

BY JIM JAMES

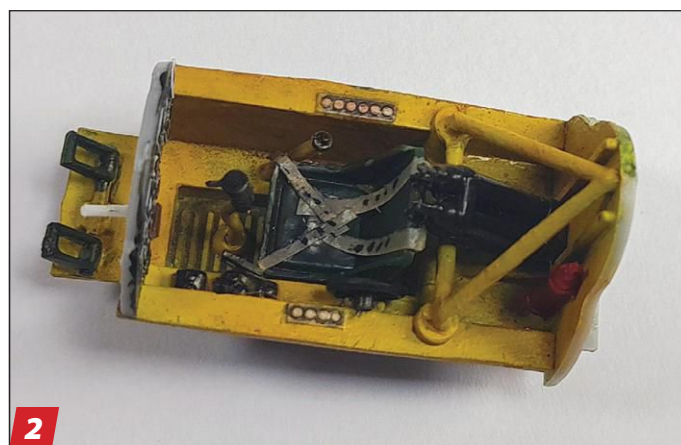
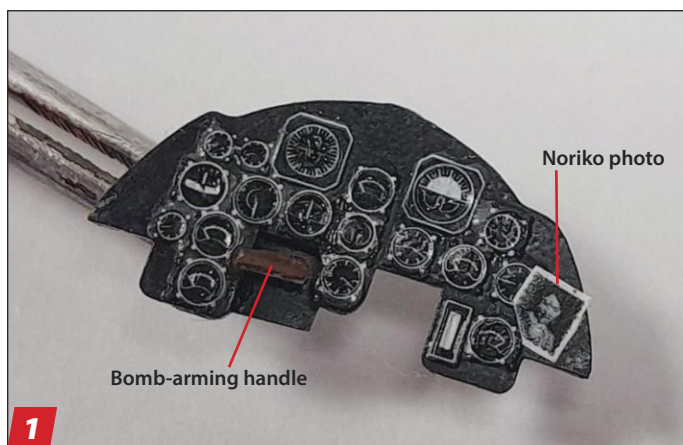
The *Godzilla Minus One* hero Koichi Shikishima flies an experimental aircraft to defeat the enormous *kaiju* (“strange beast” in Japanese). That aircraft, a Kyushu J7W1 *Shinden* (Magnificent Lightning), was developed late during World War II with two prototypes but didn’t enter production before the end of the war. Toho Studios built a 1/1 replica of the *Shinden* for the movie (which was excellent), and

Hasegawa re-released its 1996 1/48 scale *Shinden* kit with new decals (No. 52739) in conjunction with the studio. Hasegawa made an effort to customize the kit to match the film’s aircraft, but there are a few extra modifications that can be made for an even closer match to the movie fighter.

Although an old kit, the *Shinden* is well-molded with an acceptable amount of detail. The raised panel lines are light and should not be a negative for most

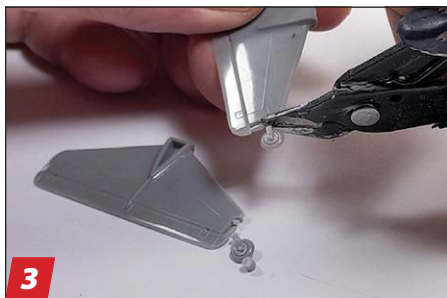
modelers. The kit does not include a seated pilot (or a scale Godzilla!), but it does include a standing figure. I wanted to display the model on the ground with Shikishima and determined that a little sculpting and painting could produce a close match.

For the *Shinden*’s movie details, I watched *Godzilla Minus One* and took screen captures for references. There are worse ways to spend time researching than watching a movie!



I made two film-accurate modifications to the instrument panel. For the bomb-arming handle, I attached a small piece of styrene sheet behind the lower left opening for a panel. The handle was made from styrene rod and sheet and fitted to a hole drilled in the center of the backing panel. A printed screen cap of the movie's heroine, Noriko, was glued to the panel's right side.

I painted the cockpit tub chrome yellow and detailed with silver, flat black, and flat red. Green and brown pastels provided weathering. After painting the seat Mr. Color IJN Green Nakajima (No. C015), I made simple seat belts from masking tape painted gray and silver. The bronze handle to the front left of the seat is to activate the ejector seat added by the film's mechanic, Tachibana.



The kit instructions detail two "Godzilla" modifications: removing the outrigger wheels and two guns. Yeah, they're kind of important, but the movie plane didn't have those wheels, so snip, snip, there they go.



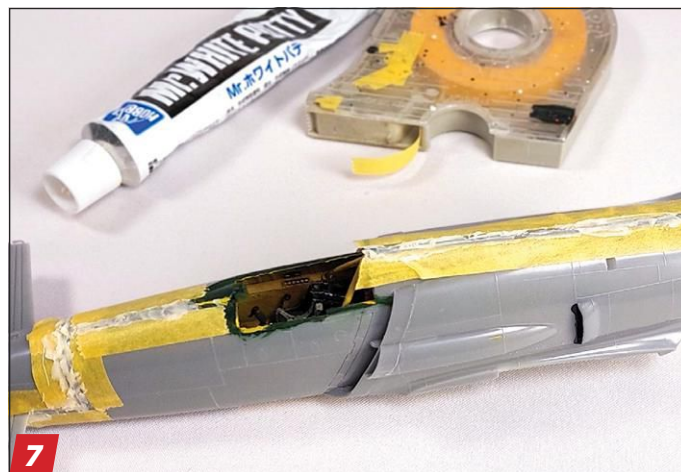
To fit all the bomb explosives in the nose, Tachibana suggests removing the two starboard nose guns. I ground out both gun ports on the starboard side with a rotary tool and filled the hole for the rear gun with modeling putty. Then I blocked the fuselage intakes with styrene sheet, painted the inside surfaces black, placed the cockpit, and closed the fuselage.



I poured 1½ grams of Deluxe Materials Liquid Gravity (No. BD38) into the nose through the opening in the upper fuselage. Test-fitting the part with the nose guns showed the Liquid Gravity wouldn't interfere with it, and I locked it down with a thinned mix of white glue and water. Make sure to keep the nose pointing down until the white glue dries.

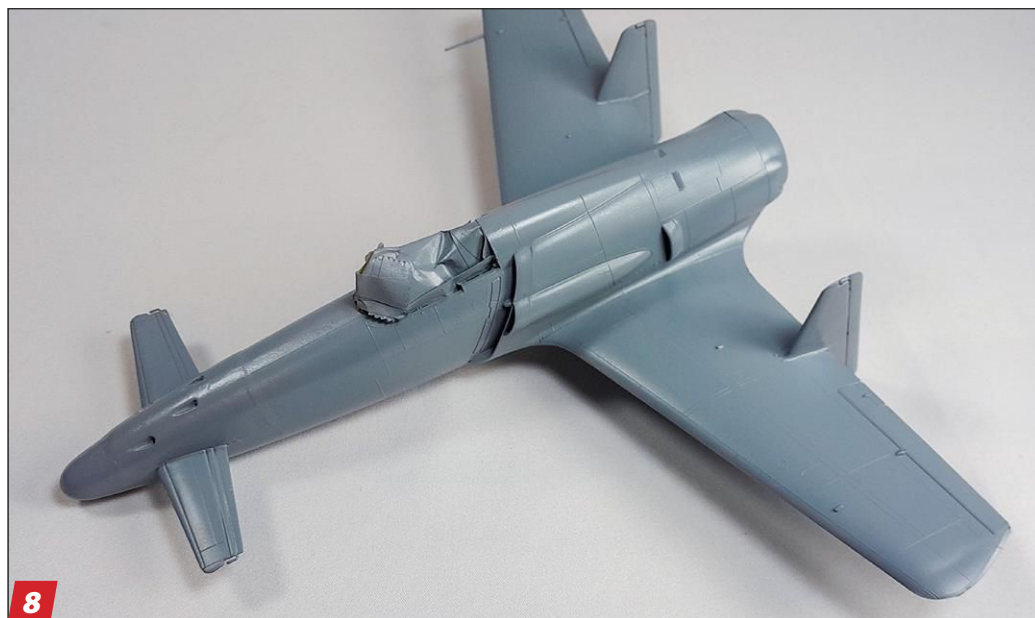


When the white glue was dry, I test-fitted the nose panel again, trimmed excess weight and secured the pellets with superglue. When everything was dry, I glued the canard section in place.

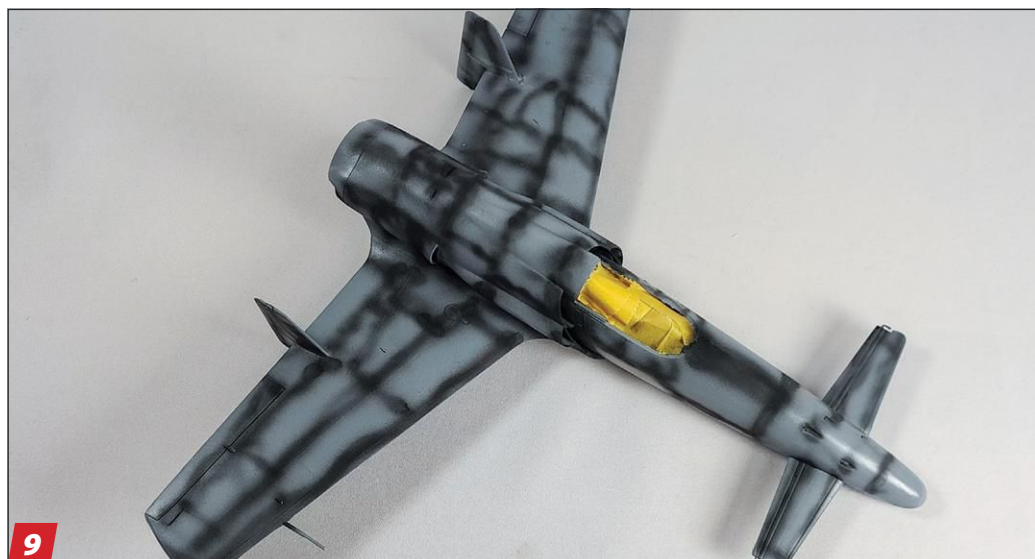


Using a tip from an old *FineScale Modeler* issue, I taped alongside all fuselage seams and applied Mr. White Putty (No. P118). The tape minimizes the area to be sanded and preserves the raised panel lines. When the putty was dry, I corrected the seams with a sanding stick and removed the tape. I added the intake rims to the rear fuselage.

Just a little filler and light sanding at the leading and trailing edges and around the fins finished the wings. I masked the cockpit and positioned the engine cowl (but did not glue it in place) before spraying the model with gray enamel primer. At this point, a few minor gaps became apparent, which I filled and sanded before another light application of primer.

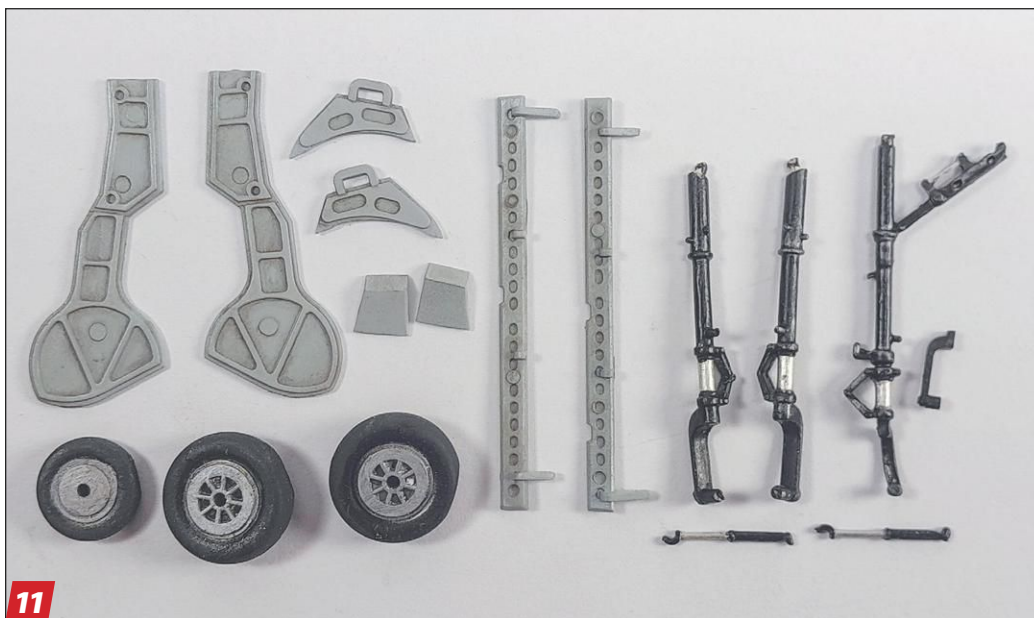


I pre-shaded both upper and lower surfaces with Tamiya Flat Black (No. XF-01), tracing along the raised panel lines with my airbrush.



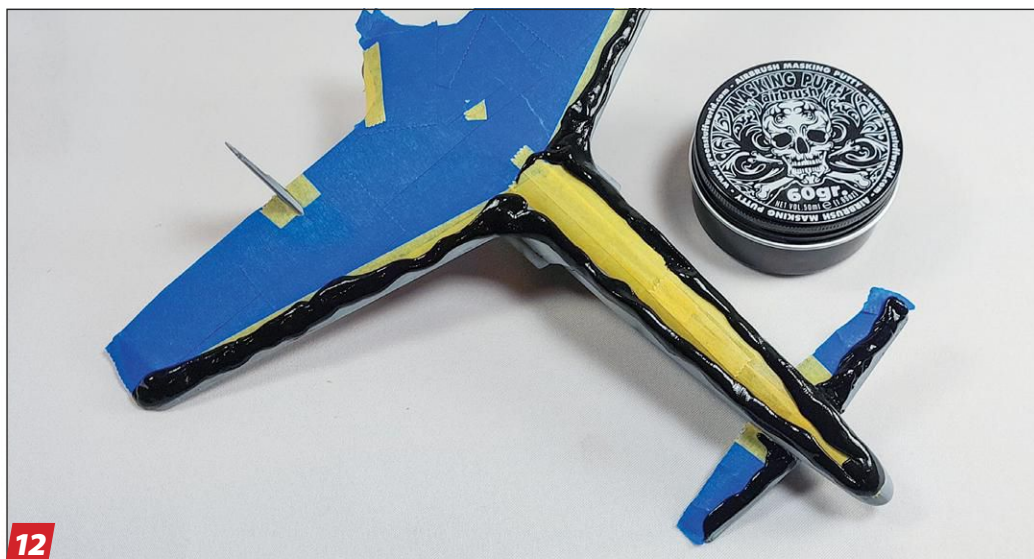
The *Shinden's* underside, landing-gear bays, and bay doors were airbrushed Mr. Color IJN Gray Mitsubishi (No. C035).





11

While I was thinking about the landing gear, I sanded the seam lines on a set of Scale Aircraft Conversions Kyushu *Shinden* metal landing gears (No. 48147) and painted them Vallejo Gunmetal Grey (No. 70.863) and dry-brushed on Revell Aqua Aluminum (No. 99) to pop details. I scraped the metal oleos with a knife for a shiny, realistic finish. I sanded a flat surface on each tire before painting the hubs aluminum and the tires NATO black. I did not glue the wheels in place at this time.



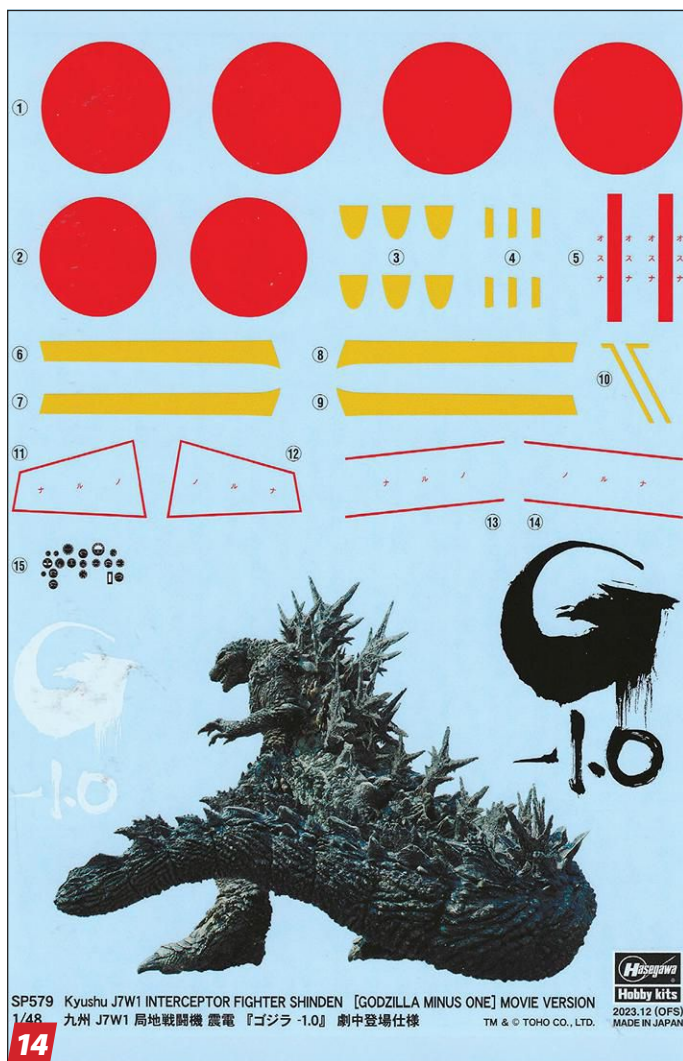
12

I masked the underside with tape and Green Stuff Airbrush Masking Putty for the irregular, wavy demarcation line between the upper and lower paint colors.



13

An ASK masking set protected the cockpit glass, and I airbrushed all the upper surfaces IJN Green Nakajima. A length of stretched sprue was shaped and superglued to the inside of the central canopy section to model a handle.



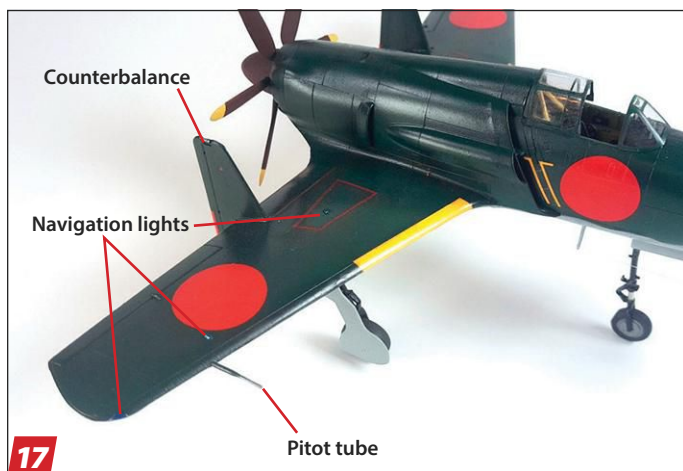
The wing decals (nos. 11, 12, 13, and 14) include a fair amount of clear film. Even over semigloss clear, these decals silvered and reacted adversely to Micro Sol. I replaced them with red stripes from my spares. The yellow wing decals didn't fit well, so I painted the leading edges Revel Aqua Yellow (No. 15).



I painted the prop tips yellow, masked them to match the decals, and painted the rest of the blades Tamiya Hull Red (No. XF-9) — a close match for the color call for in the instructions. I removed the cowl, painted the engine gunmetal with dry-brushed aluminum to pick out details. After assembling the prop and shaft, I glued the cowl in place.



Shikishima's *Shinden* has a targeting device located in the forward cockpit, but it's poorly represented in the kit. I sanded a semi-circular slot in the part, punched and glued a 1/8-inch clear styrene disc to the part, and detailed it with a custom decal. I also added a few greeblies to the forward cockpit for details seen in the movie.



I painted remaining details — pitot tube, guns, and fin and canard counterbalances — before adding the port gun barrel. I dusted the wheel wells with black pastels. The navigation lights were painted silver and then topped with a dot of Tamiya Clear Red (No. X-27) for the port side and Clear Blue (No. X-23) for the starboard side.



I assembled the landing gear but didn't glue the wheels to the legs. After gluing the gear doors on, I positioned the legs and superglued them. I turned the wheels so the flat spot matched the ground. Then a modeling moment of truth — did I put enough weight in the nose? Glad to report, the model was nose-heavy.



19

I glued the forward and rear sections of the canopy with Clear Gorilla Glue, but the center section didn't fit well. I found a set of Clear-Vax vacuum-formed canopies for the *Shinden*. I reinforced the part with painter's tape and cut the central section out with a razor saw and sharp hobby knife. I cleaned up the edges, added a handle, masked, painted, and glued.



20

The last step was to glue the front antenna mast onto the nose and run fine string between it and the mast on the *Shinden*'s belly. Waiting until the end meant not snapping it off during handling earlier in the build. Always endeavor to avoid frustration.



21

The kit figure is typical of a Japanese pilot uniform. To model Shikishima as seen in the movie, I used a grinding bit and a rotary tool to remove most of the bulky flight suit, the harness, and the helmet. I found colors comparable to those seen in the film and relied on a wash of Tamiya Smoke (No. X-19) to bring out details.



22

To simulate a plain gravel surface, I glued a sheet of 120-grit sandpaper to a painted, wooden plaque, masked the edges and airbrushed the sandpaper shades of gray, and dusted it with earthy pastel colors. A few wisps of greenery simulate weeds. The wheel chocks and boarding ladder came from the Zoukei-Mura *Shinden* Sortie Preparation Set (No. 32447). Godzilla doesn't stand a chance! **FSM**



DOUG WEBB
SANFORD, FLORIDA

Doug built his Hobby Boss 1/48 scale F-111D/E out of the box, except for the nose art, an aftermarket throwback to the B-17 era. He finished the aircraft with AK Interactive Real Colors lacquers and Flory washes.

► **RYAN YOUNG**
CALGARY, ALBERTA, CANADA

Ryan added largely airbrushed Tamiya 1/35 scale late-war German infantry figures with hand-painted details to his AFV Club 1/35 scale SdKfz 251/22 Pakwagen scene. He painted the tank with Tamiya acrylics and added post-shading and chipping effects after airbrushing on the camouflage. Ryan used Archer dry transfers for markings. He made the base from insulation foam and styrene sheet topped with AK Interactive groundwork products and added Green Stuff World foliage to the tree made from a real branch. Ryan added a lot of stowage to depict a 6th Panzer Division vehicle in spring 1945.



◀ **JÁNOS VELICS**
SZOMBATHELY, HUNGARY

Because of the hard-to-find and unique subject, János scratchbuilt his 1/75 scale model of the first steam-propelled vehicle, the *Fardier à Vapeur* designed in 1769 by Nicolas Joseph Cugnot. János began the build trying to use original materials, construction, and technologies, so the boiler is made of copper sheet. He painted the copper parts with a thin, dark brown and lightly wiped the surface when it was partially dry to create the patina. He made the chassis from hardwood with tongue-and-groove joints. János fashioned the wheels from wood and the iron parts from metal and plastic.



◀ **JOSEPH SCHAEFFER**
SHIPPENSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

Joseph built a Bandai 1/72 scale *Star Wars: Return of the Jedi* B-wing. He lightly weathered the Rebel assault fighter and paid special attention to cockpit details under the canopy. It looks great!



▲ **BRIAN JACOBS**
KELAYRES, PENNSYLVANIA

Built straight from the box, Brian made a Tamiya 1/48 scale M4 Sherman Early Production kit. He sprayed Tamiya lacquers and an Iwata airbrush for the camouflage. He made masks enlarged from the kit diagrams and detail painted with Tamiya acrylics.



◀ **RICK SCHAD**
WARWICK, RHODE ISLAND

Rick's 27th build of 2024 was this Tamiya 1/32 scale A6M2b Zeke. The model took him over 100 hours to finish, most of which was spent on painting and weathering. "My client is thrilled, which makes it all worth it!" Rick said.



▲ **MATT MINNICHOFFER LINDSTROM, MINNESOTA**
This 1/8 scale model of the 1917 *Excelsior* board track racer attracted a lot of attention. Matt 3D-modeled and scratchbuilt the bike from photo references, designed the decals, had them professionally printed, and painted the bike with colors from Scale Finishes and Vallejo.

► **STEVE SHAFFER HASTINGS, MINNESOTA**
Steve modeled the German Me 163B *Komet* captured by the British and used for testing from 1945 to 1947. He detailed the 1/32 scale Meng kit with Eduard photo-etched metal, painted with MRP lacquer, and based it on a wooden plaque he bought from an art supply store.



◀ **ED ST. DENIS ROCHESTER, MINNESOTA**
Ed added styrene-rod guideposts to the rear hull of his 3D-printed 1/72 scale U.S. T1E1 light tank. He painted the interwar prototype with acrylics and enamels. Black wash and pigments bring out details.



◀ **HOWARD QUEDNAU**
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

Howard completed an original Aurora 1/87 scale *Wanderer* whaleship from 1966 and put it on a base to show the last of the great whalers at work. He arranged the sails to look closer to the prototype and painted the model with Tamiya acrylics and artist oils. Of course, Howard applied plenty of weathering with oil washes and pigments. For the base, he made the near-freezing sea from Woodland Scenics Water and modeled the pack ice with foam-core.

▶ **ANDREW HILL**
COTTAGE GROVE, MINNESOTA

Andrew always shows up with the most unusual — and often attention-grabbing — models. This year it's his *Ecto-7* fashioned from a Polar Lights 1/32 scale *Star Trek Galileo* shuttle and *Ghostbusters Ecto-1* 3D-printed parts downloaded from the internet. "I used various parts of the *Gambody Ecto-1* scaled to look correct on the *Galileo*, Andrew said. He painted the body Tamiya White lacquer from the can and airbrushed the rest with acrylics and Alclad II metallic lacquers.



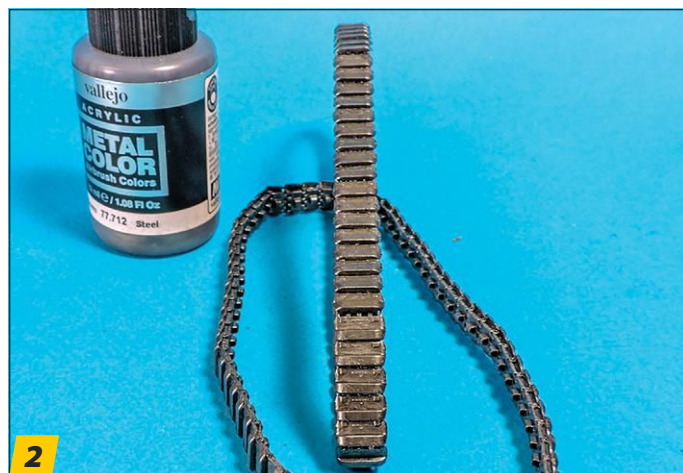
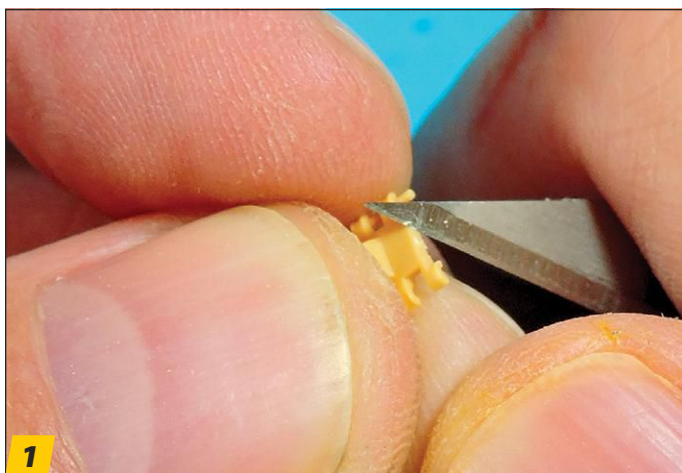
MATILDA, *take two*

Weather an Australian tank in the Pacific Theater

BY MICHAEL BEDARD

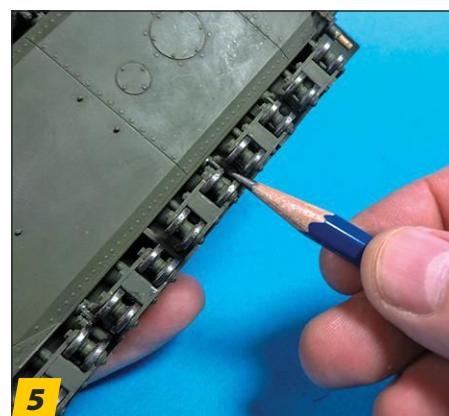
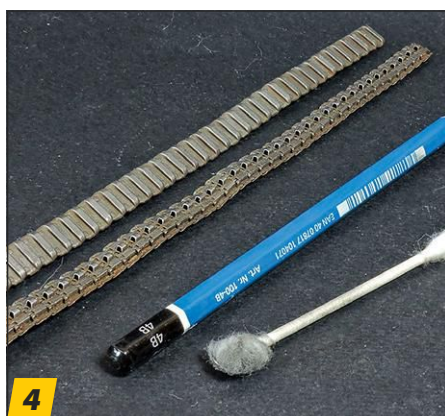
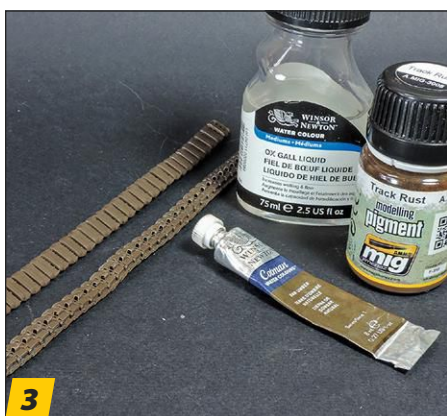


My father served in the Philippines during World War II, so that probably explains why I have a fondness for modeling subjects from the Pacific Theater. One of the iconic vehicles from the war, I wanted to try my hand at building a Matilda II once more. The last time I built a model of this storied tank was for *Military Modeler* in September 1987. A lot has changed since then, and the 2009 Tamiya Matilda Mk.III/IV (No. 35300) was too good to pass up. With it as a base and accessories from Bronco, Echelon, Firestorm, and Voyager, I set off to replicate an Australian Matilda in the Pacific.



The Tamiya kit featured link-and-length tracks. There's nothing wrong with those, but I wanted working tracks. For those, I turned to a Bronco Matilda 2 "Flat Type" set (No. AB3532). The styrene set looks good, but the attachment points needed to be cleaned up with a hobby knife.

I airbrushed the tracks Tamiya Flat Black (No. XF-1) for a base coat and followed up with Vallejo Metal Color Steel (No. 77.712).



I brushed a coat of Rustall (No. RST-001) over the tracks and sealed everything under AK Interactive Ultra Matte Varnish (No. AK183). Then a slurry of Winsor & Newton Ox Gall Liquid and Burnt Umber watercolor and Ammo Track Rust (No. A.MIG-3008) was brushed onto the tracks.

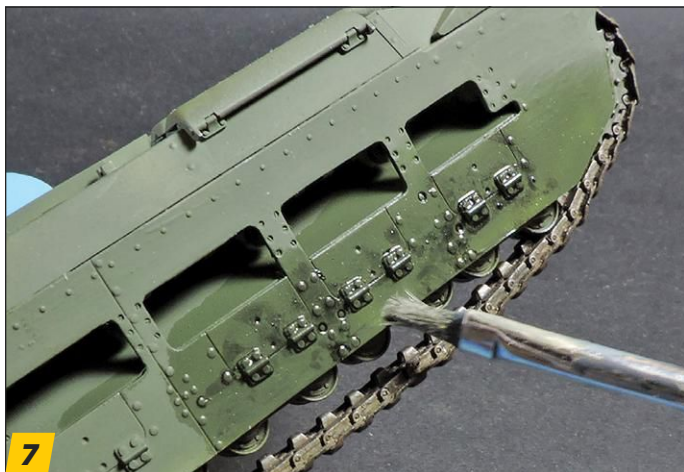
For the final step on the tracks, I rubbed a 4B artist pencil on the runs and polished them with a cotton swab. This helps give a metallic sheen with a weathered, rusty under-surface.

To wear the surfaces of the road wheels, I first brushed the outside diameter of each with steel acrylic and let it dry. Then I smoothed out the effect with a 4B artist pencil, which also provided an even more-worn appearance.



6

The Matilda has been fully assembled with Firestorm resin parts and a photo-etched metal (PE) protective engine screen. Also, Voyager PE details and a turned barrel have been added. The suspension and backsides of the side skirts were painted and finished prior to assembly.



7

I airbrushed the Matilda British khaki green — a 1:4:4 mix of Tamiya Flat Black (No. XF-1), Deep Green (No. XF-26), and Flat Earth (No. XF-52). Next, I brushed Turpenoid onto the surface and flowed a wash of Mars black artist oils and Turpenoid into the details and feathered the edges.



8

To add volume and provide contrast, I dry-brushed the Matilda with a Citadel angled brush and Vallejo Model Color Reflective Green (No. 70.890), Russian Uniform (No. 70.924), and Khaki (No. 70.988), in that order.



9

I base-coated the metal tools flat black and followed that with steel. A coat of Rustall went on followed by the ox gall, paint, and pigment mixture from Step 3. I brushed on Aim Products Real Rust (No. 937), scrubbed a final coat of Rustall to blend the layers, and finally rubbed the surface with a 4B pencil and polishing with a cotton swab.



I base-coated the wooden handles Vallejo Goldbrown (No. 70.877). The wood grain was a mixture of Winsor & Newton Burnt Umber and Raw Sienna artist oils, brushed on and then swiped with a brush damp with Winsor & Newton Liquin to create the lines.



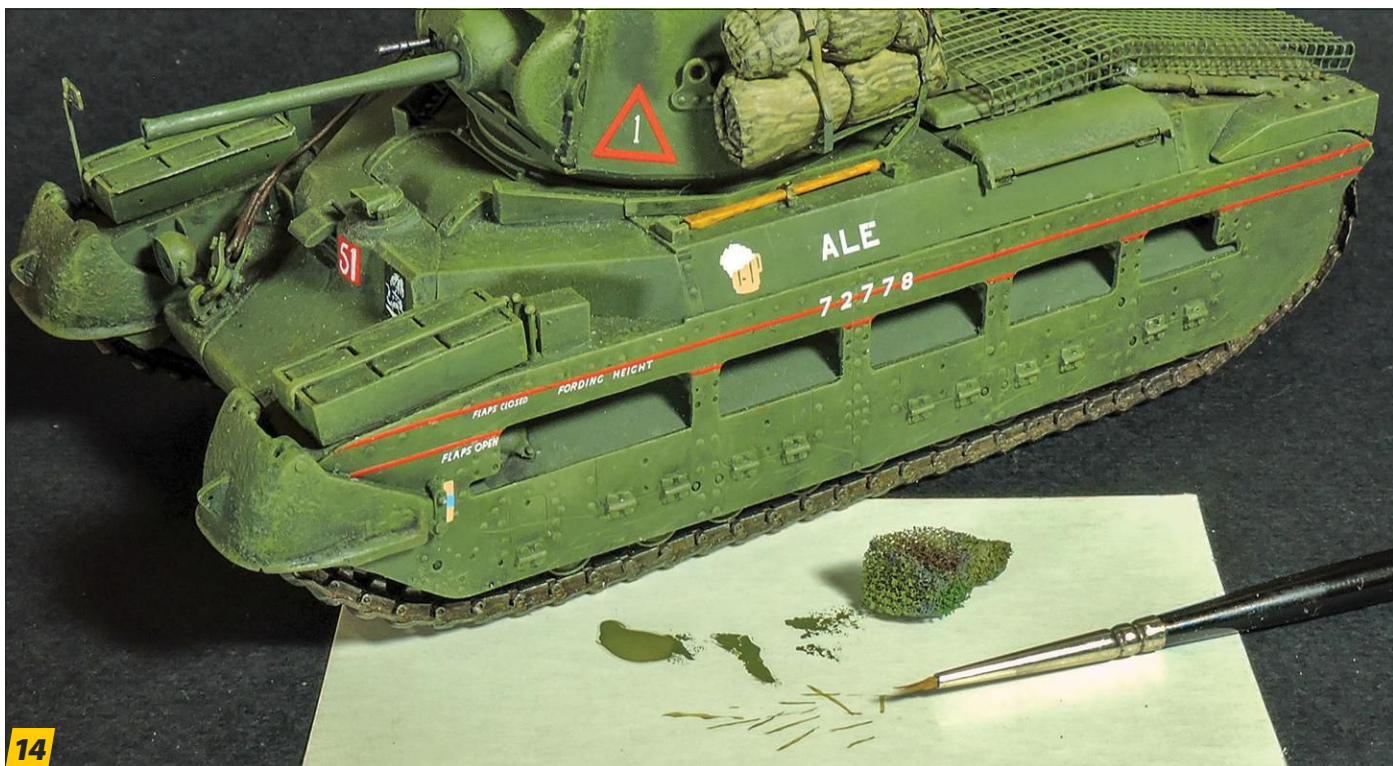
I followed a process similar to the tracks to finish the muffer, but after the ox gall slurry came a coat of Real Rust before scrubbing the layers with Rustall. I dabbed rust-colored acrylic paints with a small sponge and finished with a 4B pencil and swab.



A small section of sponge was used to dot random patches of Vallejo Reflective Green on the muffer to create a chipped-paint effect.

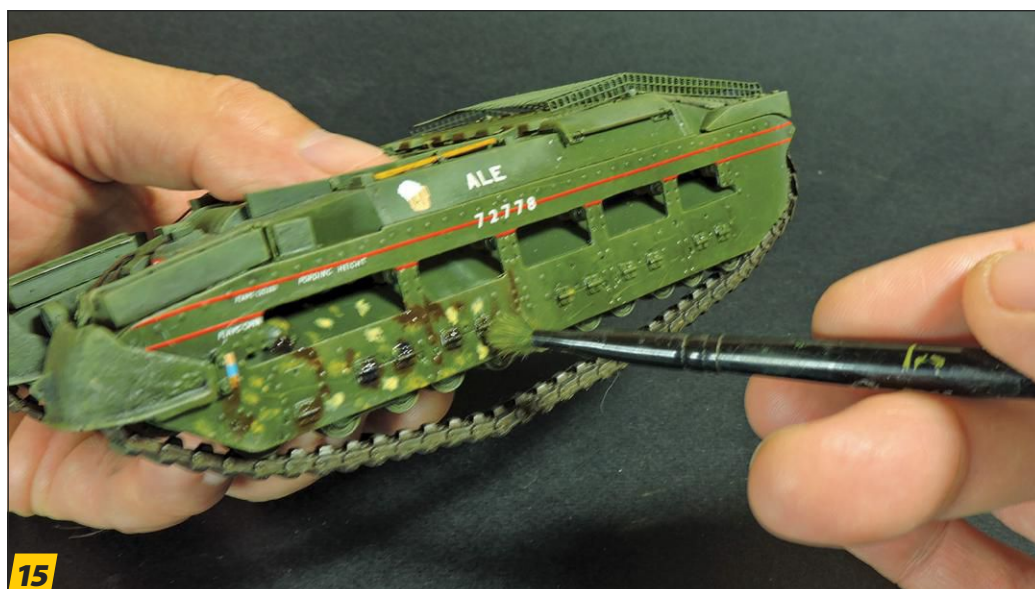


To make tarps, I used craft tissue paper soaked in a solution of white glue and water. For thick tarps, I folded them into layers prior to wetting the paper. I painted these tarps Vallejo Model Color Canvas (No. 70.763) and then created highlights and shadows.



To chip and scratch my Matilda, I used both a small sponge and a fine-tipped brush. Vallejo Model Color Russian Uniform (No. 70.924) worked well for chipping by itself. I added a bit of Reaper Flow Improver (No. 9106) to make thin lines for scratches.

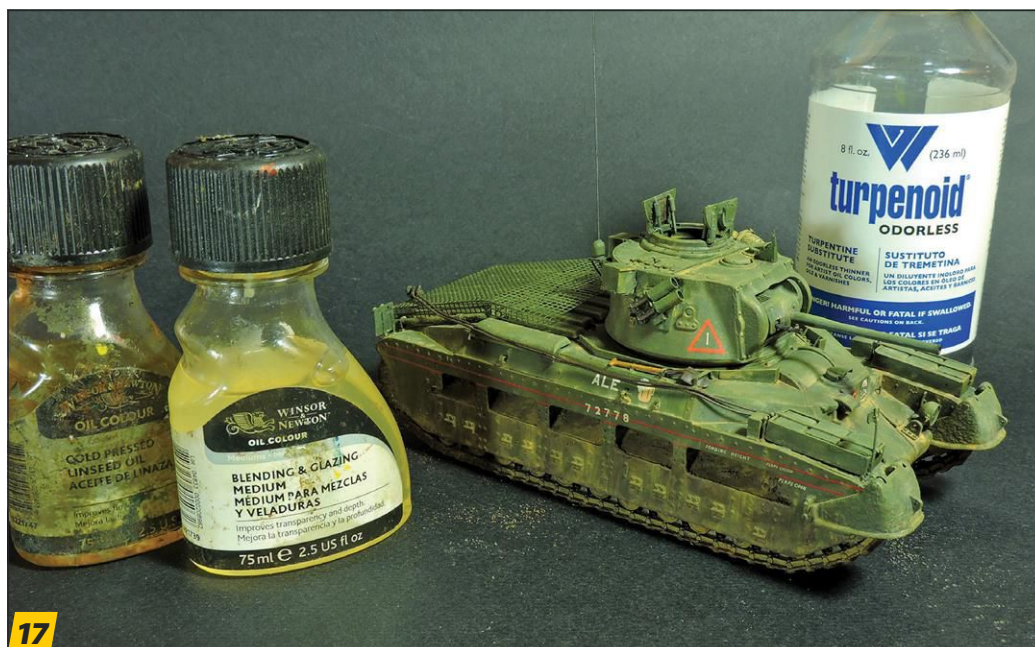
For fading and streaks, I brushed Turpenoid onto the area I was working and then dotted it with Naples yellow, Italian yellow ochre, French ultramarine blue, and burnt umber artist oils thinned with Turpenoid. I dragged the colors downward with an angled brush, cleaned after each swipe.



I mixed Gamblin pigments with Turpenoid and placed it where you'd expect dirt to accumulate. For mud on the lower surfaces and tracks, I combined Vallejo Airbrush Thinner, Hudson & Allen Mud and Muck, static grass, and pigments and dabbed it on with a brush.



Winsor & Newton Linseed Oil and Glazing & Blending Medium combined with various brown and black colors created semigloss oil and fuel spills and streaks. **FSM**



Model A Woody

An old Hubley 1/20 scale kit gets a real-wood makeover

BY SCOTT GLATSTEIN



Scott Glatstein built a Hubley 1/20 scale Model A woody wagon and replaced the metal kit body with one scratchbuilt from real wood.

When modeling scale vehicles, I enjoy using materials authentic to the original — metal bodies, wooden dashboards, and leather seats. For my latest passion project, I chose to re-create a 1930 Ford station wagon, affectionately known as a woody. Long before California surfers rediscovered them, these were primarily commercial vehicles used for moving people. Ford stripped back the Model A body and replaced it with an extended, four-door, wooden frame that accommodated three rows of basic seating.

See? Metal, wood, and faux leather seats — this would make a perfect project for my modeling style. A Hubley 1/20 scale Model A Station Wagon kit (No. 858K-350) would be my starting point.



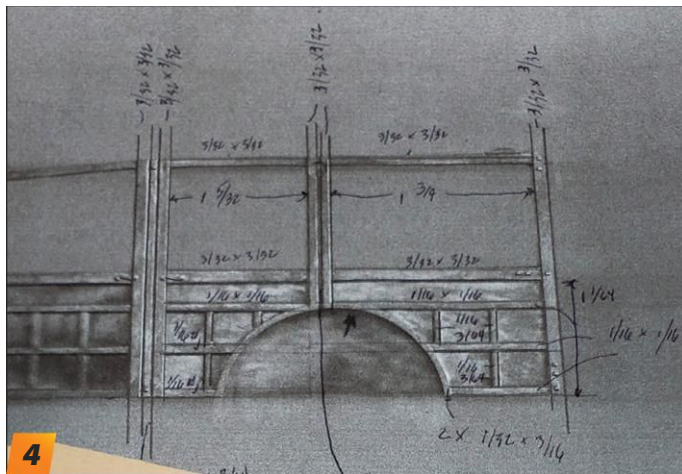
Hubley cast parts from inexpensive pot metal using crude molds developed in the 1960s. The kits were heavy, lacked detail, and required a lot of cleanup. However, it provided authentic metal parts, and the scale made fabricating the wood body easier.



The metal body halves were cast as single pieces. I cut off the front from the A-pillar forward on both halves with a cutting wheel and rotary tool and smoothed the edge with a belt sander. I glued the cowl together with 5-minute epoxy and metal shims. Once cured, I filled and sanded the seam and added a polystyrene strip along each A-pillar.

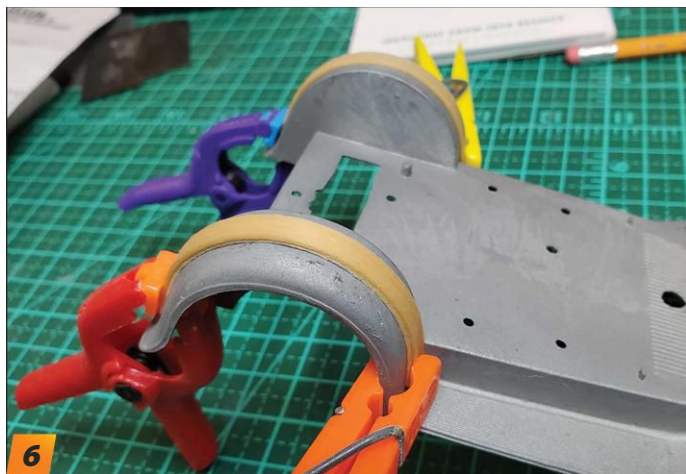


I airbrushed the metal parts with Splash Paints 2K Grey Primer (No. SPP-002). The chassis elements and fender/floor piece were airbrushed Semigloss Black (No. SPM-013), and the hood and cowl received a coat of Racing Green (No. SP-380). Splash 2K Ultra Gloss Clear finished it off.

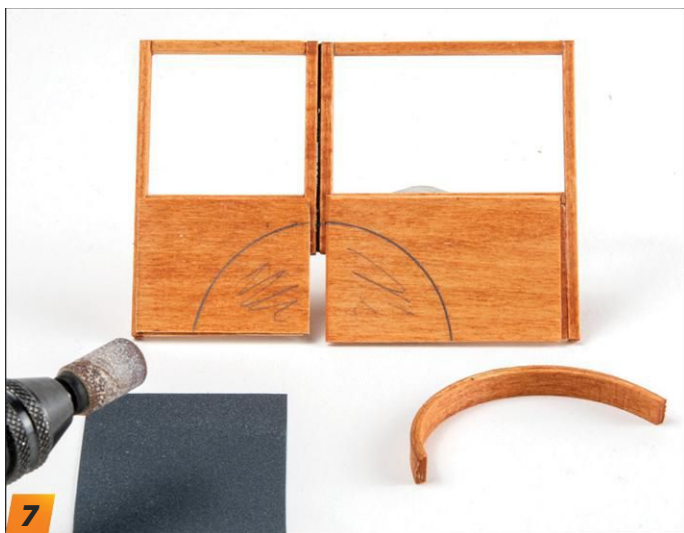




5 I cut the lumber to length, sanded it lightly with 400-grit sandpaper, and stained it Varathane Colonial Maple. I started each section with the $\frac{3}{32}$ -inch square outside posts and $\frac{1}{32}$ -inch thick sheet. A magnetic assembly jig helped keep the basswood parts square.



6 To make the wooden parts that circle the fenders, I boiled $\frac{3}{16}$ -inch x $\frac{1}{32}$ -inch strips for 10 minutes and clamped two onto each metal fender and let them rest overnight. When they were dry, I glued the two $\frac{1}{32}$ -inch-thick semicircles together to make a strong, $\frac{1}{16}$ -inch-thick molding.



7 I glued the rear door panels to the rear extension panels and marked the locations for the fenders. Most of the area was cleared with a sanding drum chucked in a rotary tool. I finished the opening by hand with sandpaper and patience.



8 I glued the fender molding to the rear panels and added the upper frame along the top. I finished all the panels with $\frac{1}{16}$ -inch square and $\frac{1}{16}$ -inch x $\frac{3}{64}$ -inch basswood strips. The panels received three coats of Varathane semigloss polyurethane with light sanding between each.



9 The kit's plastic seats were incorrectly shaped, so I carved new ones from small blocks of basswood. I made sure to test-fit the new parts into the existing kit parts. It may seem like a small thing, but if I was going to put in the effort, then I was going to make things as correct as possible.



10 I made templates of the seats with Tamiya masking tape and transferred them to the back of self-adhesive vinyl from a Neaylfe leather patch kit. The vinyl was cut to size, wrapped around the wood seats, and the seams trimmed with narrow, dark gray polyester cord.



11 As a curbside build, I didn't have to worry about an engine. I glued the metal parts together with 5-minute epoxy. A set of wheels from 3D Scale Parts painted with Splash Butternut Yellow (No. SP-248) and Alclad II Klear Kote Flat (No. ALC-314) completed the chassis.



12 The woody body went together quickly, starting with the fender panels and the rear gate. The roof supports created a strong box. I overlaid and extended the floor of the metal fender piece with a black-stained $\frac{3}{64}$ -inch wood board and glued the wood box to the floor and fenders.



13 I measured the space between the doors. This was a final hedge against imprecision. In the end, one pillar was a perfect $\frac{3}{32}$ -inch wide, while the other was slightly larger and required a bit more work. Gluing the front doors, door pillars, and roof supports finished the body.



14 Following my blueprint, I installed $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch x $\frac{1}{32}$ -inch strips $\frac{3}{32}$ -inch apart across the roof to support the fabric. Starting in the center and working outward, I used spacers to ensure consistent, parallel placement for each strip.



15 Panoply neoprene fabric simulated the fabric top. I covered the roof with four pieces. The top piece is $\frac{1}{32}$ -inch bigger on all sides. Three $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch-wide strips sit under this over-hang, and the whole thing was trimmed with black polyester cord stiffened with white glue.



16 I finished the grille shell with SMS Hyperchrome (No. CHM-01) over gloss black and added a screen painted with Splash 1K Black Primer (No. SPP-007). The front bumper is made from styrene strips and tubes and metal rods. I painted it Alclad II Polished Aluminum (No. ALC-105).

17



The kit's body didn't have a windshield frame — just a slot along the A-pillars to hold a piece of clear plastic. I built a proper window frame from styrene strips and attached 0.015-inch clear styrene inside. I glued the window to the front of the A-pillars and added the final roofline trim pieces along the front edge. The build was complete!

FINAL THOUGHTS

IT TOOK ME ABOUT 300 HOURS to finish my 1/20 scale Ford Model A woody. I had to build the basic wood panels three times before I was happy with the result. Along the way, I learned how to do fractional math down to $\frac{1}{128}$ -inch in my head. I learned a lot about keeping things square and true and the importance of patience in the building process. Finally, I learned that replicating the subtle reflectivity differences between the different materials was key to producing a result close to the original. Oh! And I repainted the wheels (see the first photo); I think black looks better. **FSM**



A COMET

in Germany

Tie a 1/35 scale tank to its surroundings with dirt, dust, and water

BY JARI HEMILA





Sifting through the internet, I happened to search for photos of the Comet I (A34). One from the Imperial War Museums archives showed a Comet on a bridge crossing a small river near Osnabrück, Germany, April 1945. I liked the scene: a muddy road winding to a bridge with a stone arch and brick sides covered with mortar. Part of the bridge had been damaged, and British soldiers had planted steel bars along the road's edge as makeshift guard rails or guide posts.

The photo struck me as a good reference for a diorama. But it wouldn't be quick: the dirt road, foliage, and bridge, not to mention the water feature. Then there was the Comet — the focal point for all the additional work. What the heck?

Challenge accepted!



1 I assembled a Tamiya 1/35 scale A34 Comet (No. 35380). I diluted Tamiya Putty (No. 87053) with Tamiya Extra Thin Cement and stippled it onto the cast-iron parts of the tank with an old paintbrush. This left behind a subtle, yet visible, cast texture on the surface.



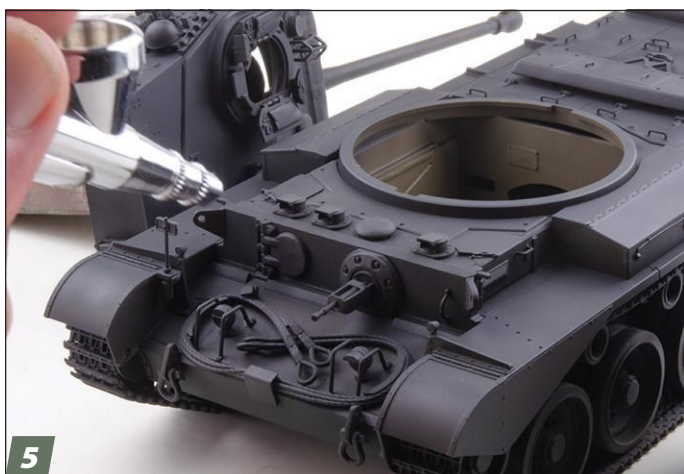
2 The kit's solid grab handles were shaved off with a sharp hobby knife and replaced with copper wire. I drilled the locators for the ends of the handles with a pin vise and micro bit, bent the wire at right angles, and superglued the new handles in place.



3 With those minor improvements, I had a Comet built out of the box. The link-and-length tracks can be tricky during weathering because enamel thinners can soften the plastic bond. So, I reminded myself to use acrylic products on them.



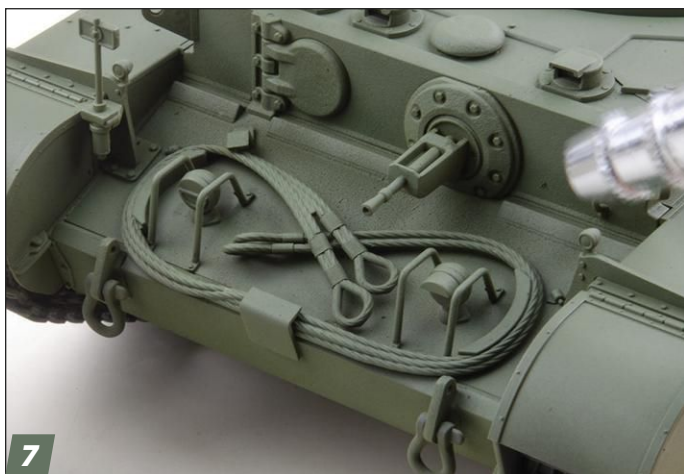
4 Before painting, I primed the copper grab handles with Tamiya Metal Primer (No. 87204). Useful for photo-etched and turned metal parts, just brush it on and let it dry. Then I brushed Tamiya Putty mixed with extra thin cement onto the handles.



5 The hull, turret, and figures were primed with Mr. Finishing Surfacer 1500 Black thinned with Tamiya Lacquer Thinner (No. 87077). This black primer coat would make a perfect base and provide pre-shading for the dark green color to follow.



6 I airbrushed the tracks Tamiya Dark Iron (No. XF-84). There was no need to worry about overspray because it would be covered with other colors soon enough.



7 My SCC 15 British olive drab base color was a mix of Tamiya Dark Green (No. XF-81), Cockpit Green (No. XF-71), and Olive Green (No. XF-58) in a 5:1:1 ratio thinned with lacquer thinner. I airbrushed without obscuring the pre-shading and masked where needed to prevent overspray.



8 I lightened my SCC 15 with a few drops of Tamiya Flat Yellow (No. XF-3) and thinned it 9:1 lacquer thinner to paint. This mix was airbrushed on panel centers. Dial back the air pressure on your airbrush when doing this and test your spray pattern off the model.



9 A little post-shading was in order, so a few drops of Tamiya Flat Black (No. XF-1) went into my SCC 15, and I diluted it the same as in Step 8. I airbrushed around bolt heads, hinges, and along panel lines.



10 To finish painting, I mixed more flat yellow into my previously lightened SCC 15, thinned it heavily, and misted it over everything to tie the pre-shading, post-shading, and panel centers together.



11 I only needed the kit Arm of Service marking (52), division insignia (bull), the Crusader nickname for the front and rear, and the white air-recognition star decals. Ammo Decal Set (No. A.MIG-292) and Fix (No. A.MIG-2030) settled them nicely over semigloss clear.



12 All the raised details, like bolt heads, were painted a lighter olive drab to emphasize volume. Then I sealed the decals and all the work up to that point under a couple of thin coats of Tamiya Semigloss Clear (No. X-35) in preparation for washes.



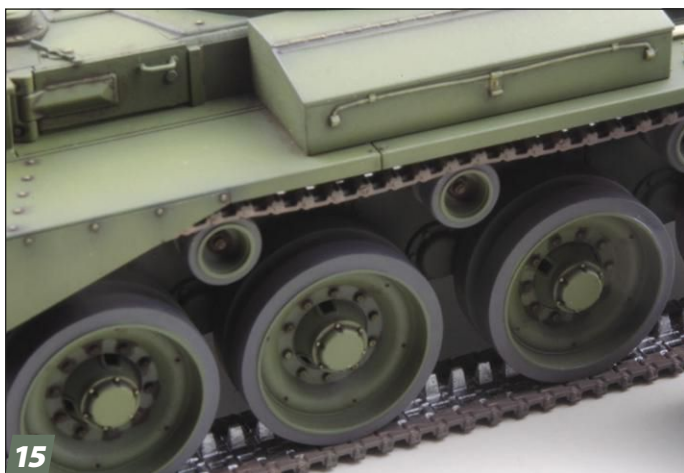
13

I applied pinwashes made from Ammo Oilbrusher Black (No. A.MIG-3500) and Dark Brown (No. A.MIG-3512) thinned with enamel thinner and applied with a 000 paintbrush. Capillary action does the rest.



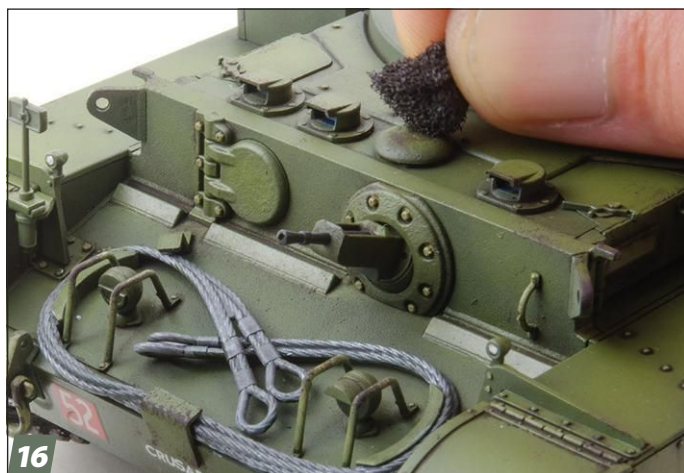
14

After the pinwash dried, it turned flat. Now, it can be blended with a dry make-up sponge or with a small paintbrush moistened with enamel thinner.



15

To avoid the track glue joins being softened by enamels, I hand-painted the runs Vallejo Track Primer (No. 70.304) and the metallic parts Ammo Steel (No. A.MIG-191). The tires received a mix of Vallejo Dark Rubber (No. 70.306) and Neutral Gray (No. 70.992).



16

I used a sponge and Vallejo Black Brown (No. 70.822) to chip the paint in select areas. The real vehicle was only a few months old at this point in its career, so I kept the effect light. The chipped areas also received a light, rusty wash.



17

To model dirt on the upper surfaces, I sprinkled sand onto the model and set it with thinned white glue. I added a dusting of finely cut AK Interactive Dried Sea Grass (No. AK8045) for added texture. Yeah, it's ugly, but just wait.



18

After the glue dried, I airbrushed the dirt areas Tamiya Buff (No. XF-57) in bursts for a patchy appearance. This is just to unify the colors and blend the sand and grass into the surrounding areas.



Then I applied Ammo Heavy Mud Thick Soil (No. A.MIG-1701) and Turned Dirt (No. A.MIG-1753) thinned as a wash to the sand/grass areas with a paintbrush. Start with the lighter color, follow up with the darker, and clean up excess with a paintbrush and thinner.



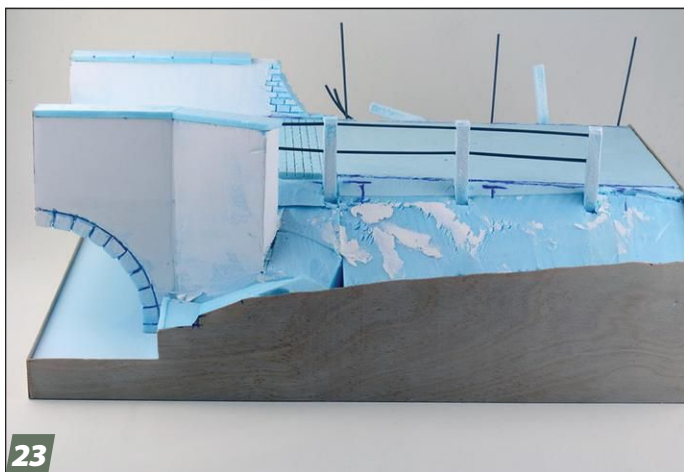
A Panzer Aces Light Mud (No. 70315) wash went over the tracks, followed by a pinwash of turned dirt. With acrylic paint and washes down, I delicately applied the Oilbrusher dark brown and black wash I made earlier to the smaller track surfaces.



Where there's mud, there's spatter. I ran my finger across the shortened bristles of an old brush loaded with turned dirt to replicate splashes. Careful, you can easily overdo this effect. After some cleaning and blending, I set the tank aside to dry.



Lastly, I ran a graphite crayon along the track treads, the end of the gun barrel, machine guns, and around the hatch openings. Basically, I hit anywhere paint wasn't likely to stay and would be worn down to the metal underneath. Next, the base!



I shaped the base from extruded polystyrene foam (XPS) with a hot-wire cutter. I carved the stone with a sharp hobby knife and then widened the gaps with a craft knife. The rails are 1mm styrene rod and the whole assembly was glued to a plywood bottom.



Warning! Enamel thinners and paints will eat XPS. I covered the diorama slope with Ammo Vignettes Dark Mud Ground (No. A.MIG-2154) using an artist spatula and sprinkled marble sand onto it.



25

I filled the gaps between the bridge pavers with sand and sealed it under thin white glue. I spread more dark mud ground on the dirt road, sprinkled fine sand all over it with extra where the tracks would run, and then pressed spare vinyl tracks into the sand.



26

A generous amount of fine sand and small stones was scattered over the area of turned dirt. Seagrass shavings lightly strewn over top and then everything was wetted down with thinned white glue and left to dry over night.



27

I dotted areas along the embankment and roadside with white glue and then spread static grass with a static-grass applicator and different lengths of grass. When the glue had dried, I shook off the excess and then placed taller grass made from brush bristles.



28

I primed the entire base black. The taller grass clumps were airbrushed Tamiya Flat Earth (No. XF-52) mixing in Buff (No. XF-57) and White (No. XF-2) for highlights. NATO Green (No. XF-67) colored the short grass with Yellow Green (No. XF-4) highlights.



29

Flat earth covered the green overspray on the road and I lightened the effect with buff, concentrating on areas around the track treads. Under the bridge, I airbrushed the area for the water Tamiya Khaki Drab (No. XF-51).



30

A wash of Vallejo Burnt Umber (No. 70.941) deepened the tread marks overall. Then I followed with a wash of Black Brown (No. 70.822) in select spots along the tracks for variation.



31

While previous washes were still wet, I applied a final wash of Vallejo Light Mud (No. 70.315) over the central hump in and along the sides of the road. Thanks to wet-on-wet washes, the blending is achieved nearly automatically.



32

Under the bridge, at the waterline I applied a wash of Vallejo Military Green (No. 70.975) to the stone. Then, as with the grass earlier, I dotted white glue where I wanted moss and sprinkled on scenic moss, let it dry 10 minutes, and tapped away the excess.



33

Washes of Vallejo Khaki Grey (No. 70.880) and Golden Olive (No. 70.857) bring the moss to life. The wet washes blend automatically. Black and brown washes applied in small areas show dying or dead moss. Again, looking for variety and realism.



34

To make the water, I mixed white glue with a few drops of khaki drab and gently stirred in the paint to prevent air bubbles. Then I applied the water to a depth of 3mm, covered the base, and set it aside for a couple of days to dry.



35

The glue dried with sinkholes. Gah! I mixed khaki drab with Ammo Acrylic Water (No. A.MIG-2204) and thinned it with a little water. I filled the sinkholes in the glue with the mixture and painted it over all the water — five times to get the right look!



36

With the water feature finished, I painted the sides of the diorama base flat black for a professional and finished appearance. I placed the tank and applied some final earth and dust colors to tie it to the base and surroundings. **FSM**



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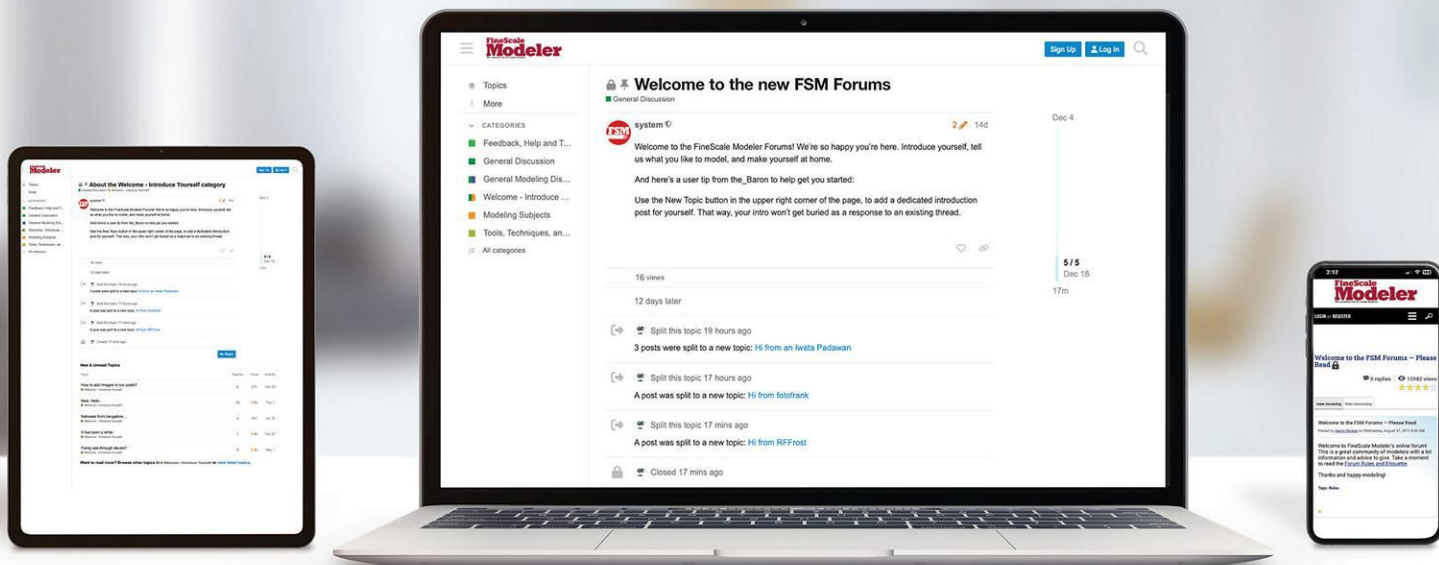
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HobbyBoss U.S. B-24J Liberator

When I opened the new HobbyBoss 1/48 scale U.S. B-24J Liberator plastic model kit, my first thought was, "We've got trouble right here in Rivet City." The exterior is littered with the recessed polka dots, although the petite panel lines look fantastic. The detail on the interior parts looks soft rather than sharp. The engines are strangely shaped, and to my horror, the front and rear turrets are split straight through the center of the clear areas rather than on the natural seams.

The box top notes the full interior, and HobbyBoss isn't joking. The first 17 pages of the instructions comprise just the fuselage. At first, I thought some of the details were modern additions to warbirds that still fly, but my references showed they were installed in combat aircraft. In Step 8, do not install the photo-etched metal (PE) detail on the sides of the bomb-bay catwalk

and wait until final assembly, because they interfere with the fit of fuselage halves while test-fitting the interior.

The instructions show where to add nose weight on Page 15, but not how much. I jumped ahead to build the wings and tail, then taped everything together to help me calculate a number. I made a small aluminum foil packet for the area behind the nose gear and added 4.5 ounces of lead shot mixed with white glue. I hoped that once this dried, I would be able to remove it and paint the foil, but it wouldn't budge. In addition, no matter what I tried, there was now a gap in the lower seam between the nose gear and the bomb bay. Considerable filler was needed to correct it.

The fit of the wings and tail was great and the flight surfaces press-fit into place without glue. The strangely shaped engines are hidden by the nacelles, and the landing gear looks good.

The detail inside the turrets is impressive. Though small, they are near-perfect representations of the Emerson A15, the Consolidated A6C, and the Martin A3C turrets. Unfortunately, the clear outer shell of the Emerson and Consolidated come in halves with the seam running down the center of the glass panes. I joined the turrets with Microscale Liquid Tape. It looks a little messy now, but with minor modifications to the turret mounts, I'll be able to replace HobbyBoss' clear parts with aftermarket ones, should they become available.

Part of my masking sheet had not been cut correctly, with the smallest masks left uncut. Some of the masks fit poorly, so I used a set from Eduard instead.

The extremely thin decals went down well over a coat of Alclad II Gloss. Be careful, because the decals may fold over themselves, and, if they do, they're done. I took a few from a second kit I have for another

project. Strangely, HobbyBoss provided only three prop logos on the decal sheet, but 12 are needed for all four propellers.

As I installed the tail turret, my B-24 rocked back and became a tail dragger. Because of the mods I made, I was able to remove the nose turret and add just enough weight so it sits on all three wheels. The vinyl tires flex, and I'm not sure the gear legs can take the strain of all that weight, but at least it's not a tail dragger!

Despite my first impression, the HobbyBoss 1/48 scale B-24J Liberator kit grew on me. The amount of interior detail is impressive, the decals look good, and, for the most part, the fit is excellent. The finished model scales out perfectly. The biggest downsides are the clear parts split through panes and the rubber tires. With aftermarket wheels, gear legs, and turrets, the HobbyBoss B-24J could be a showstopper!

—Andy Keyes



Kit No.: 81774

Scale: 1/48

Mfr.: HobbyBoss, hobbyboss.com

(Sample courtesy of MRC) **Price:**

\$136.99 **Comments:** Injection-molded

plastic (medium gray, clear); 588 parts

(13 photo-etched metal, 11 rubber

vinyl); decals **Pros:** Complete interior;

good fits **Cons:** Turret parts breakdown;

vinyl tires don't hold weight of model

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By Tim Boyd

First, but left behind

Monogram, missing a sea change, released a kit for a market that had moved on

Today's state-of-the-art model-car kits build into stunningly accurate replicas of 1/1 automotive subjects, even down to decals of the assembly-line worker marks across the engine compartment of the Revell 1971 Mustang Boss 351. The only decision for box-stock builders is the choice between two body graphics options.

Conversely, 60 years ago, model kits were designed to offer kit builders a relatively simplified and quickly assembled replica that also provided multiple building and customizing options. A great example is the original Monogram 1/24 scale 1955 Chevrolet kit. The box top wording sold the proposition: "Modeler's Choice Customizing Kit — Makes any of a variety of custom and stock models."

Monogram's offering was the first 1/24 or 1/25 scale kit of Chevrolet's 1955 Bel Air. Illustrations of showroom stock convertible and hardtop versions of the model graced the box top. Side panels of the kit box depicted various options for customizing. Would you choose a 1958-60

Thunderbird-style hardtop (called a "Continental Type Hardtop") or a large clear bubble top as popularized by customizers Ed Roth and Darryl Starbird. And how about custom lake pipes, a custom console with short shift, custom grilles, custom bucket seats, or a rear-seat TV?

Kit construction was typical of 1960s assembly kits, with a one-piece body molded in dark turquoise or bright red. A single integral chassis frame/underbody with engraved dual exhausts was paired with separate leaf spring/rear axle unit and lower A-arm/front suspension assemblies. The Chevy V8 engine reflected Monogram's simplified approach with a two-piece block incorporating engraved starter, oil filter, oil pan, front cover, and water pump details. While not referenced on the box art, plated engine options included six two-barrel carbs, ribbed valve covers, a supercharger setup, and exhaust headers.

A fine effort by Monogram, by the time of its 1963 debut, car culture was already

MONOGRAM 1/24 SCALE 1955 CHEVROLET MODELER'S CHOICE CUSTOMIZING KIT

Kit No.: PC83-198

First Introduced: 1963; reissued once with fresh box art in 1966

Current Value: \$200

transitioning away from a fascination with customized cars toward the exploding popularity of drag racing. When Monogram's competitors Revell and AMT followed with their own 1955 Chevrolet kits in 1964 and 1965, respectively, drag-racing features dominated the box art.

Not surprisingly, Monogram's custom-themed kit quickly became outdated among model car builders. Accordingly, Monogram engaged artist Tom Daniel to redesign the kit with a drag-racing theme. The factory-stock and customizing options disappeared in favor of a classic, late-1960s street racer/gasser with a slightly chopped top, red tinted hood scoop, and faux 396 side-panel decals (the 265 ci Chevy engine was carried over from the original kit).

This new "Bad Man" '55 Chevy went on to become one of Monogram's all-time, top selling kits. And while the original configuration of Monogram's 1955 Chevrolet kit is gone forever, two all-new kits of the 1955 Chevrolet hardtop and convertible hit shelves in the 1990s and remain readily available today.

That makes the original Monogram 1955 Chevrolet kit a snapshot of the divergence of the 1/1 scale automotive and 1/24 scale model-building worlds of the early 1960s, and thus worthy of consideration for any historical model car kit collector. **FSM**



1966

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Model Kit Features:

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- ♦ Newly-tooled body and Shelby parts
- ♦ Molded in white, clear, and transparent red with chrome-plated parts.
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1/24 TOYOTA GR SUPRA CUSTOM

Item No. 24371

The GR Supra is a Toyota two-seater sports car released in January 2019, whose sensuous long nose, short deck form has a striking double-bubble roof. The top grade RZ model has a 340hp inline-six turbo engine. Plenty of custom parts called GR Parts are offered by TRD (Toyota Racing Development) for various customizations. Components such as carbon fiber aerodynamic parts, forged aluminum wheels and sports muffler provide superior performance. Owners can enjoy customizing this car as they like to get their ideal drive.



About the Model

This is a 1/24 scale plastic model assembly kit. Length: 183mm, width: 85mm, height: 54mm. ★The dynamic, elegant form with aerodynamic parts such as spoilers and side skirts is captured in style. ★Features a realistic rendering of the interior. ★The underside has depictions of suspension, exhaust system and more. ★19-inch wheels by Toyota Racing Development are also recreated. ★Metal transfers and masking stickers are included. ★Choose from Japan, U.S. and Europe versions.



This detailed model accurately captures the car with various GR PARTS fitted. Choose from Japan, Europe and U.S. versions.



The spoiler is split into three sections.



Side skirt and door garnish sections add to the profile view.



A ducktail spoiler adorns the trunk lid, with the subtle curves recreated in style.



Recreations of the TRD 19-inch aluminum wheels are accurate down to the spokes. The center cap logo is a decal.



Assemble the model as a left- or right-hand drive car. Separate head-rest and shoulder parts for the seats make for an easier paint job.

