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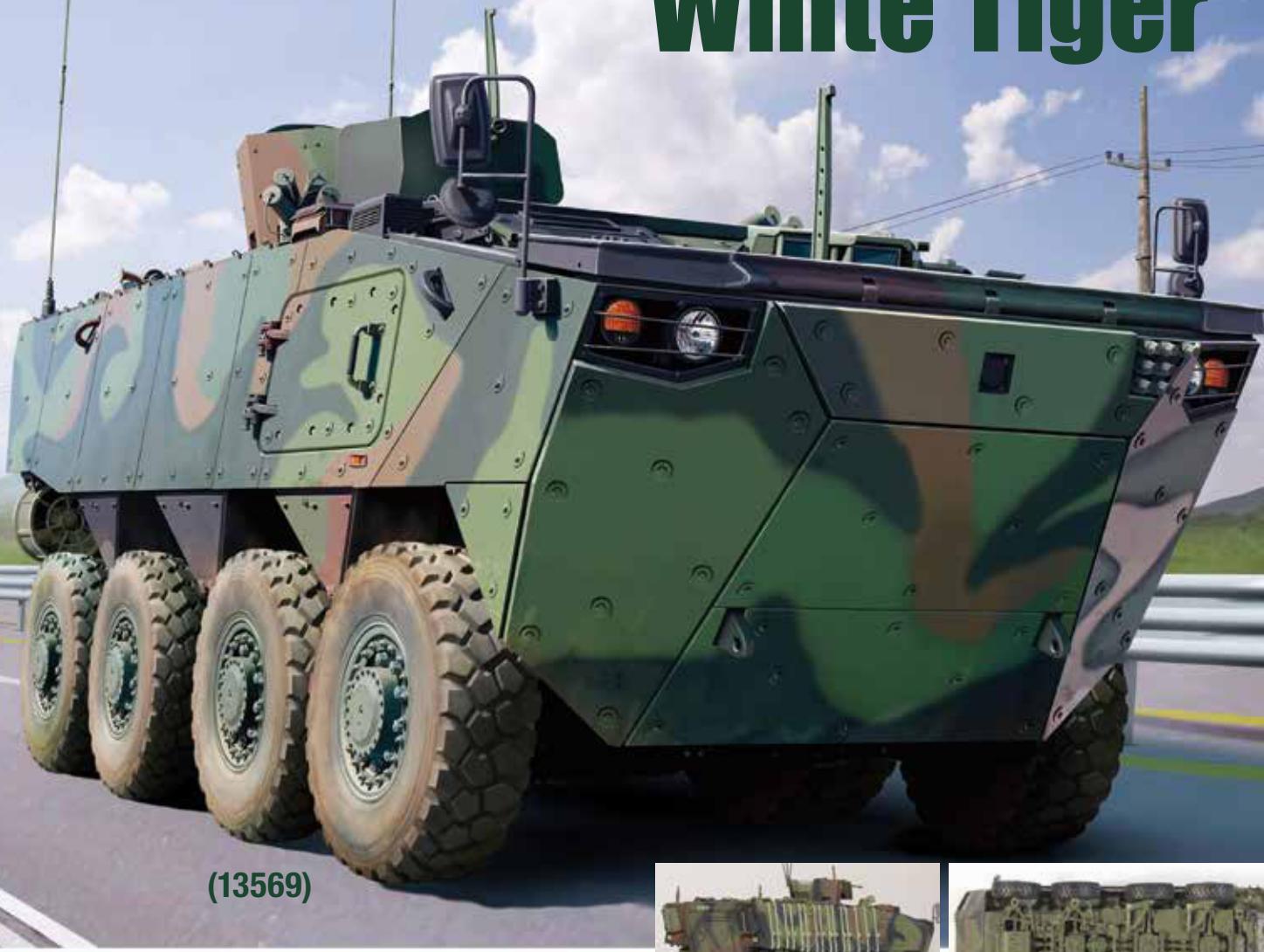
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A C-119 INTO
A MOVIE STAR



Vol. 44 • Issue 2

White Tiger



(13569)



ROK ARMY K808

In order to build a rapid response force, similar to the U.S. Stryker brigade, South Korea developed a family of 8x8 and 6x6 wheeled Armored Personnel Carriers. These fighting vehicles are often referred to as "White Tiger" a holy beast in Korean mythology that signifies power and protection.

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FROM THE EDITOR

By Tim Kidwell

As complicated as you make it

During our *Scale Model Basics* video for wiring engines, I mentioned the process was as complicated as you wanted to make it. Just gonna run wires, great! Feel like adding spark-plug boots? Go for it. Looms to organize those wires? The sky's the limit. Detail your heart out.

That's scale modeling in a nutshell: You get to decide how complicated you want your builds to be, and this issue gets to the heart of that idea, though I didn't consciously pull together that theme. It just sort of materialized, and there's often a thrill when you realize something you've been ruminating, worrying like an oyster laps a pearl, finds its way into your creative process.

Bob Steinbrunn and Ilya Yut concentrate on paint and finish while building complex models. You'll see Rafał Lebioda and Andrew Cooper make substantial changes to their kits to achieve a satisfying result. Then Phillip Gore and Gary Myers dive in for full-blown conversions and scratchbuilding to model completely new replicas that aren't kitted by major manufacturers — or at all!

The point? It's like playing a video game (oh, no!). Pick your difficulty and enjoy the journey. The building is the thing, and challenges make victories all the sweeter.

editor@finescale.com

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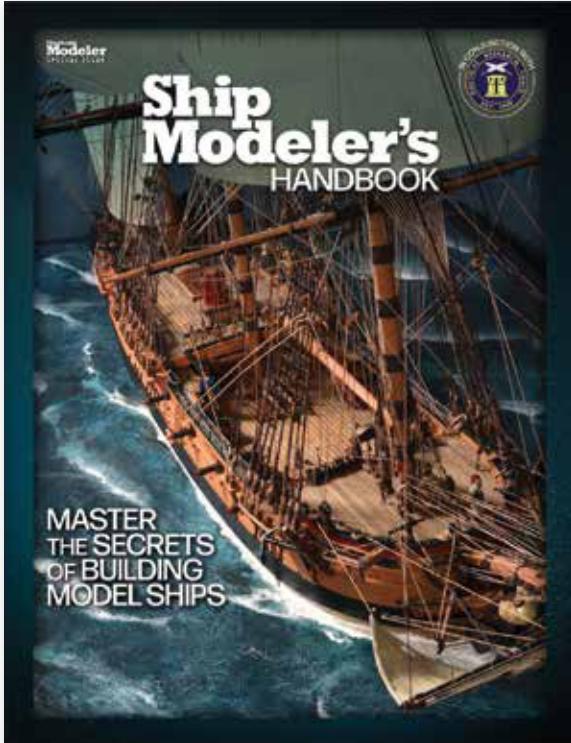
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Hello fellow modelers

I would definitely fall into the category of old modelers. I was introduced to inexpensive 1/72 scale airplanes when I was about 10 and was very fortunate to have a group of peers who all liked building. We built cars, a few ships, and a lot of planes before I left home for the Navy at 17. Most of this was the 1970s.

I rediscovered building after a few years in the Navy and a more stable housing situation. Built a lot of tanks and aircraft as my interest shifted over the years. In 1982, I found a copy of *FSM* at a local shop in California. It became my routine to stop in when your new issues were released. While you often covered topics I was not currently working on, the techniques were often easily transferred, and I eventually added an airbrush, started using photo-etched metal parts, vacuum-formed kits, and expanded scratchbuilding techniques.

As we were raising our family, I often had little time to work on kits, and many years, didn't complete any. I did continue to subscribe to *FSM*, and would dive into your publication each time it arrived. Sometimes it was the only real connection to the hobby. I also watched as the hobby shops around New England disappeared. We just recently lost a shop I had been driving to about once a year after I almost 40 years in business.

Now, I am about to begin retirement with a stash that should last a while, and hopefully, the time to make this a priority again. I am still a subscriber, and while you are still evolving your magazine, I am glad you are still here.

It was disheartening to see some of the criticisms in the letters in the November/December 2025 issue. Your magazine has to evolve to survive a different market, and I will have to get better at using your online articles and reviews. Keep working to keep this magazine going for the model building community.

Mark Woods
Stoddard, NH

*Ed.: Mark, thank you for your years supporting *FSM*. I have often said that one of the best things about editing for this title is the ardor our readers have for it. I also appreciate your kind words and will keep working to fill the title with interesting and enlightening stories.*

Pilots, metal, and geometry

I really enjoy the magazine and had a couple of questions.

1. Why don't aircraft model companies supply pilots? Seems like this should be a requirement. I guess it is slightly more complex to mold, but once it's designed in CAD, should be easy to transfer between models. Many years ago, they all had pilots.

2. Speaking of pilots, I build some of the *Flames of War* gaming models, and they often use cast-metal parts. Seems like a good idea, especially for tricycle landing gear aircraft, to supply pilots as weights!

3. I used to build old Monogram 1/48 aircraft where many of the World War II planes had retractable landing gear, folding wings, etc. When did this go out of style?

4. Lastly, curious about how model companies get the actual geometry for planes, tanks, cars, etc. Does Boeing, etc., send them files or do the companies have to do their own research on the details?

Thanks for any answers.

Tom Olsavsky
Oceanside, CA

Ed.: Tom, we reached out to a few of our industry contacts, and Fred Medel, marketing manager for Tamiya America, gave us a comprehensive view from inside:

"There is no rhyme or reason to including or not including pilot figures. It's all done based on the whim of the designer and Mr. Tamiya. Now that Mr. Tamiya has passed, the decision will be made based on what the designer feels best makes the product stand out. Also, all our latest modern-themed aircraft models do include a pilot figure, so I assume [Tom is] more curious about World War II planes.

"Because Tamiya manufactures plastic, it's not really in our wheelhouse to produce die-cast metal parts. That would have to be outsourced, which adds costs that we have no control over. Making metal pilots would not yield a detailed figure, so it's best to keep them made of plastic. If a model needs weight, Tamiya's designers find other ways, as you've seen from our P-38 model kits from a few years ago.

"Tamiya's research and development team does extensive research of full-size subjects. We use the data supplied by the intellectual property (IP) owner, [and] then we do extensive cross referencing of the actual subject because sometimes what the plans show may have been changed during the assembly process on the fly. This was especially true of older subjects.

"Additionally, seeing the subject in person then taking measurements will give our designers insight into how to mold specific parts and sections of subjects. Plans of the IP alone may not provide sufficient insight. In essence, Tamiya has adopted the philosophy of

obtaining IP data, then cross-referencing said data with a visit to the full-size subject.

"While not the norm, we sometimes have special access to the subject while it's being developed. Case in point, our newly released Honda Prelude (see the review on Page 55) model car kit was developed while Honda was developing the real car. Our design team had special access to the Honda team that was developing the reimaged Prelude. This ensured that absolutely no detail was missed.

"We had such advanced special access, by the time the kit went into production, there were still a lot of details about the car that had not yet been revealed to the automotive media and public. We had to sit on our early samples to model reviewers until Honda revealed the last specs of the car to the media."

Special thanks to Fred for taking the time to answer Tom's question. And Tom, thanks for your questions. I'm still working on No. 3.



Biplane alignment jig

I love biplanes, but getting the upper wing aligned while attaching the various struts is maddening. For the 1/32 scale Camel currently on my workbench, I hit upon the idea of building an alignment jig to hold the wing rigidly until all the struts were in and the glue was dry. It seems that including a drawing in biplane kits to facilitate building such a jig would be a greatly appreciated bonus. It might be a marketable item for the aftermarket suppliers. I know I would purchase one for every biplane kit if it was available.

Tom Kupferer
Rayville, LA

*Ed.: Tom, I love biplanes, too! There have been a number biplane jigs sold commercially by hobby manufacturers over the years. The one we have in the *FSM* workshop is the HobbyZone Aircraft Assembly Jig (No. AJ01). It's made out of MDF and has adjustable magnetic clamps. Vertigo Miniatures and JH Models both produce jigs, the former in clear plastic, and latter in laser-cut plywood. And if you search Etsy, you can find no end to wooden, plastic, and 3D-printed jigs for helping assemble biplanes.*

Advice for fellow modelers

I am a long-time subscriber to *FSM*, have even had a few pictures of my models published therein, and have always enjoyed From the Editor and Scale Talk. [I] was particularly interested in the letter titled "Aspirations and expectations" In the January/February 2026 issue (Page 5). I thought about the issue in question per the letter by Jeffrey de Wit and have the following comments and suggestions for any readers trapped in "analysis paralysis" or "Advanced Modeler Syndrome (AMS)" or whatever else you want to call a similar malady:

1. Avoid the temptation to have too many projects going on at once. Limit yourself to no more than two or three projects at a time so you can bounce back and forth while waiting for cement or paint to dry on your various projects.

2. If you run into a problem, bring the model to a club meeting and get feedback or look for help from your favorite podcasts or YouTube videos.

3. If you get bogged down with one project, switch to something fun or different to get you out of the doldrums. Try a more basic Gunpla model or an auto or airplane model if your "specialty" is armor, for example.

4. Don't get so bogged down with accuracy issues. For every judge that insists that the proper color is RLM 63, you will find another judge that completely disagrees. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder (of a faded color photograph that is off anyway).

5. Don't worry if your model ends up as what you determine will not win a contest. Even The Beatles recorded some songs that did not make it to a mainstream album (Exhibit No. 1: "If You've Got Trouble"). My mentor would show me a model he just finished and state, "Well, it's not perfect but good enough for third place, I guess." I have won enough awards in competition that I don't worry anymore if a model is not up to snuff — it will still look good in my museum display case.

The main thing to remember is that building models is a better alternative than a lot of other things you could do in your spare time, reading *FSM* excepted. Even though many of the articles cover areas of modeling that don't interest me as much, I still pick up tidbits which help me with my own favorable projects. So, hopefully, when all else fails, pick up a different model and try again. And when you get to the end of your rope (or sprue), grab the latest issue of *FSM* and start reading!

Richard C. Engar
Holladay, UT

No love for Warhammer 40K?

I'm seeing lots more Gundam coverage, but why no *Warhammer 40,000*? They have scads of plastic model kits running the gamut from miniatures to armor to walking armored robots not unlike Gundam. I ask for occasional coverage of the *Warhammer* universe.

Richard Leithman
Belle Chasse, LA

EXCLUSIVE CONTENT AT FINESCALE.COM**ACME Southern Nationals photo gallery**

It was another banner year for the ACME Southern Nationals in Cartersville, Georgia! With 940 models registered from 196 entrants, Southern Nats has become one of the premiere model shows in the U.S. *FSM* selected more than 50 of the models on display to photograph and feature in the online gallery as well as in the pages of the print magazine. Visit [FineScale.com/show-galleries](https://www.finescale.com/show-galleries) and enjoy!

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Ed.: Richard, I'll see what I can do.

A career in the offing?

Howdy Tim, a question from a youth here. How would you recommend getting my feet planted in the scale model scene? I one day hope to write kit reviews, magazine articles or some other kind of production, and I was wondering what you thought the best way to get my start here would be. I'm a relatively new modeler who spends most of my day in a cow field or school, but I'm hoping to make my hobby a career or help to move it forward and improve. Whatever advice or ideas you have would be greatly appreciated, and I'd love your insight.

Bo Bollinger
Groveland, FL

Ed.: Bo, that's an interesting question, and a big one, too. I'm not sure I can give you all of my thoughts in the space I have here, but I'll jot down a few thoughts. Up front, creative careers are hard to break into and make work for you. Would it surprise you to know that

most published authors also have a day job or are married to someone who has a job that supports them? Yes, even best-selling authors. It is a select, lucky few who are able to write full-time for a living and support themselves. Fewer still make good money at it.

So, my first bit of advice would be to not expect to be able to make a living by just building models. It will almost always involve something else, like editing, writing, video editing and camera work or maybe in marketing or business, or an unrelated job. This isn't to dissuade, just help set expectations.

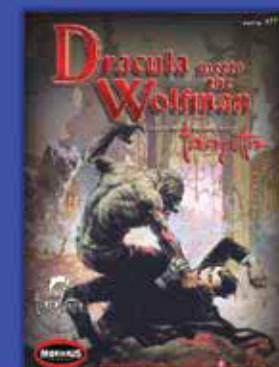
With that said, you can start writing reviews today. A good way to practice would be to take a new kit and start a build log, jotting down your thoughts as you go, noting challenges and how you overcome them along the way. When you've finished, take those notes and compile them into a review. Read published model reviews to get an idea about approach and language. Also, and this is just a personal preference, don't be one of these people who take pleasure in running down a kit. Be professional, honest, and evenhanded.

As for how-to articles, you can start writing those, too. But read a lot of published build articles first, from a variety of publications. Just like with reviews, note how they are written. Practice taking clear, well-lit process photos on a clean background. Also, make sure to read the submission guidelines for the publication you want to submit your article to. Each publication has different rules, and if you don't follow them, you're asking to be immediately rejected. And practice your writing.

Attend large shows when you can and get to know people repelling the manufacturers and publications. The industry is small, so always be courteous and professional, because word spreads. A good impression can go a long way. A bad impression could be a detrimental and long lasting.

Don't forget video. You could start a YouTube or TikTok channel if you're willing to learn some basic video editing skills. But if you're not comfortable in front of a camera, that may not be the route for you.

Again, a big question, but I hope I've given you some food for thought. Good luck! **FSM**



Dracula Meets Wolfman



The Wolfman



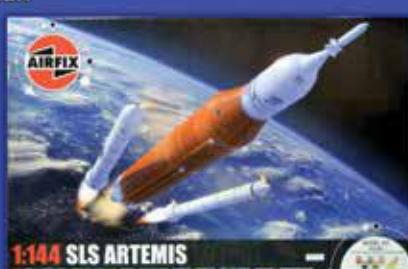
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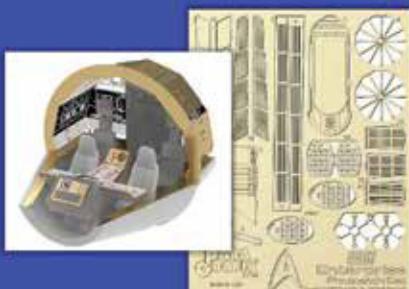
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1/72 SCALE

Supermarine Spitfire Mk.I Early - Beginning of the Saga No. 72580 \$29 from IBG Models.

C-47A Skytrain - Polish Dakota No. 72910 \$TBA from IBG Models.

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ARMOR

1/35 SCALE

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1/72 SCALE

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1/25 SCALE

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1/35 SCALE

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1/35 SCALE

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\$36.95 by Andy Singleton, 184 pages, soft cover, 250 color illustrations, 50 mono illustrations, ISBN: 978-1-036116-21-7 from Pen and Sword Military.

War in Ukraine Volume 11

The Battle of Chernihiv, February-March 2022, \$29.95 by Mihailo Zhirovov, 72 pages, soft cover, 5 B/W photos, 3 color illustrations, 70 color photos, 21 color profiles, 4 color maps, ISBN: 978-1-036116-21-7 from Helion and Company.

Big-time *LIGHTNI*



Building a 1/32 Zoukei-Mura Mitsubishi J2M3 Raiden

BY BOB STEINBRUNN

The Mitsubishi J2M Raiden (a combination of the Japanese kanji *Rai* (thunder) and *Den* (lightning) and translated variously as “lightning bolt” or “thunderbolt”), Allied reporting code “Jack,” was a bold departure from normal Japanese design philosophy. Instead of prioritizing maneuverability, range, and lightness like most other Japanese fighters, the Raiden was designed to combat the high-flying B-29 Superfortresses over Japan by emphasizing rate of climb, speed, firepower, and armor protection. As such, it was a

point defense interceptor with a single purpose: to bring down B-29s and protect the homeland.

Designed by famed Japanese aeronautical engineer Jiro Horikoshi, who also designed the Mitsubishi A6M Reisen (Zero fighter), the Raiden was powered by an 1,800 horsepower Mitsubishi Kasei (Mars) 23a 14-cylinder engine. With a maximum speed of 365 mph at 17,390 feet, the aircraft was afflicted by numerous teething troubles. Many Japanese pilots felt it was difficult to fly, but those who mastered it preferred it to all other fighters. In the end, it

NG



was moderately successful, and only 476 were built, compared to over 10,000 of the Zero.

My finished model depicts the J2M3 Raiden Model 21 flown by Lt. j.g. Yoshihiro Aoki, 352nd Kokutai (air wing), Omura airbase, Japan, August 1, 1945. I chose the Zoukei-Mura 1/32 scale kit (No. SWS05), which has twice the number of parts as Hasegawa's 1/32 scale Raiden and will take twice as long to finish. It is detailed inside and out, and the journey is as important as the model you have when you're finished.



1

The model comes in a large box containing nine gray sprues and two clear sprues. This is not a kit for the beginner, but it is beautifully molded with superior detail. Assembling this aircraft will give modelers a sense of what it was like building the real thing.



2

I airbrushed the engine cylinders Alclad II Aluminum (No. ALC-101) and then brushed Ammo Dark Wash (No. A.MIG-1008) over the cylinder cooling fins to provide depth and pop details. The pipes connecting the lower valve covers are intercylinder oil drains I made from .015-inch brass rod.



3

The Kasei 23a (shown here upside down for stability) nose case was painted Tamiya Flat Black (No. XF-1). I finished the exhausts with a mixture of Alclad II Aluminum, Burnt Iron (No. ALC-121), and Copper (No. ALC-110). An aftermarket Zoukei-Mura set provided the photo-etched metal (PE) spark-plug wires.

**4**

The kit provided options for open or closed cowl flaps — I went with the former. The silver framework behind the firewall is the engine mount, and you can see the two magnetos, fuel-injection pump, and other sundry details in the engine accessory section.

**5**

The beautifully sculpted propeller blades have an accurate airfoil profile, and the detailed hub has four separate counterweights. None of this will show once the spinner is cemented on, but remember, it's part of the journey. I airbrushed the prop a mixture of Tamiya Flat Red (No. XF-7) and Flat Brown (No. XF-10).

**6**

For precisely folding PE parts, I turn to my Five Speed Hold and Fold by The Small Shop. You insert a part under one of the bending fingers, tighten the knobs to clamp the part in place, and raise the part with a razor blade to perform the bend. It was quite useful for this kit and a vital tool for ship modelers, too.

**7**

I shaved off the details on the kit instrument panel, carefully preserving the levers and switches, and upgraded it with an aftermarket Zoukei-Mura PE panel. I glued a section of clear acetate between the plastic and PE panels to serve as glass for the gauges and glued the details I kept from the kit panel onto the PE upgrade.

**8**

The cockpit floor has all the structural details of the real airplane, plus it includes the linkage for the control stick, oxygen bottles, and a carbon-dioxide bottle.

**9**

The highly detailed cockpit included PE seat belts, throttle quadrant with levers, valve handles, switches, side structure, and radio and switch panels. A diluted application of Ammo Dark Wash (No. A.MIG-1008) outlined raised details to provide depth and shadow.

**10**

The heart of the aircraft was now one unit: the engine, oil tank, firewall, fuel tank, cockpit, and rear shelf with radio. Everything fit together precisely and without fuss: sheer delight!



The lower wing half included the wing spar and support structure, two fuel tanks, the wheel-well walls, and the four 20mm cannon. References indicated the mix of the two lengths of the Type 99 guns was a result of manufacturing shortages and using whatever was available.



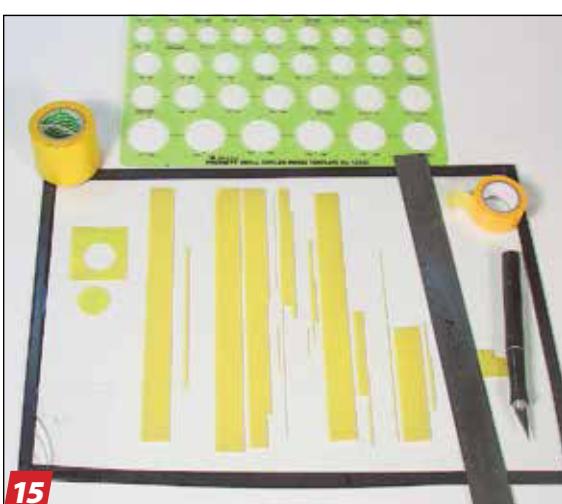
The aftermarket Zoukei-Mura Exterior Details set added much needed detail to the flap wells. The set's PE was fiddly to install, and I had to shave down the kit wells to eliminate a ridge. The PE ribs were too tall when superglued in place and needed to be carefully ground level with the wing undersurface with a rotary tool and an abrasive wheel.



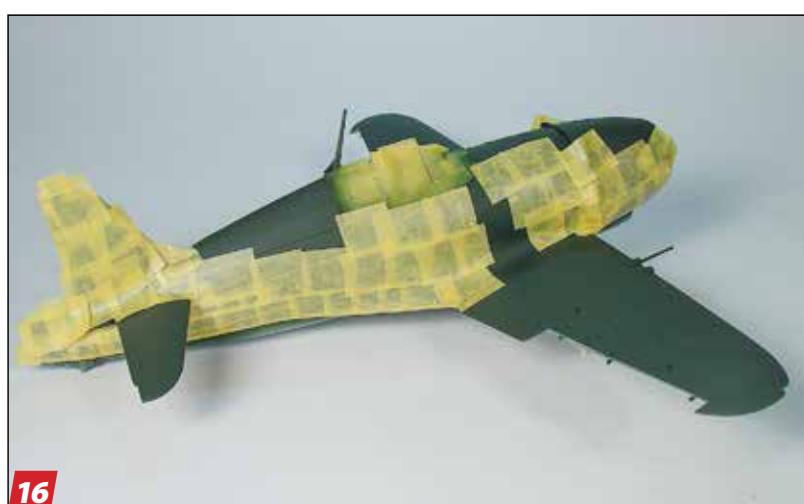
Instead of following the instructions and gluing the starboard half of the fuselage (with the engine/cockpit module inside) to the wing and then adding the port side, I glued the fuselage halves together first. Then I glued the subassembly to the wings. This was a good call. The fuselage-to-wing joints required filing, filling with superglue, and sanding smooth. You can fill small gaps with a dilute solution of white glue or your favorite filler.



I drill a .16-inch hole in an inconspicuous spot on parts that will be painted and superglue the part to a .15-inch wire connected to a toothpick. These homemade part holders allow me to paint without touching the parts, using the toothpicks as handles. When the part is dry, I grip the wire with pliers and gently twist off the part.



My masking station consists of a glass plate (sharp edges protected by electrical tape), a metal straightedge, and a knife with a sharp blade. Tamiya makes its masking tape from rice paper, and it won't leave gummy residue on your model. A wide roll of tape and a circle template are ideal for masking wheels and radial engines inside a cowl.



I airbrushed the model Tamiya J.N. Green (No. XF-11), let it dry for 24 hours, and then masked for airbrushing the undersides.

**17**

I painted the undersurfaces Tamiya J.N. Gray (No. XF-12), masked, and airbrushed the wing leading edges a mix of 33:1 Tamiya Flat Yellow (No. XF-3) and Flat Red (No. XF-7) to replicate the deep yellow used by Japanese forces. Precise masking will yield sharp lines between colors.

**18**

The kit provides three options for the canopy and windscreen, and I chose the separate frames and glass. This allowed me to airbrush the framework and then fit the clear panels inside, eliminating tedious masking. Evergreen Canopy Glue carefully brushed inside the frames worked well and was easily cleaned up with water.

**19**

Zoukei-Mura's decals were a bit thick, and the *hinomarus* had trouble conforming to the fuselage's compound curves. I applied several coats of Micro Sol over a few days to soften them to diminish the wrinkles. Eventually, I turned to Walthers Solvaset to do the job, but the wrinkles were still evident. Now what?

**20**

Taking a tip from certain Wingnut Wings instruction sheets, I carefully used a hair dryer with the heat on high. Several hair-dryer applications later, the decals finally surrendered and laid flat. Whew! Unfortunately, the heat melted the boarding step, so I had to scratchbuild a new one from brass rod and strip styrene.

**21**

I taped the individual canopy sections in place first. When I was happy with how they were situated, I flowed white glue into the joins and wiped off any excess with a damp cotton swab.

**22**

After drilling .013-inch holes in the top of the fin, fuselage spine, and mast, I stretched EZ Line between the attachment points and held it in place with a dab of superglue. Beads of white glue later painted flat white became the insulators on the lines.



23

Tamiya NATO Black (No. XF-69) made a good base for the cannon color. I then rubbed the barrels with graphite powder I reserved from a draftsman's pencil sharpener and a Colour Shapers round tool. The tips of these tools are made of composite rubber, great for applying and manipulating pigments and pastels. You can easily clean the tips with lacquer thinner.

SOURCES

Zoukei-Mura Raiden Turned Metal Machine Gun Set (No. SWS05-M03)

Zoukei-Mura Raiden Photo-etched Interior Set (No. SWS05-M04)

Zoukei-Mura Raiden Photo-etched Exterior Set (No. SWS05-M05)

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Japanese Aircraft of the Pacific War, René J. Francillon, Naval Institute Press, ISBN 978-0-870-21313-7

J2M Raiden and N1K1/2 Shiden/ Shiden-Kai Aces, Yasuho Izawa, Tony Holmes, Jim Laurier

(Illustrator), Osprey Publishing, ISBN 978-1-472-81261-2

Japanese Aircraft of World War II: 1937-1945, Thomas Newdick, Amber Books, ISBN 978-1-782-74474-0

Mitsubishi J2M Raiden (Jack), Robert Pęczkowski, Stratus (Mushroom Model Publications), ISBN 978-8-391-63277-2

Concept Note SWS No. VI, Hideyuki Shigeta, Zoukei-Mura Publishing, ISBN 978-4-903-59617-4

Famous Airplanes of the World, No. 61: Navy Interceptor Raiden (J2M) "Jack," Bunrindo Company, ISBN 978-4-893-19058-1 (Text in Japanese)



FINAL THOUGHTS

I PICKED OUT SMALLER AREAS of bare metal with a Prismacolor silver pencil and then refined with a Colour Shaper. Rub 'n Buff Silver Leaf worked well for larger sections where paint had rubbed away, especially at the wing root where Lt. j.g. Aoki would step. The code numbers on the tail indicate the 20th aircraft of the 352nd Kokutai and were individually cut out from the single piece of clear decal film they were printed on. An overspray of Testors Dullcote with a few drops of gray created a muted, dusty appearance. The wingtip lights were painted Tamiya Clear Red (No. X-27, port) and Clear Blue (No. X-23, starboard). I spent 120 hours during seven months building the Zoukei-Mura 1/32 scale Raiden kit. It was a challenge at times, but overall it's an excellent representation of the real thing, and I'm pleased with the outcome. **FSM**

A PHOENIX RISES

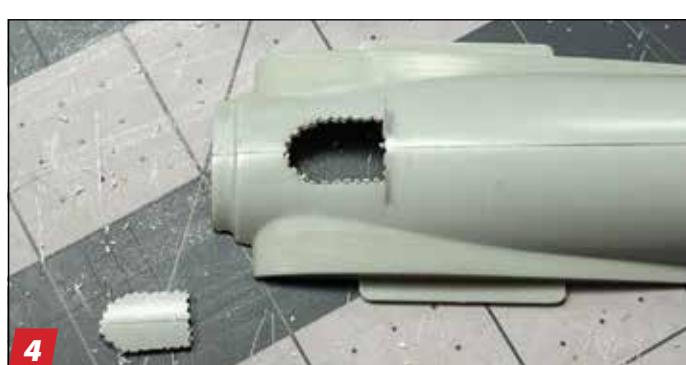


Making a famous movie aircraft from a C-119 kit
and scratchbuilt parts

BY PHILLIP GORE

One of my favorite movies, *The Flight of the Phoenix* from 1965, is about a small group whose twin-engine cargo plane gets caught in a sandstorm and makes an emergency crash landing deep in the Sahara Desert. One of the passengers, a brilliant aircraft designer, tells the other survivors that a smaller, single-engine plane can be built from the wreckage and fly them to safety. The others know there is no hope of rescue and this long-shot option is preferable to slowly dying in the desert.

For decades, I've wanted to add a *Phoenix* model to my collection. Since no manufacturer has offered a kit of it, I convinced myself the easiest way to acquire one was to do what they did in the movie — start by heavily modifying a Fairchild C-119 Flying Boxcar and scratch-building the other required parts. Note, for the 1965 movie, two *Phoenix* airplanes were built, one flying and one non-flying (static). My build is of the static version seen in almost every exterior scene of the movie.



**10**

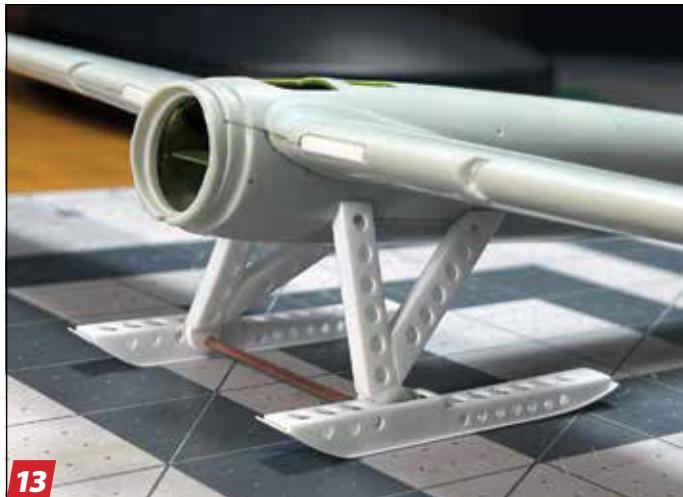
The *Phoenix* had multiple guy wires supported by cabane struts. I used brass rods to represent the struts, and here they are being test fitted.

**11**

I scratchbuilt four support legs using Evergreen $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch x $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch rectangular tubing, estimating the lengths based on studying stills from the movie. Then I marked off lightening holes and drilled them before gluing each piece in place.

**12**

The two skis used Evergreen $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch square tubing, and the completed front sections are shown in the photo. False wheels are included on the skis of the non-flying *Phoenix*, but only to make it more closely resemble the flying version.

**13**

I test-fitted the finished ski assemblies to the main body. Brass .032-inch tubing creates the wheel axle.

**14**

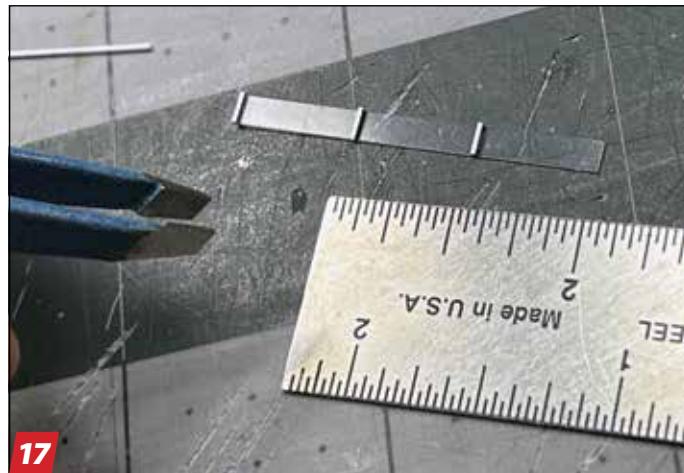
After painting the basic colors, I added dry transfer lettering (burnished on decal film). Dental floss taped across the length of the fuselage in a straight line makes sure the decals line up.

**15**

I weathered the main assembly first by adding dark gray pastel dust in the recessed lines of the elevators, stabilizers, and flaps. Next, I burnished medium gray dust randomly with a soft, thick makeup brush, creating an overall grimy, dirty effect.

**16**

Final weathering of all the components included adding aluminum paint applied with a bit of sponge held in tweezers and delicately dabbed along edges where chips would naturally occur.

**17**

I cut the wing fairings the movie's passengers laid behind from .007-inch thick clear film. I painted Evergreen .020-inch strip braces Alclad Dull Aluminum (No. ALC-117) and attached them with white glue.

**18**

I ran Fine Black EZ Line for all of the guy wire rigging and held it in place with superglue.

**19**

A wooden base with a pale yellow desert landscape is the perfect permanent resting spot for my 1/72 scale *Phoenix*.

I normally try to keep my builds close to box stock, but this project forced me out of my comfort zone with its scratchbuilding and modifications. My desire to have a nice display of this airplane pushed me to do more than I thought I was capable of, and it was a great experience. **FSM**







Combine armor-modeling techniques
to weather an abandoned AT-AT

BY RAFAŁ LEBIODA

Derelict K-2S-R

For a *Star Wars* lover like me, the Bandai kits for the universe have always been impressive. Inexplicably, I'm drawn to the AT-AT, and have built many — usually one that's functioning. This time around, I wanted to build one of the behemoths destroyed in battle.

With a 1/144 scale AT-AT kit in hand, I reviewed the contents and planned the build process. Considering the modifications I intended to make, and the number of parts packed into the box, I knew I was in for a good time, especially since I'd already built this kit three times before!



Following the instructions, I built the AT-AT head, hull, undercarriage, and three legs (almost by heart at this point). I also made three small gouges with a rotary tool and round burr in the side of the hull for blast marks. Then I sprayed the subassemblies with Mr. White Surfacer 1000.

**2**

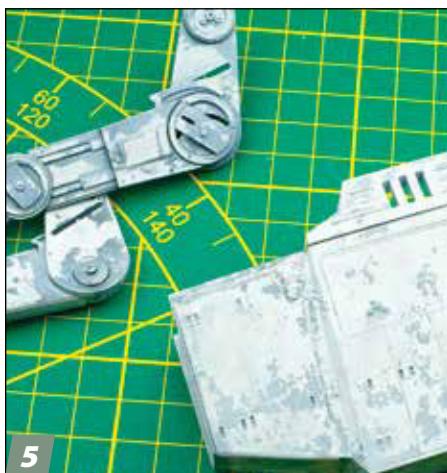
For the damaged leg, I cut out structural elements with snips and a razor saw and superglued lengths of various diameter wire and thin foil to the leg for a ragged look.

**3**

I sprayed clear varnish over the primer. Once dry, I added two light coats of hair spray. After a few minutes, I airbrushed the subassemblies with Mr. Hobby RLM 66 Black Gray (No. H416).

**4**

Then I moistened the paint with warm water, which allows it to break free of the hair spray, and chipped and peeled it with a toothpick, needle, old toothbrush, and dental tools.

**5**

To tone down the contrast between the dark gray and white, I misted coats of thinned white paint over the subassemblies. I applied clear varnish to protect all my work up to this point.

**6**

After picking out the wires on the damaged leg with red, blue, and yellow, I tapped areas with a section of sponge dipped in Vallejo German Camouflage Black Brown (No. 70.822).

**7**

I masked select panels and airbrushed gradients of extremely thinned mixes of yellow, orange, and brown to show how the environment affected the underlying metal.

**8**

I airbrushed the same diluted colors elsewhere on the AT-AT, like the undercarriage, head, and feet, keeping the colors darker on panel centers and let it feather and lighten toward the edges. To prep for washes, I coated the subassemblies with gloss varnish.

**9**

A dark brown wash from artist oils and mineral spirits shows the AT-AT's age. I applied the wash over each subassembly and allowed it to dry for 30 minutes. I removed the excess with cotton swabs damp with mineral spirits. When I was happy with the appearance, I flat coated.

**10**

At this point, I put together the hull, undercarriage, and head. Along the way, I touched up washes in places where I thought it was required, and I could really see the AT-AT start to take shape.

**11**

Brown and rust colored pigments enhanced the AT-AT's decrepit looks. Applied with a medium brush, I worked them into the desired areas and fixed them with mineral spirits.

**12**

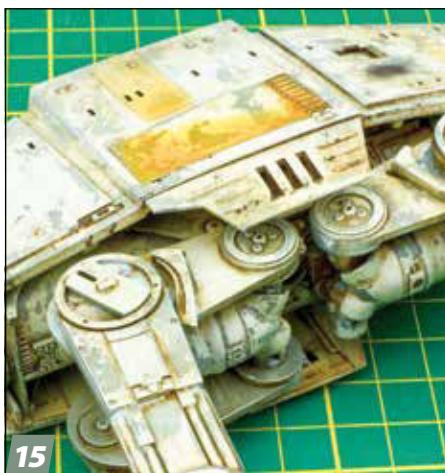
I picked out the hits from laser blasts on the hull with black pigments and feathered out the scorch marks around them. Again, mineral spirits locked down the pigments.

**13**

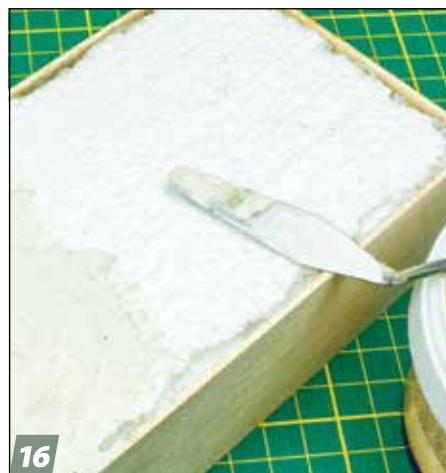
I applied LifeColor Liquid Pigment Deep Rust (No. LPW 06), Eroding Light Rust (No. LPW 08), and Yellow Marks (No. LPW 10) around the hull and legs. Don't use too much!

**14**

I thought a dangling head cannon would add dynamic flare to the model. I finished painting it and attached to it a length of the thinnest wire I could find to represent a power cable.

**15**

Next, I glued on the legs, using thick superglue for strength. The jagged, damaged leg was last so I didn't snag it while working. A soft-leaded pencil gave exposed edges a sooty look.

**16**

I cut a rectangle of EPS foam and tidied up the sides with balsa wood sheets. Wood putty sprinkled with small pebbles and sand on top made a desert landscape.

**17**

I painted the ground various sandy colors before positioning the AT-AT and locking it in place with superglue. Then I adjusted the groundwork, adding more putty and sand to make the walker a part of its surroundings rather than just plopped into a scene.

**18**

I placed the parts snipped off the damaged leg on the ground and partially buried them in sand. I also attached the dangling cannon and remaining detail parts. Then I gave the whole base and the AT-AT a misting of sand-colored paint to tie the scene together.

**19**

Lastly, I applied streaks with Ammo Oilbrushers Dark Mud (No. A.Mig-3508) and Ochre (No. A.Mig-3515) and touched up areas I thought needed a bit of a kick with pastels and called the deserted AT-AT complete. **FSM**

A NEW TRUCK

for a new Army



Gary Myers marked his M715 for Delta Company of the 16th Engineer Battalion, assigned to the U.S. Army 1st Armored Division garrisoned in Fürth, West Germany, in the mid-1970s.

Remake the Revell 1980 Jeep Honcho into a Cold War warrior

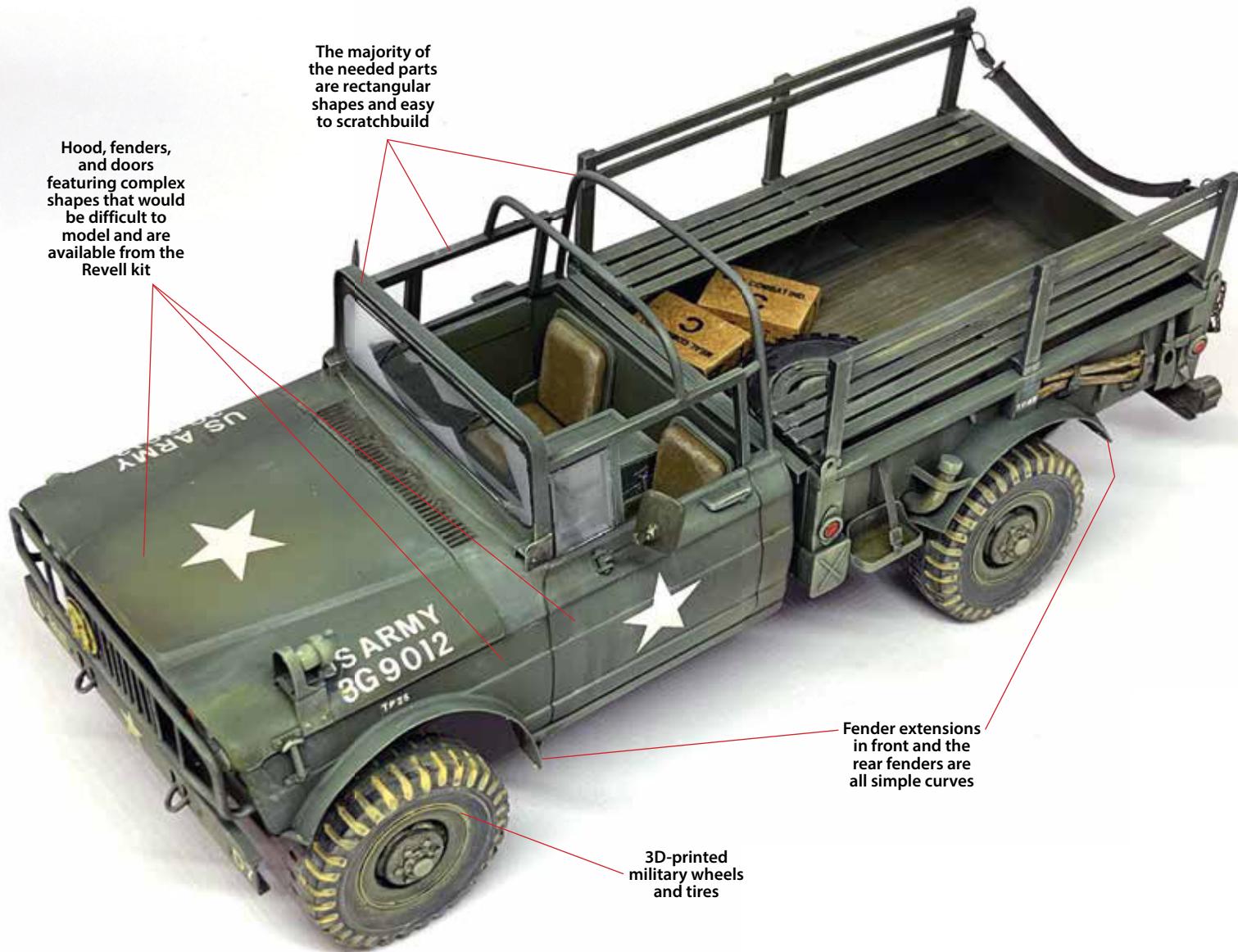
BY GARY MEYERS

A 1968 Kaiser Jeep advertisement promoting its M715 1 1/4-ton military truck declared, "A new truck for a new Army." Ironically, the guts of the new military truck were hardly new, based largely on the Jeep Gladiator pickup introduced in 1962. Moreover, the M715 featured an innovative but troublesome overhead-cam engine that would disappear from civilian versions about the same time soldiers started receiving the M715.

In order to save time and cost, the U.S. Army kept modifications to the civilian truck to a minimum. The result was a vehicle that seemed to have been spawned in Dr. Frankenstein's laboratory. The utilitarian cargo bed mated to the stylish sheet metal of the Gladiator's hood and fenders; a scar remained evident

where the curved and raked windshield had been discarded in favor of a flat one hinged to fold down against the hood; the sleek metal roof had been lopped off and replaced by a bulky canvas one; smooth fender flares integrated with the cab's styling were sliced off and replaced with plain sheet metal fender extensions that protruded at right angles to accommodate lugged wheels and rugged military tires.

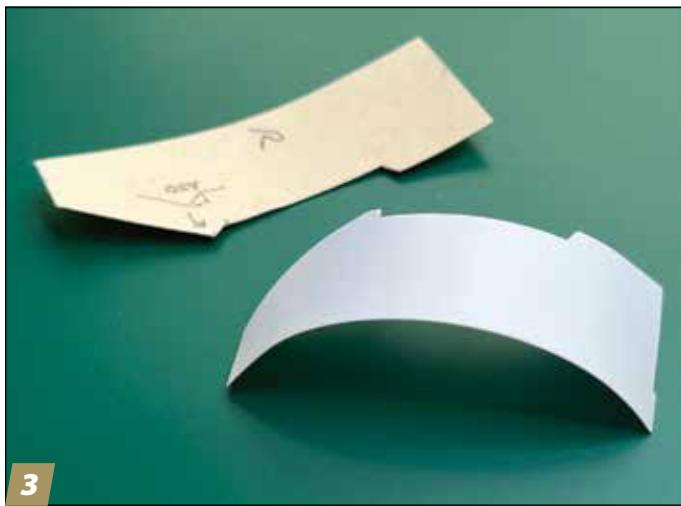
With no M715 kit in 1/25 scale, I'd have to do it myself. The base for my model was the Revell 1/25 scale 1980 Jeep Honcho (No. 85-7224). I saw the M715 in the lines of its cab and quickly confirmed the Honcho was essentially a Gladiator under a different name and with updated trim and features. Most importantly, the sheet metal and running gear were correct for an M715 project.



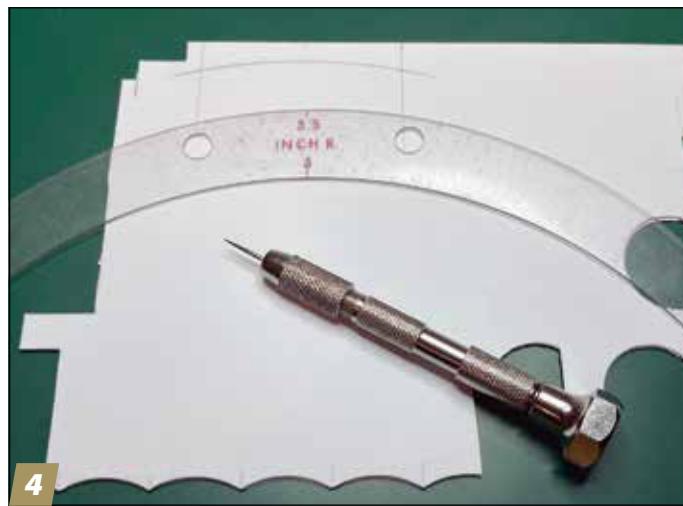
I like to tackle the difficult tasks first — the M715 cab exterior, in this case. Repeated passes of a scribing tool made easy work of separating the civilian cargo bed.



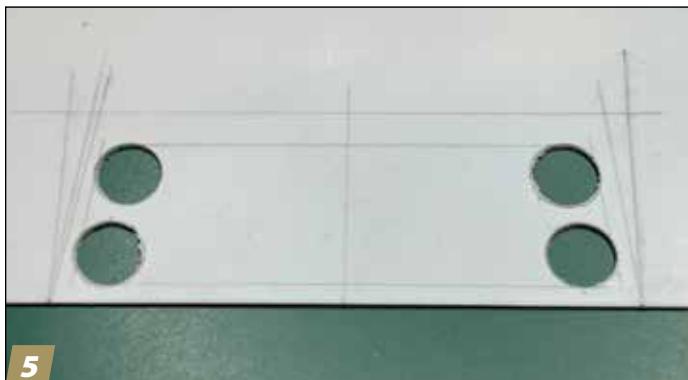
After removing the civilian fender flares, I glued a 1.8-inch diameter semicircular guide of .02-inch sheet styrene to each fender to radius the wheel openings. I repeatedly drew a compass point chucked in a pin vise along the guide to eventually cut the new wheel openings.

**3**

I made templates from old manila file folders. I fashioned them via trial and error after test-fitting the cab, chassis, and interior together. When I had the shapes, I traced them onto .01-inch styrene sheet and cut them out with a sharp hobby knife.

**4**

After removing the top of the cab even with the tops of the doors using a razor saw and sanding and filing the results, I cut the filler between the old, curved windshield and the new, straight one with an engineering circle template and my compass-point scribing tool.

**5**

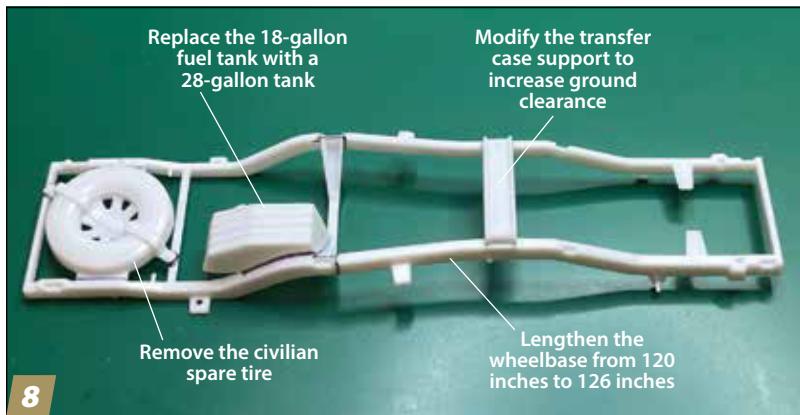
I used smaller circle templates as a guide to cut uniform corners for the trapezoidal windshield opening in .02-inch styrene sheet. These circles were then connected via straight lines to complete the opening. To complete the part, I wrapped the edge of the frame with strips cut to width from .01-inch styrene sheet.

**6**

To avoid damage, I delayed adding the thin fender extensions until I completed other work on the cab, including installing the completed windshield frame. Also, note the back panel of .02-inch styrene sheet and brace to strengthen the cab.

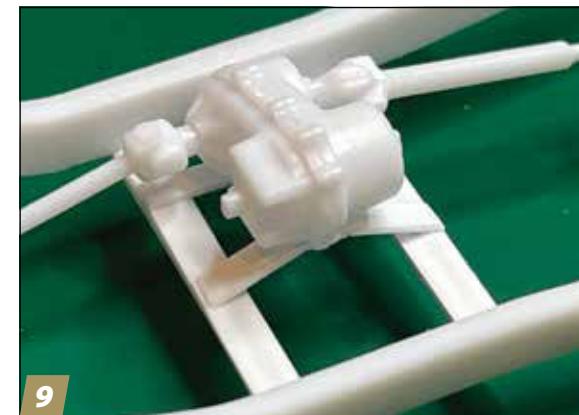
**7**

I estimated the shape of the hoops for the cab's canvas top from references. Polystyrene rods forced into a wooden jig and heat set using a hair dryer made the hoops. The amount of time and heat this process takes depends on the diameter of the rod.



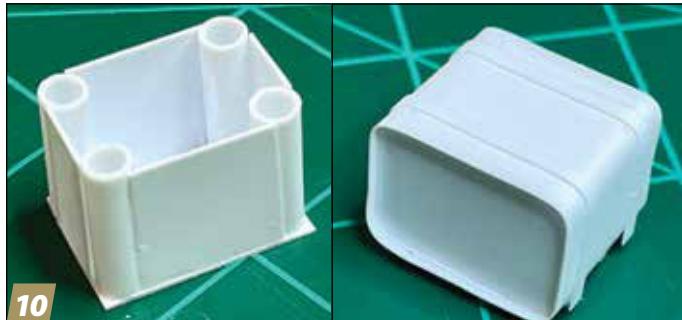
8

Although I didn't intend to detail the underside of the M715 or its engine, four modifications were essential for the finished model's appearance.



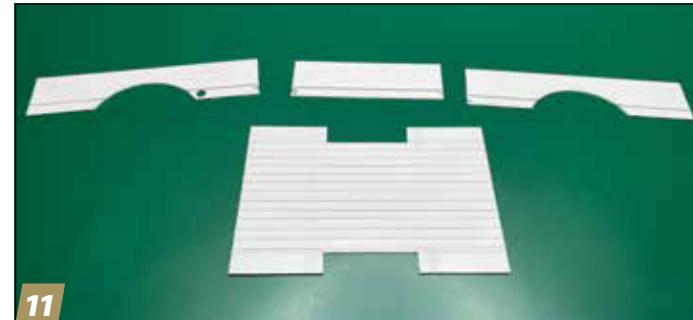
9

New supports fashioned from .04-inch styrene strip raised the transfer case above the bottom level of the side frame rails in accordance to references.



10

Four $\frac{3}{16}$ -inch-diameter styrene tubes formed the new gas tank's rounded corners. After the basic shape was complete, I sheathed it with .01-inch styrene sheet for a realistic thickness on the overhang on each side of the tank.



11

The truck's cargo bed is fundamentally a box I built from .02-inch styrene sheet using measurements from internet references.



12

I fleshed out the cargo bed details with angle, U, and strip styrene. The wheel wells and fenders were made by curving .01-inch styrene sheet into the space and cementing it in place.



13

To make sure the frame remained straight and true during the lengthening process, I made a jig out of .04-inch styrene stock (painted yellow). This locked in the distance between the insides of the wheels (the wheel base) and the axle height at half the tire diameter.

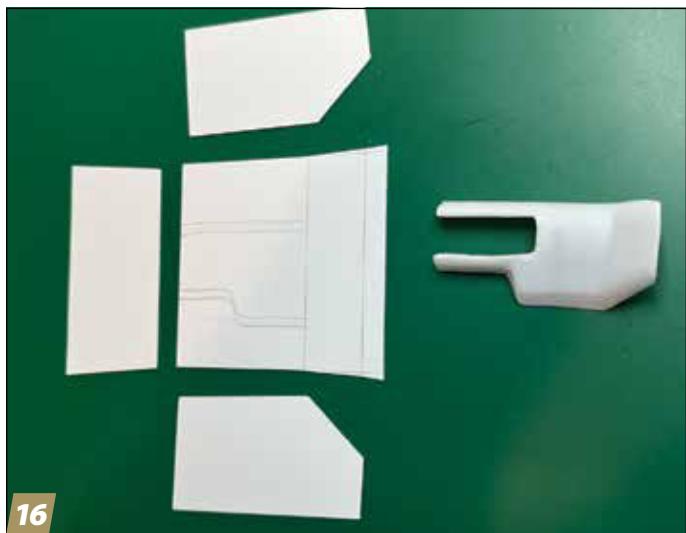


14

I downloaded a period-correct Jeep logo from the internet, resized it, and printed it on adhesive label paper. I applied the label to .01-inch styrene sheet and used it as a template to cut out the letters for the embossed logo on the tailgate.



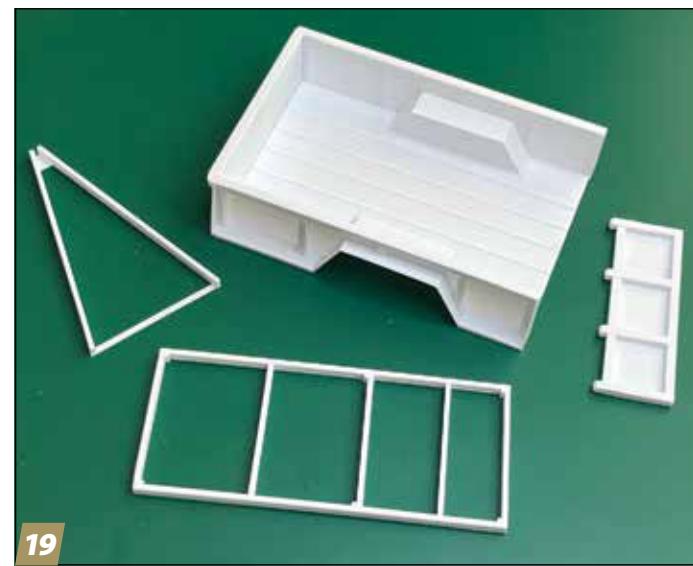
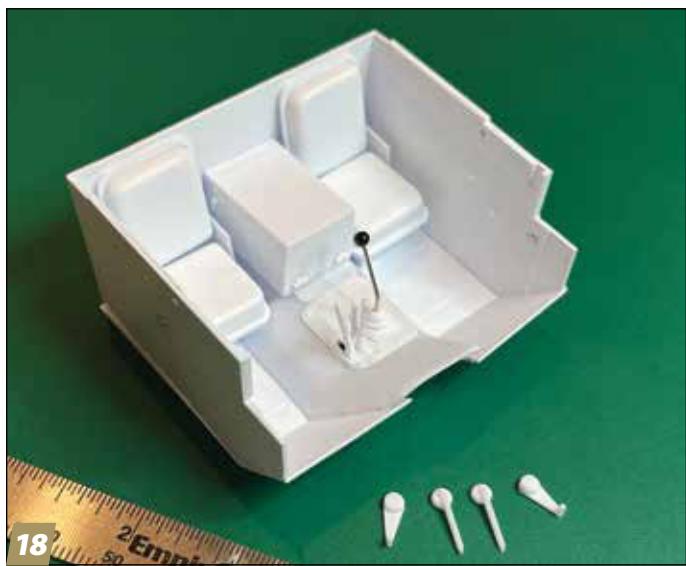
For the brush guard, I cut loose the upper rail of the kit part (A) and attached it to a new lower rail made from $\frac{1}{16}$ -inch styrene rod (B). After adding the outer verticals, I made the center section on a jig with the smaller verticals glued parallel in slots scribed into the jig (C). Next, I snipped the top of each vertical to separate it from the jig (D) and glued them to the guard's top rail. Before the glue set, I trimmed the bottom of each vertical and cemented them to the guard's bottom rail (E).



To model the spartan M715 interior, I had to replace the kit's tub interior. I retained the transmission hump, using a scribing tool to remove it. Then I built a new tub from .02-inch styrene sheet. The only other part I kept from the kit for the interior was the steering wheel.



Seat frames constructed of .02-inch styrene sheet were lined with .04-inch square stock. I made cushions from layered and cemented .04-inch styrene sheet filed and sanded to simulate the soft corners.



To facilitate painting and weathering, the interior tub was completed prior to final assembly. I built a battery box between the seats and the door panels from styrene sheet. The door handles and cranks were made from styrene rod, and the shifter is a pin bent to the correct angle. I embossed the rivets on the transfer case panel and etched the contours in the floor with multiple passes of a scribing tool.

I modeled a M101 3/4-ton trailer using many of the same techniques I'd used for the truck's cargo bed. I found the basic dimensions in a U.S. Army technical manual and supplemented the details with photo references I found on the internet.



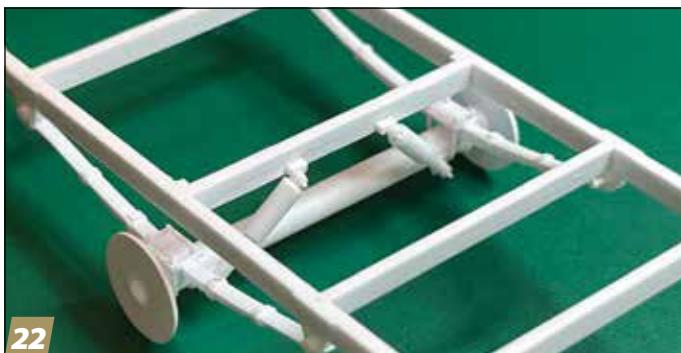
20

I scratchbuilt the trailer leaf springs on a jig made from basswood sheet and two small brads. I sketched the shape for the springs and built them from .06-inch styrene rod drilled to match the brad diameter and narrow .01-inch styrene strips. The arrows indicate weak points I had to reinforce later.



21

For the towing lunette, I went old school, wrapping .06-inch styrene rod around a nail and carefully heating it with a hair dryer so it retained its shape. Don't melt the plastic! A single turn was cut off and flattened to form the lunette ring. I threaded the attached rod with a watchmaker's tap-and-die set. I cut the bolt from styrene sheet and sliced the washer from the end of a styrene tube.



22

The remaining parts of the trailer's undercarriage were fashioned from circular rods and tubes: $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch tube for the axle; .10-inch and .06-inch rods for the shock absorbers, with the larger piece drilled out to accommodate the smaller. Bits of smaller rods were used for the shock brackets and mounts.



REFERENCES

M715 Operator's Manual (TM9-2320-244-10), U.S. Army

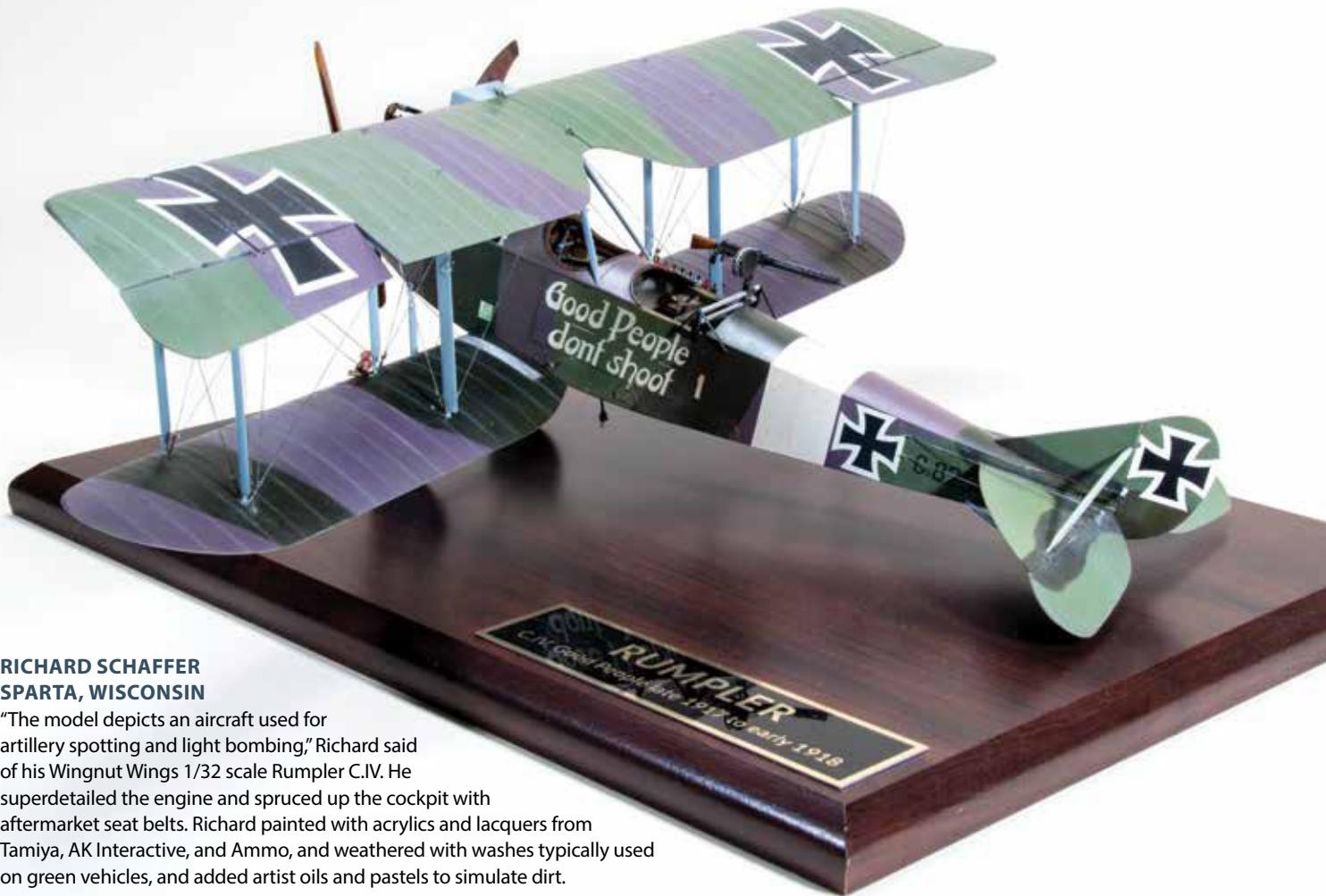
Equipment Data Sheets for TARCOM Equipment, (TM43-0001-31), U.S. Army

Websites, including oljeep.com, M715zone.com, and steelsoldiers.com

FINAL THOUGHTS

AFTER PAINTING THE TRUCK AND TRAILER, I marked them with star decals from my spares box and Microscale HO scale Railroad Gothic Letters and Numbers decals. And artist-oils dot filter and a thin wash of Vallejo Iraqi Sand added weathering.

Completing a major conversion like this will test your research, planning, and modeling skills. But the rewards are well worth the effort. **FSM**



RICHARD SCHAFFER SPARTA, WISCONSIN

"The model depicts an aircraft used for artillery spotting and light bombing," Richard said of his Wingnut Wings 1/32 scale Rumpler C.IV. He superdetailed the engine and spruced up the cockpit with aftermarket seat belts. Richard painted with acrylics and lacquers from Tamiya, AK Interactive, and Ammo, and weathered with washes typically used on green vehicles, and added artist oils and pastels to simulate dirt.

► **VICTOR DEMICHEI**
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN
Victor calls this 1/25 scale unit the *Autonomous Amphibious Urban Assault Vehicle*. Coming completely from his imagination, Victor scratchbuilt this model. It includes a bomb-sniffing "robo" dog, wheels made from Nerf bullets, motors derived from earbuds, four 8-foot-tall robot officers, a .50-caliber machine gun, water cannon, concussion rockets with launcher, and a plethora of equipment fit for a dystopian future cityscape.





◀ **KEVIN COUCH**
FINDLAY, OHIO
Parts from here, there, and everywhere went into Kevin's 1/25 scale rat rod. He chopped off the cab of a 1937 Chevy pickup and then started adding bits and pieces until he arrived at his destination. Kevin dry-brushed the cab, weathered heavily using the salt technique with acrylic paints and a gray "wet" wash.



▲ **JOHN CLANCY**
MENOMINEE FALLS, WISCONSIN

John is well known as a paper modeler, and he worked his magic to build Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry from *Harry Potter*. He printed the parts on an inkjet printer, using 17 standard leafs, but realized the instructions were written only in Chinese. After some searching, he found someone online who built the model and followed their directions. After a week, mostly spent cutting out the various parts, John had re-created Harry Potter's alma mater in miniature!

▲ **MIKE KOHTA**
GREEN BAY, WISCONSIN

Mike's diorama, *Age of Innocence*, depicts Ukrainian troops on a captured Russian tank waving at a photographer and refugees. He used 1/35 scale Dragon and Trumpeter Shika AA and BMP3-E tanks and added LEDs from Evans Designs to illuminate their interiors. Painting, Mike went with Vallejo acrylics, Tamiya enamels, and artist oils, and worked both with an airbrush and paintbrushes.

**MATT MINNICHSSOFFER
LINDSTROM, MINNESOTA**

Matt built an Eduard 1/48 scale P-51B Mustang box stock and decorated it in D-Day markings for *Flying Scot II/Vicious Virgie* flying out of Bodney, England, piloted by Lt. Carleton Fuhrman. He primed the plane with Mr. Finish 1500, pre-shaded panel lines, and painted the natural-metal finish first. Next came the blue nose, and Matt left the invasion stripes for last. Pastels colored the nose and wings for exhaust.

**▲ ROB TEUBERT
EDGERTON, WISCONSIN**

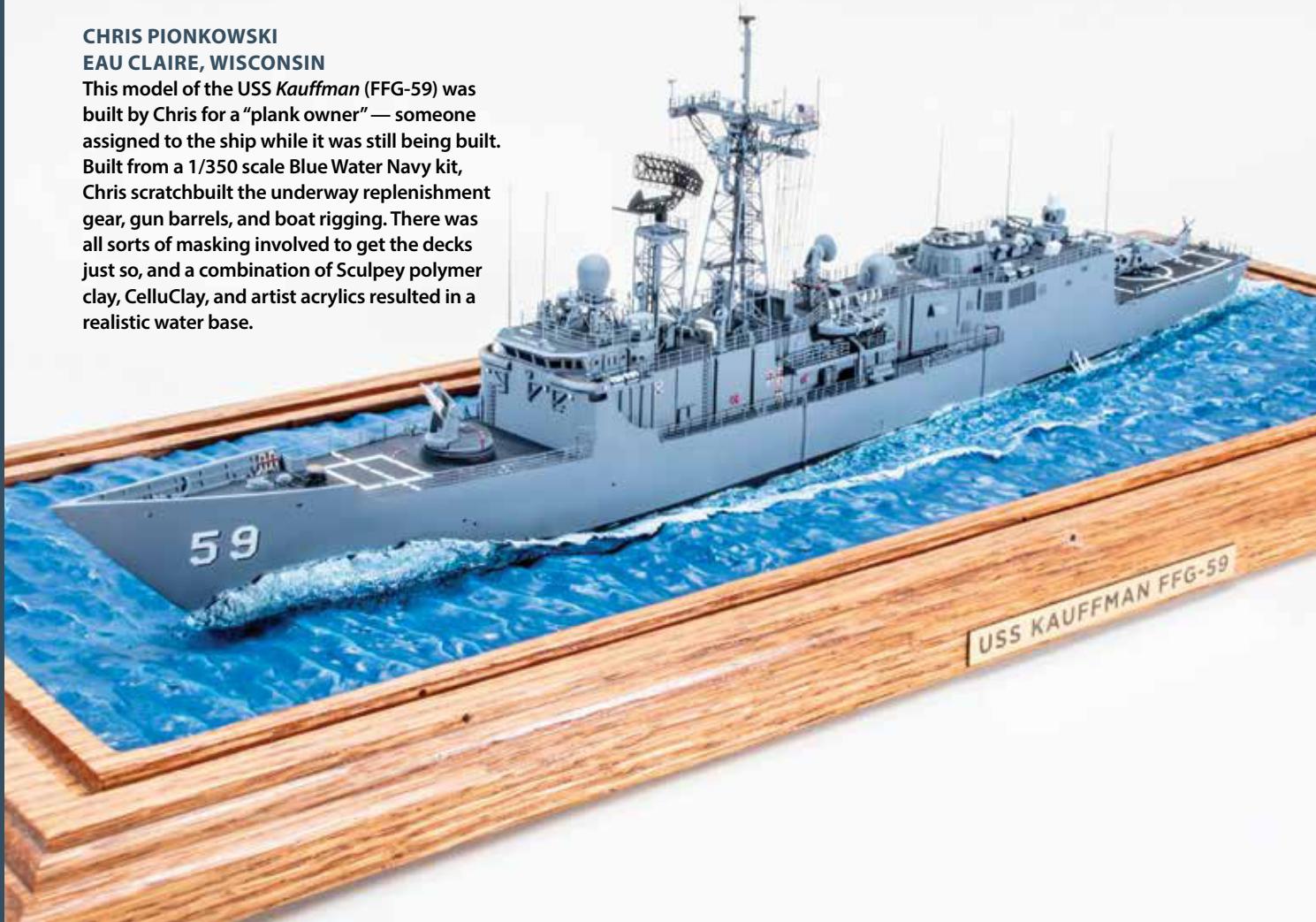
This 1/72 scale Char I Bis wears markings for the Free French Forces in 1944. Rob reworked the front vision slot, added cast texture to the Trumpeter kit's turret and hull, and installed exhaust covers, rear chain hooks, and chains. AK Interactive acrylics furnished the tank's colors, and he hand-painted the markings to reflect those on the real vehicle.



**▲ HOWARD QUEDNAU
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA**
Howard combined a Tamiya 1/24 scale Vespa and a resin figure for his fun "Scooter Girl" model. He painted the Vespa Tamiya Orange from the spray can and finished the helmeted rider with Tamiya acrylics and artist-oil washes. He made the base by cutting a circle from a thin sheet of plywood and spray-painting a fun striped pattern that gives the model motion, almost like a frame from a comic book.

CHRIS PIONKOWSKI**EAU CLAIRE, WISCONSIN**

This model of the USS *Kauffman* (FFG-59) was built by Chris for a “plank owner”—someone assigned to the ship while it was still being built. Built from a 1/350 scale Blue Water Navy kit, Chris scratchbuilt the underway replenishment gear, gun barrels, and boat rigging. There was all sorts of masking involved to get the decks just so, and a combination of Sculpey polymer clay, CelluClay, and artist acrylics resulted in a realistic water base.

**◀MICHAEL****BADINGER****CHAMPLIN,**
MINNESOTA

This is the first Games Workshop Warhammer 40K vehicle Michael has modeled, and he said this 28mm Dakkajet pushed his skills. Supplied with numerous options in the kit, he built what he liked and added a 3D-printed Grot to a spare bomb as homage to *Dr. Strangelove*. He hand-painted the scheme over Rust-Oleum Black Primer, sticking with The Army Painter acrylic colors, wash, and panel liner.





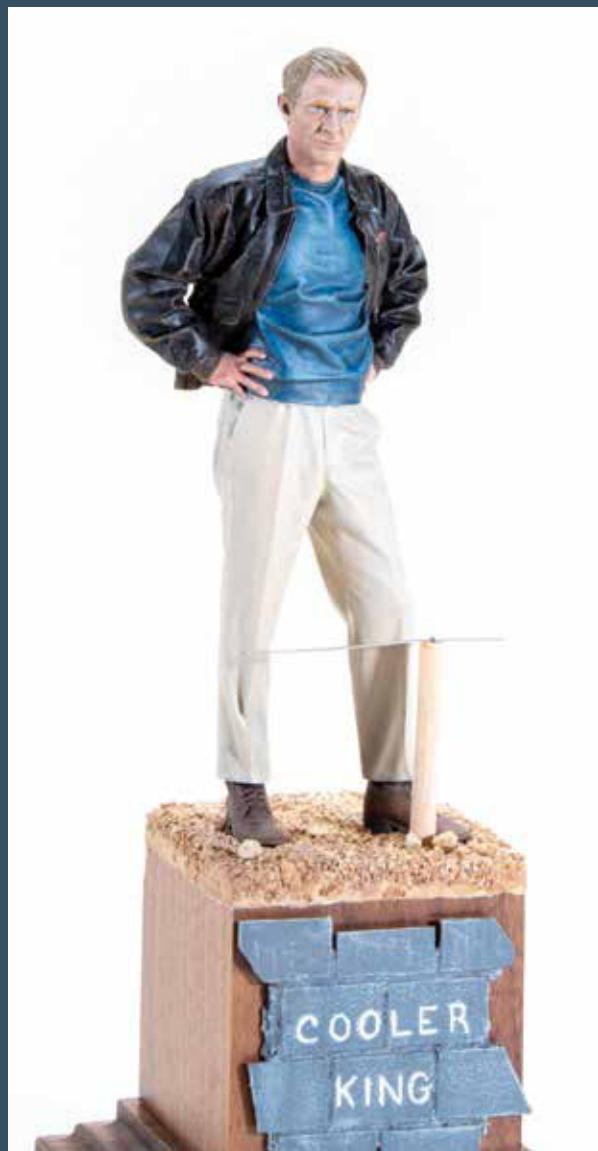
◀ WEYLIN ALBINIAK

DULUTH, MINNESOTA

This MSM-3 Gogg has seen the end of its fighting days. Weylin built a Bandai 1/144 scale kit, severing one appendage and finishing it to show a long forgotten mech. He primed the model black, dry-brushed silver, and stippled colors and rust effects across its surface before layering in pastels and washes. For an added touch, Weylin decorated the Gogg with moss and miniature flowers to show it has become part of the countryside where it lies.

▲ GARY ANDERSON
BLOOMINGTON, MINNESOTA

To model his 1/72 scale Spanish galleon, Gary turned first to a Revell Ghost Ship and then equipped it with guns on the weather deck and a main sail from an Airfix HMS Prince. He rescued the flags and decals from his spares. The colorful trim comes from a combination of paint brands, including Tamiya and Model Master, wood stains, and paint pens. Gary said he found the wooden base at a thrift store, and he replaced its handle with a pair of skulls.

▲ TIM STREETER
EDINA, MINNESOTA

Modeling Steve McQueen as "The Cooler King" Hilts from *The Great Escape*, Tim hand-painted a 1/16 scale figure from H3. He layered colors from LifeColor, Model Master, and PolyScale to achieve realistic lighting. Putty and Woodland Scenics rocks made the groundwork. Tim made the 8th Air Force decal for the shoulder insignia and added scratches in the leather with burnt umber and yellow ochre.



◀ ROBERT PROKOP
CHASKA, MINNESOTA

Robert built this War Paint Studio 1/6 scale Vietnam OH-58 door gunner and added scratchbuilt safety harness straps, a comms cord, M-60 bungee, and the inside of the door. He painted and weathered with various acrylics and artist oils and added decals he found online. For the scenery, Robert used heavy-duty acrylic rod and artificial plants from an art store trimmed to size and arranged around the rod.

▼ DECLAN CHODAK
CHERRY HILL, NEW JERSEY

Declan scratchbuilt a base from styrene strip and finished it with acrylic paints and artist oils for his Cix Models 1/35 scale 1913 Indian board track racer and pilot. He painted the figure with Tamiya lacquers, Vallejo acrylics, and weathered with Winsor & Newton artist oils to make a figure and bike ready for a race in Milwaukee, Wis.





DAVE PESCHKE
SPRING GROVE, ILLINOIS

Aviattic Fokker F.I 103/17 decals and cowl, Aeroclub bezels, HGW Models seat belts, EZ Line rigging, and more modify Dave's Meng 1/32 scale Fokker Dr.I triplane to make it Werner Voss' prototype. Dave employed pre- and post-shading, acrylics, lacquers, and artist-oil washes to finish the model and placed it on a picture frame on top of a lazy susan.



▲ JAMES HUEBNER
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

James replaced the hull planking and wales on his Panart 1/78 scale HMS Victory bow cross-section ship model kit for better contrast. He built the gun port hatches with pull ropes and added ratlines and upper deadeyes. James stained the entire model and placed it on a base of stained oak trim and plywood.



▲ NOEL MEYER
WAUCONDA, ILLINOIS

Noel based her original sculpt on an Art Nouveau painting by Alphonse Mucha called *The Evening Star*. She attached brass trim to a picture frame backing and painted the sculpt with acrylics in a different color and lighting scheme than the original painting.

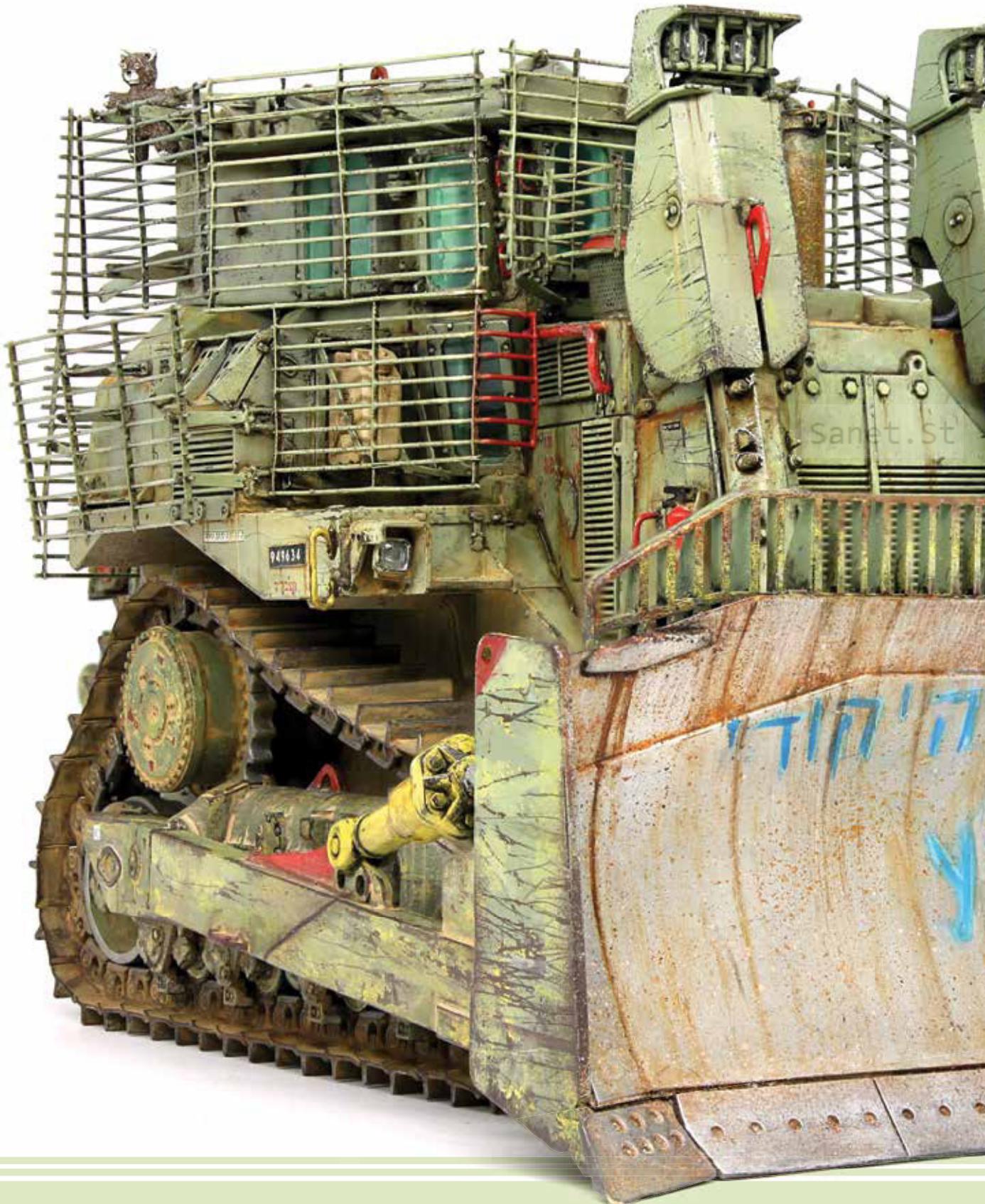


▲ GARY BAKER
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

Is this taxidermy or a bust? Gary made the Hammerline 1/10 scale Gemsbok bust look lifelike with acrylic paints and artist oils.



◀ RICK RASMUSSEN
DECORAH, IOWA
Rick kitbashed his 1/48 scale 8.8cm Flak 37 auf Panzerkampfwagen IV from a Tamiya chassis, Italeri 8.8cm Flak 37 AA gun, and Fruimodel metal tracks. He added CMK interior details and a carbon-fiber antenna in addition to airbrushing on Model Master enamels and weathering with pastels.



The Israeli Defense Force (IDF) has a decades-long record of deploying heavy D9 bulldozers in combat. First used during the Suez War (Operation Kadesh) in 1956, successive versions of the beast have appeared over the years performing combat engineering and assault missions. The commercial version of the Caterpillar D9 is huge and heavy,

comparable to a medium tank in weight. By the 1990s, the IDF had started adding even more weight by protecting its bulldozers with a comprehensive armor package. In this configuration, a D9's weight and dimensions are on par with a Merkava MBT.

The IDF relies on armored D9s in urban combat, often using them to clear paths and collapse structures. They can be fitted with



Armor and weather an

IDF D9

Photo-etched metal slat armor and myriad Ammo products complete a Meng 1/35 scale bulldozer

BY ILYA YUT

Ilya Yut spent about two weeks working on the plastic components and then another week soldering bar armor. Although he didn't run into any fit issues, the kit nor the photo-etched metal armor set are meant for beginners. But with the bulk of the building finished, he could concentrate on painting this bulldozing behemoth.

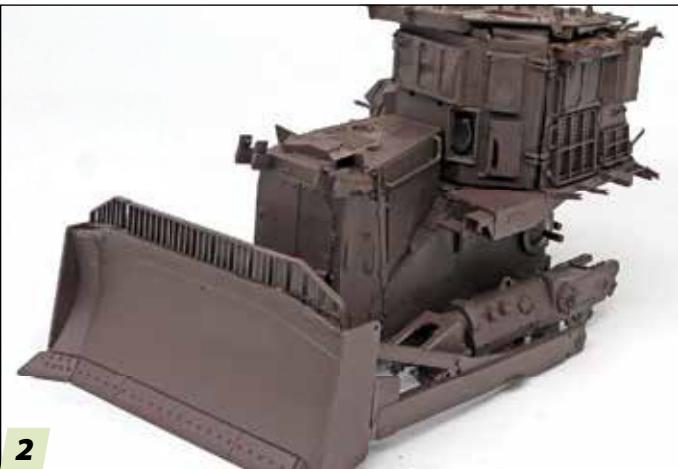
several different dozer blades and plows, and one version can be operated remotely. In recent years, the slat armor has been extended to cover the driver's cab roof, not just the sides.

The first time I saw a D9 model was a resin kit nearly 15 years ago. Meng released its 1/35 scale D9R Armored Bulldozer kit (No. SS-002) in 2013 and followed up with a slat-armored version (No.

SS-010) in 2016. In 2023, I was finally ready to tackle this subject, but I could only find the version without the slat armor (unless I wanted to pay double the price in an online auction). To make up for the missing armor, I bought an E.T. Model Israeli D9R Armored Bulldozer Slat Armor (No. E35-211) photo-etched metal (PE) set to go with it.

**1**

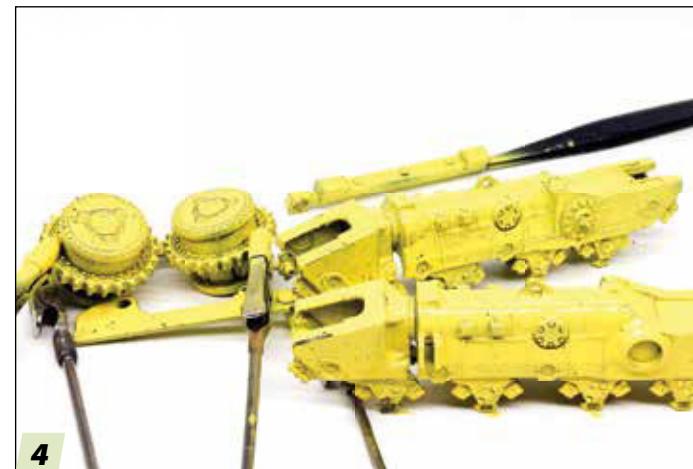
The PE slat armor sections, all soldered together, were rinsed with airbrush cleaner and then treated with Ammo Photoetch Burnishing Fluid (No. A.MIG-2021) to blacken the parts and help paint adhesion. Should paint flake off, there is a dark color underneath, not brass.

**2**

As always, I treated the model as a set of subassemblies for easier painting and weathering and started the process by airbrushing brown lacquer primer, mixed from Ammo A-Stand Black (No. A.MIG-2354), Brown (No. A.MIG-2353), and Oxide Red (No. A.MIG-2357) primers.

**3**

Wear and tear on IDF D9s often reveals the distinctive Caterpillar yellow paint beneath the military colors. To replicate this effect, I airbrushed two generous coats of Ammo Scratches Effects Chipping Fluid (No. A.MIG-2010) and let each coat dry 15 minutes before moving on.

**4**

I mixed Ammo Atom Yellow (No. ATOM-20018) and Cremeweiss (No. ATOM-20002) acrylic paint and airbrushed it over the chipping fluid. I let the paint dry for 20 minutes — the longer the paint sits, the smaller the chips you'll get, so manage your drying time accordingly.

**5**

After the paint had dried enough, I came in with a number of stiff-bristled brushes, a toothpick, and a cup of water. I dampened the brushes and began rubbing away the yellow paint on select areas, revealing the brown base color. Then I let everything dry for several hours and applied two more coats of chipping fluid.

**6**

For the IDF sand gray, I mixed Atom Matte White (No. ATOM-20000), Light Gray (No. ATOM-20141) and Green (No. ATOM-20084), sprayed it over the parts, and chipped it in the same manner as before. I even used a sharp airbrush needle for fine scratches.

**7**

I performed the previous chipping process on the armored hull but skipped airbrushing the commercial yellow. That wouldn't have been on the armored portion of the IDF D9, limiting the work to just the IDF sand gray over the brown primer.

**8**

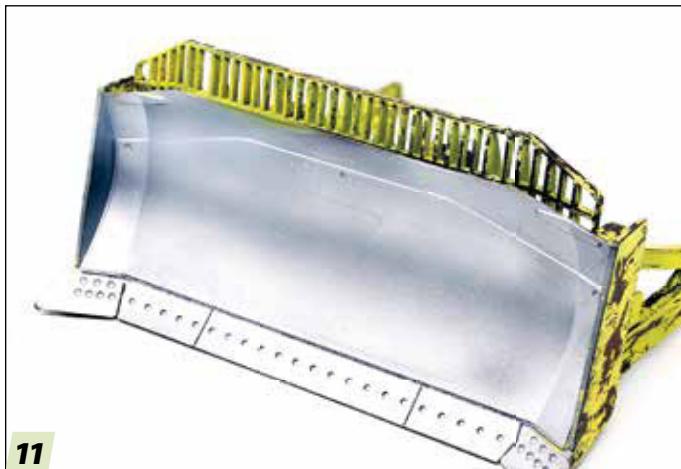
I picked out grab handles and other parts in red and refined the chipping with a fine-tipped paintbrush. The hairspray method creates a battered look, but lacks control. Also, I applied decals and helped them settle to the surface with Ammo Decal Fix (No. A.MIG-2030).

**9**

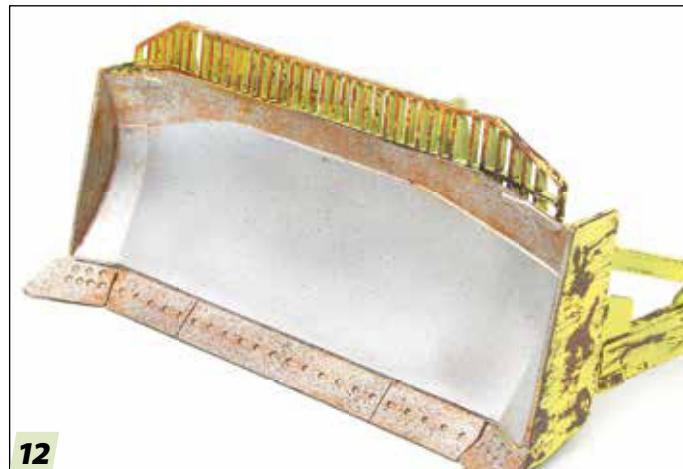
Details and furnishings for the cab interior were airbrushed separately and then glued in place. Afterward, I coated everything inside the cab with satin varnish to help washes flow and hold pigments in place.

**10**

Ammo Interiors Wash (No. A.MIG-1003) was applied to the interior, concentrated around details and recessed areas. I followed up with Ammo Golan Earth (No. A.MIG-2030) pigment, which took the starkly clean look and providing the appearance of a heavily used vehicle.

**11**

Everytime I paint a dozer blade on a model, I do my best to try something different. This time, I opted for rusty streaks over a metal finish. The first steps were priming and chipping the commercial yellow, like I did in steps 4, 5, and 6. Next, I airbrushed the blade A-Stand Polished Aluminum (No. A.MIG-2304).

**12**

I masked the central portion of the blade and speckled the lower and upper areas with Atom Rust (No. ATOM-200045), Orange (No. ATOM-20027), and Dark Rust (No. ATOM-20047). I dabbed an old paintbrush in the color and then drew the bristles against a toothpick to get the random spatter.

**13**

D9s in the field display a wide variety of slogans painted on the dozer blades. I saw one that, translated from Hebrew, read "The Jew-Bear has arrived," a reference to the the D9's nickname ("small bear") and a character from the movie *Inglourious Basterds*.

**14**

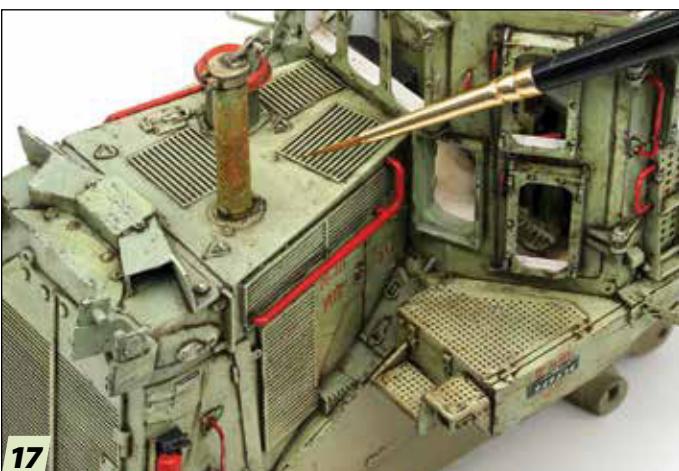
I sealed my work under satin varnish and prepped a wash from Ammo Oilbrusher Dark Brown (No. A.MIG-3512) and Rust (No. A.MIG-3510) and Ammo Odorless Enamel Thinner (No. A.MIG-2018). I applied the wash along panel lines and in and around other details on the blade.

**15**

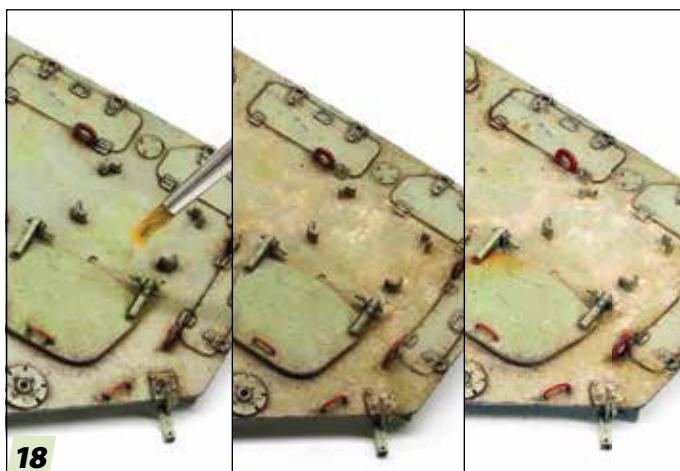
Moisten a saw-toothed weathering brush and a fine-tipped paintbrush with enamel thinner, dip them in artist oils, and drag them downward to create rust streaks. Here, I've used Oilbrusher Rust, Red Tile (No. A.MIG-3525), and Ochre (No. A.MIG-3515).

**16**

To finish off the dozer blade, I went back and added a more rust and dust speckles, repeating the processes above. For a touch of metallic shine, Ammo Dio Drybrush Light Metal (No. A.MIG-0621) worked well applied with dedicated dry-brushes.

**17**

With the dozer blade out of the way, I sealed the D9 hull with satin varnish and leaned into weathering. First, I applied Ammo Africa Korps (No. A.MIG-1001) and Black (No. A.MIG-1011) washes. I turned to Oilbrusher Dark Brown (No. A.MIG-3512), Mud (No. A.MIG-3508), and Earth (No. A.MIG-3514) for shadows and a bit of discoloration.

**18**

After I was happy with shadows and depth, Ammo Airfield Dust (A.MIG-3011), Sand (No. A.MIG-3012), and Middle East Dust (No. A.MIG-3018) pigments affixed with odorless thinner created a layer of dust. I topped things off with Wet Effects (No. A.MIG-1802), Fresh Engine Oil (No. A.MIG-1800), and Fuel Stains (No. A.MIG-1801).



19

Underneath, I airbrushed the lower hull Atom Dust (No. ATOM-20143) for a fine layer of dust. Then I streaked dirt with Oilbrusher Yellow Bone (No. A.MIG-3521), Buff (No. A.MIG-3517), and Summer Soil (No. A.MIG-3534) and a saw-toothed brush.



20

After adding rust streaks, I speckled the lower hull with Ammo Kursk Soil (No. A.MIG-1400), Dark Mud (No. A.MIG-1405), and Fresh Mud (No. A.MIG-1402) enamel effects. Rainmarks (No. A.MIG-1208) and a fine-tipped brush helped reinforce individual streaks.



21

I mixed Ammo North Africa Dust (No. A.MIG-3003), Negev Sand (No. A.MIG-3024), Middle East Dust, and Sand pigments into pastes with enamel thinner and applied it to the single-shank ripper and running gear. The wheels were dry-brushed light metal.



22

For the tracks, after the brown primer, I dry-brushed them thoroughly with Dio Drybrush Gun Metal (No. A.MIG-0622) and Light Metal. Then I applied Ammo Light Rust Wash (No. A.MIG-1004) to the inner areas that don't contact the wheels.



23

Then I applied Middle East dust pigment as a paste. After letting the pigment dry, I wiped away the excess and dry-brushed Dio Drybrush Gun Metal on the track contact points with a flat paintbrush.



24

Now that all of the subassemblies were painted and weathered, I just needed to put the model together one last time. I fixed any issues I had during final assembly as I went, and touched up paint and weathering as needed. **FSM**

Making the GRADE

A 1/35 scale World War II bulldozer presents challenges worth leveling

BY ANDREW COOPER

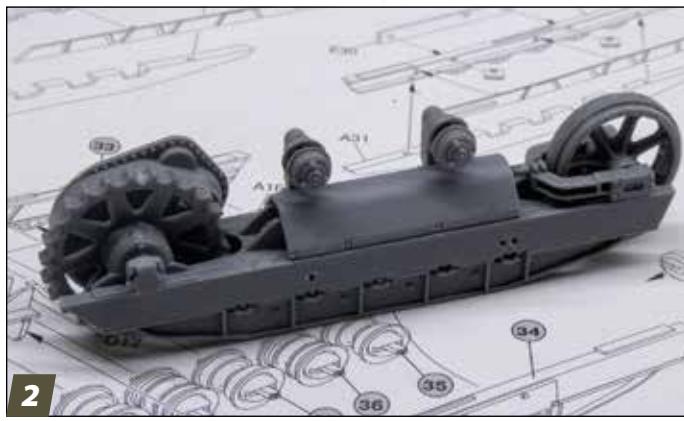
My fascination with military engineering vehicles has led me down many conversion paths and projects over the years. However, I think one type of vehicle often gets overlooked: the humble bulldozer. When MiniArt released several different kits of the Caterpillar D7 in 1/35 scale, this oversight was, in my opinion, corrected. The next step, naturally, was to build one. I chose the U.S. armored tractor with angled dozer blade (No. 35291).

The mountain of sprues inside the box made me wonder where all the parts would go, considering the finished D7 measures only 4 inches long, minus the blade. It's a complicated build with many tiny parts, but it turns into a detailed model of the workhorse of many World War II Allied military engineering outfits. The kit itself offers nine finishing options, including one armed with two machine guns. When I wrote this, I hadn't yet found any photographic evidence of such a machine, but I'll keep looking.

For this model, I tackled each subassembly in turn, finishing it before moving to the next one. The most daunting were the running gear and tracks, so that's where I started.



1 Each track link consists of four parts, so I prepared and labeled small, resealable bags to put the numbered parts in. I cut them from the sprue, cleaned them up, and popped them in the proper bag, but the cleanup was tedious and repetitive, so I worked in batches.



In between rounds of working on track parts, I built the running gear. Assembly was a bit fiddly, especially getting the idler wheel and track adjuster on the bogie chassis. However, once built, they certainly looked the part. I put together both sides in preparation for fitting the tracks.



The tracks required so much patience. I assembled each link with slow-setting cement and built runs, leaving off the treads. Before the cement set, I shaped the runs around the sprockets and idler wheels and then removed them to dry. Then I made the top and bottom runs.



4

With the straight runs ready, I put the tracks onto the running gear. Once satisfied with the fit, I tacked it in place with quick-setting cement. The treads were added with slow-setting cement, and I used a steel ruler to keep them aligned. As the glue cured, I corrected any alignment issues, brushed liquid cement over the links, and left it all to cure overnight.



5

Things went quicker on the second set of tracks, but no matter what I did, I was a link short. The kit provided only 36 links per side, and I needed 37. Without another option, I hid the missing link on the bottom of the run and made a styrene tread to cover the gap. I have no idea how this happened, but extra parts would have been nice.



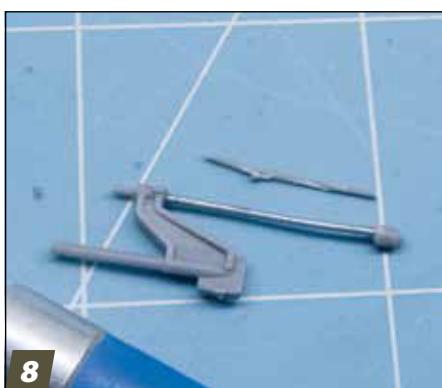
6

Turning back to the beginning of the instruction book, the major components of the engine and transmission went together quite easily. As always, adding the details takes time, and, in the case of this kit, I found they could be somewhat frustrating.



7

Many of the detail parts in the kit were smaller than a grain of rice, and definitely smaller than the sprue gate they were attached to. Cleaning them up often proved impossible without breaking or losing them.



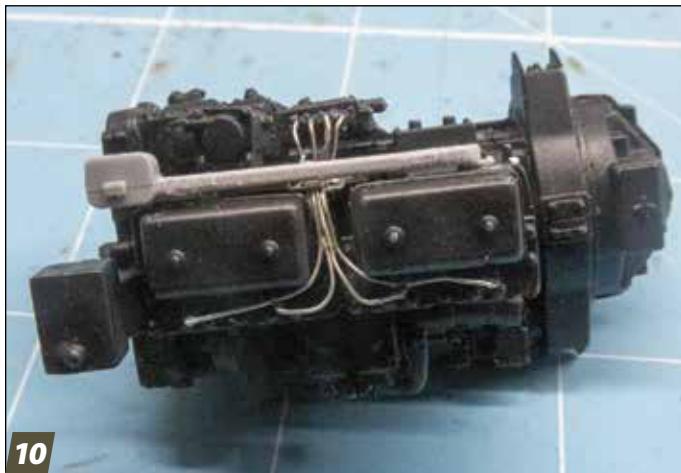
8

To make life easier, I replaced select styrene components with wire or pins, like the metal rod I used for the vertical crank shaft for the dozer's donkey motor.



9

Despite all the supplied detail, the kit was missing the prominent jacketed fuel-injection piping. To make this, I folded a length of thin lead wire into quarters, superglued the lengths together, and added a bracket made from wine bottle foil.

**10**

I snipped the ends of the quartered lead wire and attached the ends bound by the bracket to the fuel pump. The longer lengths were run up over the top of the engine to the fuel injectors on the other side. Then I completed the rest of the engine assembly.

**11**

Finally, I reached a point where I could test-fit the chassis, running gear, and engine. The build was definitely not a conventional armor model, and I now knew it would have to be painted in subassemblies.

**12**

For the Cherbourg, summer, 1944 U.S. Army olive drab (OD) scheme in the kit, I pulled out every shade of OD paint I had. I sprayed the engine and fittings SMS U.S. Olive Drab (No. PL167) and then picked out details with a brush and Tamiya and Mr. Hobby OD shades chosen at random.

**13**

I dry-brushed Tamiya Metallic Gray (No. XF-56) over the engine to bring out the details, and touched various levers and handles on the engine block with red for a rare splash of color. I replaced the lubricating oil lines with lead wire because the parts (B8 and B9) broke during cleanup.

**14**

The basic chassis and the transmission received the same treatment as the engine. Applying the other OD colors provides just enough variation to break up the monotone paint scheme. Once this was complete, I fitted them all together, along with the radiator.

**15**

At this point, I sprayed the model with gloss clear and weathered the engine and transmission to unify the various subassemblies. Applying earthy washes made of artist oils and mineral spirits with a brush now meant avoiding damage to delicate parts that had yet to be added.

**16**

Many of the control levers and linkages were so fine they were damaged on the sprue or broke after removal. Frustrating. Even though many linkages wouldn't be seen under the floor panels, I replaced them with a combination of stretched sprue, lead wire, and salvaged pieces from the broken kit parts.

**17**

Here are new steering levers I made from scrap photo-etched metal (PE) parts. I waited to add them to the model until later to avoid potentially snapping them off. The model was getting "spikier" as the build progressed, and an inattentive movement could cause a lot of damage.

**18**

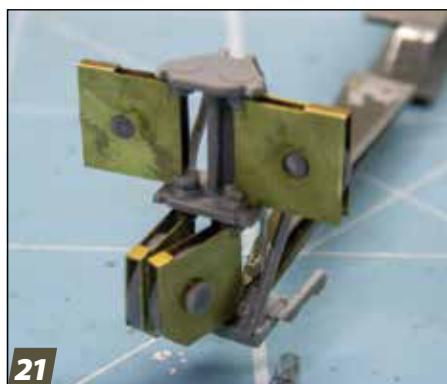
As promised, most of the detail work disappeared under the floor plates. As I boxed everything up and attached the running gear, the dozer became more substantial, but still lots of little parts could break off as the build progressed!

**19**

Underneath, I closed up the lower chassis. Note the different shades of OD here. These will be unified with weathering later on, but the differences will provide enough variation to make an otherwise single-color finish look interesting.

**20**

The Le Tourneau R7 PCU winch unit in back was a challenge to assemble. Only one cable drum was used to raise and lower the blade, so I wound the included thread onto it before completing the assembly.



The completed upper pulley assembly is delicate if left operable. Rather than risking it breaking, I glued mine into position, referring to period photos as a guide.

**22**

The completed winch looks impressive. Again, I resorted to stretched sprue to replace thin bracing components that proved impossible to remove from the kit sprue or tidy up without breaking. My references showed the cable running directly through the top pulley, and I corrected the angle of the top pulley to match period photos.

**23**

The dozer blade components assembled without issue. However, the triangular positioning stays on the blade were delicate and needed careful placement.

**24**

I dipped a small piece of sponge in Mr. Hobby Tire Black (No. H-77) or metallic gray, dabbed off the excess, and dotted the paint on the model, where appropriate, for paint chips. Earth-tone artist-oil washes blended together all the previous work.

**25**

The dozer blade, winch, and front frame were completed, painted, and decaled. Prior to fitting them to the tractor, I weathered them with the techniques previously described.

**26**

I couldn't get the cable to route through the channel over the driver and hood, to the front pulley, and down to the blade. So, I cut lengths of carefully measured cable and glued them in place. The blade was slightly raised while the glue on the cables and pivot points set.



FINAL THOUGHTS

NO BULLDOZER IS complete without some mud. I mixed white glue with various earth-tone watercolor paints, a spoonful of sawdust, and a little water until I had a "stiff mix" that a match would stand in. I applied the mud with an old brush, using reference photos as a guide for placement. I roughly ground artists pastels on sandpaper to simulate red brick dust and sprinkled that on the model. I sealed the whole model under flat clear, masking the light lenses and simulated fuel spills around the fuel tank's filler cap and a few oil stains in likely places to complete the look. **FSM**



ICM Hs 123A Legion Condor

Often described as a dive bomber and predecessor to the Ju 87 Stuka, the Henschel Hs 123 was more rightly considered a close air support aircraft, gaining fame as a sturdy and reliable aircraft in the face of austere field operations. Designed before the war began, the Hs 123 was employed throughout the Spanish Civil War — as seen in this boxing — and served until near the end of World War II.

The ICM 1/32 scale Hs 123A Legion Condor plastic model kit has sufficient cockpit detail, although it lacks seat belts. Weapons options are included, however, according to my research, the bombs used in the Spanish Civil War look more like the ones in the kit that have the fuse extenders in the nose, but the extenders were not used

at this time and are easily removed, allowing the noses to be reshaped.

You'll have to modify the alignment tabs on the separate control surfaces to pose them any other way than neutral. Remember to fill the depression in the upper wing for the radio antenna as directed in Step 46 (they weren't carried).

No rigging instructions are included, but the box top clearly and correctly shows that the Hs 123 required some rigging by the center section cabane struts. Depressions in the upper wing mark the locations, but none are apparent on the upper fuselage decking. I used the cowl fasteners to mark the locations for drilling.

While I had the pin vise out, I drilled the trigger guard in the tiny flare pistol for a bit of extra detail, and I opened holes in

the cowling behind the gun muzzle blisters.

The fits for most parts were exceptional, requiring only a touch of filler at the rear join of the wing to fuselage. However, the multipart cowling can be a bit of a challenge, as most pieces only attach to the front ring, relying on edge contact with adjacent cowl pieces. A bit of persuasion (i.e., gentle squeezing and threats) and removal of two cylinder heads got the parts mostly aligned — you have been warned.

The landing gear assemblies are comprehensive and include all the internal parts for displaying the landing gear without the streamlined spats. The gear includes the bracket for mounting the spats, visible when none are mounted but in the way on the spatted version as built — removing them before assembly is better than when



suggested in the instructions. The attachment points for the gear struts are shallow, so take care when aligning them.

The instructions provide a template for masking the windscreen — careful cutting results in a perfect fit. The kit includes decals for three of the five airframes sent to Spain. I taped the multipart cowl together in sections prior to assembly to mask the camouflage.

The decals were a mixed bag. Thin, I found them prone to folding over on themselves. After applying them, I coated the model with Hataka Matt (which has a hint

of a sheen) and was surprised to see the decals adopt a dead flat finish, including the carrier film between the numbers. I crossed my fingers and applied a further overcoat of my dwindling supply of Testors Acryl Flat, and that evened the sheen out across everything. I'm not sure what caused this issue.

After all the painting and decals were finished, I added the landing gear (main and tail), bombs and bomb racks, multipart exhaust, engine, and cowling. I also attached the EZ Line cabane rigging wires to the upper wing prior to attaching it. I added the main struts to the upper wing,

measuring the gap between to ensure fit to the lower wing. This worked, but I should have done the same with the cabanes as the tilt of the wing and the fore and aft alignment were just slightly off, throwing off the fit of the cabane struts. Again, gentle persuasion took care of the issue. Then I glued the rigging into the pre-drilled decking.

I spent 30 hours on my ICM Hs 123A Legion Condor. Solid engineering, great fit, and minimal rigging make this kit an excellent entry point for biplane building. Just be cautious of the potential fit and decal traps.

— Chuck Davis



Kit No.: 32016 **Scale:** 1/32 **Mfr.:** ICM
(Sample courtesy of manufacturer)
Price: \$96 **Comments:** Injection-molded plastic (gray, clear); 202 parts (8 unused parts); decals **Pros:** Detailed cockpit; masking template; great fits
Cons: No rigging instructions; weak attachment points for main gear

Trumpeter M915 gun truck



The M915 line-haul tractor widely used by the U.S. Army starting in the late 1970s, has been repeatedly upgraded for decades. The Trumpeter 1/35 scale M915 gun truck plastic model kit takes an early version of the semi-tractor and depicts a field conversion from a hauler to an armed and armored truck ready for convoy security duty.

Trumpeter did a nice job with the parts in this kit, all exhibiting good detail and mostly decent fits. The 16-page instruction booklet is easy to understand and follow, too, though it only offers color callouts for the exterior.

The armored box, bed, cab, and hood are all molded as single parts. Unfortunately, the gun turret mount is molded into the box along with the hardware for the roof hatch. However, it would be simple enough to cut this out and replace it with an after-market one for better detail.

The cab doors come molded separately, so you can pose them open if you choose. It is helpful to have this option because there are some nice details inside, including a fan on the dash, dome light, and photo-etched (PE) upgrades. So, open those doors and place some gear inside, too.

Trumpeter hedges a bit when it comes to the engine — just a blank with an oil pan and transmission. Despite empty space under the hood, the chassis and suspension look good, as you'd expect. Adequate PE steps attach to the fuel tank, and there is an antenna base if you decide to add a radio (which isn't included). There's lots of room in back for gear, coolers, and water bottles.

Unfortunately, there are no unit markings for the gun truck. On the one hand, it

leaves the option for you to finish it however you'd like. On the other, it would be nice to know which truck this model was specifically based on or if it's completely fictitious. There's only one decal in the kit, and it's for the dash. I cut it into smaller parts to make it easier to place. The included window masks work well.

The brass PE that comes in the kit is good quality, easy to bend, and doesn't require annealing. There are a few additional parts provided that are used for a different kit or configuration. I recommend hanging onto the extras because you never know when you might find them useful on another model.

I found references online to help with painting, and I had to research colors for the interior and frame. From what I can tell, older M915s had mostly green frames, although some appear to be black. I went with a three-color camouflage and sand-colored additions for the bed, box, and ad hoc armor, all probably salvaged on-site.

Overall, the Trumpeter 1/35 scale M915 gun truck plastic model kit was a fun one to build. I would recommend this kit to anyone with a few builds under their belt, and I hope to see others finish it. It will be cool to see alternate build choices and painting decisions. The gun truck would lend itself to fictional replicas, like a zombie response vehicle. Let imagination be your guide!

— Bill Read



Kit No.: 701084 **Scale:** 1/35

Mfr.: Trumpeter (Sample courtesy of Model Rectifier Corp.) **Price:** \$89.99

Comments: Injection-molded plastic (white, clear); photo-etched metal parts; vinyl tires; decals **Pros:** Big sections in one piece; detailed interior and chassis; window masks **Cons:** Fenders and hood didn't line up well; no unit markings

Italeri Semovente M43 da 105/25 Bassotto

The Semovente M43 "Bassotto" was a self-propelled gun built on a lowered and widened chassis from the M15/52 tank with a 105mm howitzer. Only 30 were built before Italy's armistice in 1943, with an additional 91 built by Germany.

The 1/35 scale Semovente M43 da 105/25 Bassotto plastic model kit leans into Italeri's reputation for covering unique World War II armor subjects. Of the eight plastic sprues provided, two appear to be from a previous Italeri release, the M42 75/18, but the rest are all new. The reused parts trees are for running gear common among many Italian tracked vehicles and interior details.

Construction starts with the vehicle interior. There aren't a lot of interior references for the Semovente, but the parts provide a decent representation of what I could find. Of course, if you button up the hatches, you'll see none of it.

The hull sides and engine deck fit nicely. No engine is provided, but the doors are molded separately, which makes it easy to add an aftermarket one. The running gear subassemblies comprise four units composed of 12 pieces each. A bit tedious, but they fit well and the assemblies look good when complete.

I struggled with the link-and-length tracks. My mistake was starting with the top run with the built-in sag. I followed the directions regarding the proper sequence of shorter runs and individual links, but still

ended up with a track that was half a link too long. I ended up making modifications to the last link to make it fit. However, since the top run will not be seen on the finished model due to the side skirts, just leave it off and work from the bottom up to ensure easy track installation.

The fenders and side skirts go on, followed by the crew compartment. Additional interior items install on top of the fenders with the side and rear walls. Italeri provides both a plastic and metal barrel for the howitzer, and I went with the metal version.

When adding the gun mantlet, I ran into another issue. It's made to pivot in multiple directions, but I must have gotten some glue on one of the pivot points. After sealing up the crew compartment, the gun was stuck tilted down. When I tried to lift it level, the two mantlet pieces separated. No matter how I tried to lift the barrel and keep the pieces together, they separated. I eventually glued the barrel in a level position and filled the gap with putty. It's noticeable if you look for it.

After adding the gun and front wall of the crew compartment, it was time to add the roof to the complicated upper hull. I was pleasantly surprised that it fit, and well, too! There are two enormous hatches on the roof that will allow a good view of the interior if left open. However, I decided to leave them closed.

Finally, there are several details added to the exterior like tools, headlights, and jerry cans. Italeri gives you photo-etched metal



Kit No.: 6751 **Scale:** 1/35 **Mfr.:** Italeri

(Sample courtesy of Model Rectifier Corp.)

Price: \$70.50 **Comments:**

Injection-molded plastic (dark green);

325 parts (26 photo-etched metal parts,

metal barrel); decals **Pros:** Minimal

cleanup; good fit and engineering;

great decals **Cons:** Tricky to align the

tracks; details a little difficult to see with the dark green plastic

straps if you want to use the cans, but I opted for a version that didn't require that.

Painting this kit is not for the faint of heart. All four finishing options have complex camouflage that gave me pause. There is one for Italian forces before the armistice and three for Wehrmacht vehicles. I chose the Italian version, as it had the most interesting decals.

The Italeri 1/35 scale Semovente M43 da 105/25 Bassotto kit nicely replicates a vehicle that, until now, wasn't represented in the modeling market. I enjoyed this build and would recommend it for modelers with a moderate level of building experience who aren't afraid of complex camouflage patterns.

—David Nelson



Reskit MD-3A "Mule" tow tractor

Introduced in the 1960s, the MD-3A "Mule" tow tractor was used to move aircraft around on aircraft carrier decks until the late 1990s. It came equipped with a compressor used for starting aircraft engines. The Reskit 1/32 scale MD-3A "Mule" tow tractor 3D-printed resin model would be appropriate to display with a variety of 1/32 scale U.S. Navy aircraft, including A-4, F-4, F-14, F-8, EA-6B, and F-18 jets.

I was impressed by the care with which the kit was packaged. Not only were some parts swaddled in bubble wrap, but many parts included protective cages to avoid damage. Even though removing the protective cages adds to the cleanup, it is well worth the extra time because no parts were damaged in my sample.

Carefully remove the printer supports from all of the parts. The resin is brittle, so I used a razor saw, a sharp No. 11 blade, and nippers for the job. I found it better to cut supports leaving a tiny amount of the support on the piece and filing and sanding the remaining support to get a clean surface. It took me about four hours to get all the parts cleaned and ready for assembly. You'll also need to sand some of the parts to remove faint layer line lines made by the



Kit No.: RSK32-0015 **Scale:** 1/32

Price: \$110 **Mfr.:** Reskit (Sample courtesy of manufacturer) **Comments:**

3D-printed parts (clear); 48 parts; decals and instructions **Pros:** Excellent detail; nicely packaged; clear instructions; two options for wheel chocks and tow bars **Cons:** Removal of printing supports difficult on some parts

printing process. With a low part count, my cleanup time was rewarded with excellently detailed parts that did not break.

You'll need to build the Mule with superglue or epoxy because resin cannot be bonded with plastic cement — it's not styrene. Overall, the parts fit well, but the bottom plates have gaps. These can be filled, but I didn't bother as the bottom is not visible. The fit of the generator to the back of the tractor required a bit of clamping and seam filling with superglue. Really, I was impressed by the part fits, because resin kits tend to have more fit issues than plastic kits. I slightly enlarged the wheel hub opening on one front wheel so I could push it down to get all the wheels in contact with the ground. Bending the suspension would break it, so this slight modification was needed, and might have been my fault and not the kit's.

Reskit included tow bars and spared no attention to detail on them. Different aircraft required different lengths, so it is nice to have both long and short types. Also provided were two nicely detailed wheel chocks. One is adjusted to fit to the rear wheel of the tractor and the other can be displayed sitting on top.

You will spend most of your time on finishing this kit. Separate parts for wheels,

tires, and seat cushions help ease painting. I also spent several hours on weathering to capture the well-used look so common among these machines.

The kit decals went down well over a coat of Tamiya Clear (No. X-22). I used Mr. Mark Setter and Mr. Mark Softer to settle them to the surface. I only managed to trash one small decal in the application process. Too much Mr. Mark Softer ate away the ink and a bit of the film. I cut out the placards from the instrument panel decals, applied these, and painted the rest of the instrument panel because I didn't think I could successfully get them down over the raised details. I created a simple base using part of the box label and sandpaper for the carrier deck (see a photo of it at Finescale.com/Reviews).

Overall, the Reskit 1/32 scale MD-3A "Mule" tow tractor 3D-printed resin model kit builds into an excellent model quickly and without any major issues. I was pleasantly surprised at how well this builds in comparison to other resin kits. Great job Reskit! It may not be the best kit for a novice modeler, but someone with a bit of experience, especially with resin parts, should have no trouble at all. Now that I have a nice tow tractor in the display case, I think it looks kind of lonely. Maybe a few figures and a dive into the Academy 1/32 scale F-18 in my stash will move up on the future project list. Maybe.

— Robert Raver

Tamiya Honda Prelude (BF1)

The redesigned Honda Prelude was announced in 2023, and following its production and rollout in 2025, Tamiya introduced the 1/24 scale Honda Prelude (BF1) plastic model kit.

During cleanup, I found some fine mold lines that were tough to see and removed those. I did make one minor change and filled the locator holes for the license plate on the front fascia with superglue. I prefer to leave the front plates off my car models whenever I can.

The Prelude's chassis and suspension look good with nice details, especially considering it's a curbside model. Both build up quite easily, but be prepared to spend time painting the chassis if you want to follow the instructions to the letter. I did, and I enjoyed the process.

The interior is engineered so almost all the parts can be glued in from the back, making it super easy to get clean results. Several of the individual parts will be painted an accent color, eliminating masking. There are well over a dozen decals for the interior, with options for the dash, gauges, and navigation screens. Make sure to trim away the clear film around the gauge and nav screen decals for the best fit.

The windows and lights have large mounting tabs that cannot be seen once the car is built. This makes cementing the windows easy, with very little worry of getting glue anywhere unwanted. The light lenses do not use cement; the light housings sandwich them inside the body or just snap in

place. However, one of the taillight lenses on my sample would not stay put without a small drop of superglue applied from the inside after the part was in place. Still, it was a no-mess deal.

The instructions show to snap the rear hatch hinges onto the body after it is attached to the chassis. I found it much easier and used very little pressure to install it before putting the body on the chassis. The fit of the hatch is superb, but be careful with the gas struts. They are used to prop it open and are somewhat delicate because they are molded to scale.

Tamiya's latest Honda Prelude only builds a right-hand drive version. The wheels roll, mounted by poly-caps. The steering is posable, and the rear hatch opens. There are three pieces of luggage to stow in the rear: a golf club bag, a hard-sided roller suitcase, and a soft-sided hand bag. The generic rubber tires have smooth sidewalls but offer good tread detail.

Each piece of luggage consists of two parts that fit as well as the rest of the kit. For the colors, I copied my wife's metallic blue hard-side roller suitcase using Tamiya Metallic Blue (No. X-13) and went with a well-worn brown leather look for the handbag. Multiple applications/washes of Tamiya Panel Line Accent Color Brown (No. 87132) over a black base created an aged leather effect. The golf bag scheme is a composite of several I found online: a gunmetal base with red and gray accents. Tamiya Panel Line Accent Color Black (No. 87131) added definition and wear.



Kit No.: 24373 **Scale:** 1/24 **Price:** \$46

Mfr.: Tamiya (Sample courtesy of Tamiya America) **Comments:** Injection-molded plastic (white, black, and clear); 134 parts (rubber tires, poly-caps, and metal transfers); masks; decals **Pros:** Clean fits; great details; decal options; large mounting tabs that won't be visible **Cons:** Right-hand drive only; some delicate parts

Colors are called out for five exterior body options, but I found an additional color for the 2026 model: Honda Boost Blue Pearl. All of the main body colors are pearl or metallic, but Tamiya recommends using non-pearl for the red and black versions. I followed suit for the Honda Boost Blue Pearl and used Brilliant Blue (No. TS-44) because it looks close, though it is not a pearl.

The parts from the Tamiya 1/24 scale Honda Prelude (BF1) fit together extremely well. Some of them are delicate, but with a bit of care and a modicum of patience it goes together easily. Many of the parts are clearly designed for clean results when cementing them together. Tamiya has done it once again!

—Mark Jones



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By Tim Boyd

Double-kit debut

Aurora wasn't known for scale auto models, and the company wanted to change that

Many hobbyists today do not recognize the Aurora name as a maker of model kits. Yet, 60 years ago, Aurora was one of the world's top producers of scale models. But as strong as Aurora's product range was, it was but a minor player in 1/25 scale automotive kits.

Aurora set out to change that with a new series of international sports car kits and the introduction of two "double kits" (two complete model kits in one box). The first of these included factory showroom stock and hot-rodded 1934 Ford five-window coupes; the second double kit was based on the 1922 Ford Model T.

The "Double Deuce" kit provided parts to build both a showroom stock automobile and a stereotypical late 1950s or early 1960s hot rod Model T (often called a T-bucket or Bucket T). The 150 parts were molded in burgundy, black, clear, along with both traditional chrome and faint brass-tinted plated parts. The instruction sheet told us to "Assemble this 'Old Reliable' Ford just as it looked over 40 years ago ... then assemble this 'souped up' Street Rod ... the old '22 Ford with a New Look!"

AURORA DOUBLE DEUCE '22 FORD MODEL T STOCK & STREET ROD

Kit No.: 568-198 **Introduced:** 1963; never reissued in this format

Current Value: \$230

The showroom stock version mostly mirrored the AMT Trophy Series 1925 Model T "double kit" (a kit that preceded the Aurora offering by three years). One notable difference was that Aurora rendered the T body with the doglegs at the bottom rear that mated to the separate turtledeck. Overall, the factory-stock version in Aurora's kit was a match for, if not a bit superior, to its AMT counterpart.

The street rod version yielded a high-riding result that appeared dated alongside the AMT equivalent. While clearly patterned after some design details from the AMT Bucket T, it was rendered with more of an East Coast flavor, which made sense with Aurora headquartered in Long Island, New York.

As with the AMT kit, the engine was a Ford MEL (Mercury-Edsel-Lincoln) V8, and included both tri-power carb and Latham supercharged build options. The interior featured a contemporary but lightly engraved diamond-button tufted theme. (AMT's hot rod did not add this feature until a modified reissue two years later.) The biggest drawback here was the omission of a Z'd frame which contributed to the too-high ride stance. Assembly concluded with a cylindrical gas tank out back (AMT's version added options of a turtledeck or a shortened pickup bed). The unusual header and muffler treatment stood outside the typical T-bucket design brief.

Admittedly undermined by a few questionable design details on the hot rod side, Aurora's Double Deuce Ford kit was a quality effort that deserved a better market reaction than it received. However, the large and oddly shaped box did not lend itself to easy merchandising on store shelves with other kits, and a car kit buying public unfamiliar with Aurora as an automotive kit producer meant the Double Deuce did not enjoy much success.

Aurora's Double Deuce 1922 Ford Model T kit was never reissued in this format. Today, it would take an amazing stroke of luck to find one with both kits unassembled. **FSM**



'91

TAURUS SHO



1/25 SCALE MODEL KIT / MAQUETTE À L'ÉCHELLE 1/25

AMT puts on a SHO!

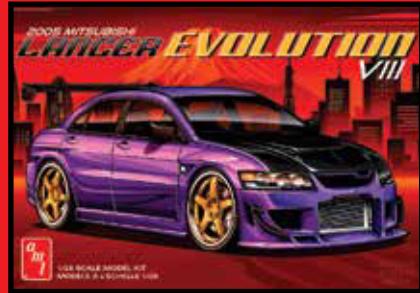
Big news for kit builders and '90s performance fans: AMT is bringing back the Ford Taurus SHO! This iconic sleeper returns as a detailed scale model kit, capturing the understated looks and high-revving attitude that made the SHO a legend. Whether you remember them shocking V8s at stoplights or you're discovering the SHO for the first time, this reissued kit is your chance to build a true Blue Oval classic—straight from the golden age of American sport sedans.

Model Kit Features:

- 1:25 Scale, Skill level 2, paint & glue required.
- 80 total parts
- Molded in white, clear, and transparent red with chrome-plated parts.
- Black Vinyl Tires
- Detailed Engine
- Detailed Interior
- Expanded Decal Sheet
- Item #AMT1554



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2005 MITSUBISHI LANCER EVO VIII
#AMT1552M (1:25 SCALE)



2004 PONTIAC GTO
#AMT1548M (1:25 SCALE)



'77 CHEVY MONZA MIRAGE WIDEBODY
#AMT1547 (1:25 SCALE)



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1/12 SCALE Honda RA273 (w/PHOTO-ETCHED PARTS)



In 1966, Formula One regulations were changed and indicated a move from cars with 1.5-liter engines to those with 3-liter ones. Having finally tasted success with the 1.5-liter RA272 the year before, the Honda engineers unfortunately had to start from scratch again, and the RA273 was not ready until the Italian GP in 1966. Featuring a lightweight monocoque frame with aluminum panels and powered by a 90 degree V12 engine, the car was driven by Richie Ginther and John Surtees, with Ginther finishing the season in a respectable 4th place overall.

About the Model

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This is a 1/12 scale plastic model assembly kit. Length: 333mm, width: 143mm, height: 70mm ★ Meticulously detailed V12 engine features fuel pipes and ignition cables. The 12 exhaust funnels are made from machined aluminum. ★ Moving suspension is equipped with metal coil springs. ★ Moving the steering wheel actually turns the front wheels. ★ Nose cowling can be attached and removed even after assembly to display radiator and water tank. ★ Extensive set of photo-etched parts, including brake discs, oil cooler, and steering wheel spokes are included for the ultimate finish. ★ Mirror surfaces, and instrument panel rings are depicted with metal transfers. ★ Semi-pneumatic tires with accurate tread patterns add to the model's racing feel. ★ 1 driver figure included. ★ 3 types of markings are included.



Exhaust pipes, air funnels and various tubes and lines add up to a super detailed finish.



The screw-attached nose cowling can be removed after completion to show off the radiator and its photo-etched grille.



Treaded tires have the GOODYEAR logo molded into them.



The rear has accurate depictions of uprights, universal drive shaft joints and more. Metal springs are used



The cramped cockpit even has representations of the instrumentation.

