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April 2020



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NUREMBERG TOY FAIR 2020

The world's biggest toy fair, the Nuremberg Spielwarenmesse, was held in January.

There were plenty of interesting announcements and new products on display.

Highlights included a number of brand new kits from Tamiya - 1:48 scale T-55 Soviet Medium Tank, a 1:35 Renault R35 French Light Tank, and a set of German mid-war infantry figures on patrol.

Tamiya will also be re-releasing a number of kits including their 1:35 scale M8 Greyhound with a pair of figures and accessories, their classic 1:35 scale T-34/76 and T-34/85 kits, and the Italeri M47 Patton with new parts and accessories from Tamiya.

Other military related announcements at the show included a 1:35 Jackal 2 from Hobby Boss, Universal Carrier Wasp Mk.II and Panzerjäger Bren Carrier with Panzerschreck 43 from Riich Models, a large number of new releases from ACE in 1:72 including an FV-651 Mk.6 Crash Tender Salamander, a V-150 Commando, BM-8-24 Rocket Launcher, AHN Gas Generator and in 1:48 a Flak 30 gun.

T-Model also unveiled a new family of 1:72 scale M1114 HMMWVs.

Das Werk was on hand with new vehicles and trucks including a 1:35 scale Kettenkraftrad and a Faun L900 Hardtop.

Revell was on hand with new 1:72 scale releases - M109 A6, Marder III, SCUD-B and more.

MiniArt had their forthcoming 1:35 scale SLA Heavy APC-54, T-34/85 and British Military Lorry B-Type, amongst others.

2020 looks like a good year for new military kit releases!

Thanks to Marcus Nicholls and Tamiya for the images.



PLYMOUTH MODEL SHOW 2020

The 2020 Plymouth Model Show will be held at Plymouth Guildhall between 10.00am & 4.00pm on Saturday 27 June 2020 featuring clubs & traders from the South West & further afield including France.

The show will cover all aspects of the hobby including military, fantasy, radio controlled & railways.

Entry fees are £4 adult or £2 child / old age pensioner. A refreshment area is available & there is a lift/ramps available to enable disabled access.

Enquiries may be directed to our show organiser, Ken Cork by e-mail ekcork@btinternet.com

ESSEX MODELLERS SHOW 2020

The Essex Modellers Show is being jointly hosted by the IPMS branches-South East Essex, Hornchurch and Chelmsford and MAFVA, Essex on Sunday, 26 July 2020 between 10.00 and 16.00, setting up from 08.00a.m.

Admissions - Adults £3.50, Child/Concession £1.50

The venue is Hannakins Farm Community Centre, Rosebay Avenue, Billericay, Essex, CM12 0SZ.

For Club and Trader enquiries please contact respectively:

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A9CS Bundesarchiv_Bild An ignominious end for an A9CS on its first time in action but see the main text! Colour scheme was G3 Khaki Green and G4 Dark Green.



THE FIRST CRUISER TANK

Peter Brown discusses the development and operations of the A9 Cruiser Tank

In the late 1930s the British Army decided it needed three types of tanks -

- Light for scouting and use in areas which would not support heavier vehicles
- Cruiser for the Armoured Divisions
- Infantry to accompany infantry attacks

A9 was the first of the Cruisers. Developed at a slow pace by Vickers, building work on the prototype began in the later months of 1935 and following trials and modifications it was accepted for service in June 1937.

It was of generally conventional layout, its

six-cylinder AEC Type 179 150hp petrol engine, gearbox with five forward and one reverse gear and transmission were at the rear driving the tracks through rear-mounted sprockets. Suspension was the "slow motion" type, the two three-wheeled bogies each side had one large and two smaller wheels with large, almost horizontal springs and shock absorbers. Its three-man turret was just ahead of centre, most tanks carried the then-standard 2 pounder gun with some mounting the 3.7" Mortar as Close Support or CS tanks intended to lay

smoke screens. All had a .303" water-cooled Vickers machine gun in a coaxial mounting. It was balanced by a No 9 radio set at the back. Traverse was hydraulic, A9 was the first British tank to use this system though there was a manual backup. Unusually there were three hull crew. The driver sat in the centre in a raised "cab", on either side of this were small one-man turrets mounting Vickers machine guns.

Fully stowed and with full crew the tank weighed around 12.5 tons and could manage 25mph on suitable ground. Armour was 14mm

maximum with only 6mm in less vulnerable areas. Although its riveted construction may look old-fashioned to our eyes, its hydraulic traverse was a novel feature at the time and it was also gas-proofed.

Two orders were placed totalling 125 tanks -

- 50 from Vickers with serials T3492 to T3542 and registrations HMM848 to HMM897 delivered between January 1939 and February 1940.
- 75 from Harland & Wolff in Belfast. These had serials T7196-T7270 and registrations PMV552-PMV626 though civil registrations were not used after T7216/PMV572. 39 were fitted with 2pdr guns and the rest with 3.7" Mortars. The first tank was tested in June 1939 with the last one delivered in July 1940.

The very similar A10 used the same engine, mechanical components and suspension but had armour up to 30mm thick. It was shorter as it did not have the small machine gun turrets, instead it had a flat front with driver on the left and a machine gun on the right. The two tanks were close enough in design for a combined user handbook to be produced which covered both. 170 A10 with 2pdr or 3.7" guns were produced. A9 was termed "Light Cruiser" and A10 "Heavy Cruiser". The two often served alongside each other.

INTO SERVICE AND INTO FRANCE

The War Establishment of a British Armoured Division at the outbreak of WW2 had a Light Armoured Brigade whose three Regiments each had 36 Light Tanks and 22 Light Cruisers, and a Heavy Armoured Brigade of three Regiments with 26 Light Cruisers, 6 CS Cruisers and 15 Heavy Cruisers each.

A revised Establishment introduced in March 1940 replaced the Light and Heavy Armoured Brigades with two similar Armoured Brigades, each with three Regiments operating 52 Cruisers including six CS. However the armoured units of the UK-based 1st Armoured Division - 2nd Armoured Brigade with The Queen's Bays (2nd Dragoon Guards), 9th Queen's Royal Lancers and 10th Royal Hussars (Prince of Wales's Own) with 3rd Armoured Brigade composed of 2nd, 3rd and 5th Battalions of the Royal Tank Regiment or RTR - still had 134 Light Tanks and 150 A9, A10 and A13 Cruisers by the time it was committed to France in May 1940 with some tanks not having wireless sets, gunsights and armour piercing ammunition. The numbers of different types of tanks in each Regiment varied.

3RTR was committed as part of a force to defend Calais. They landed on 22nd May with 30 Cruisers and 21 Light Tanks, spending the night trying to unload tanks and prepare them for action. Ordered to advance to St Omer on the 23rd, B Squadron was engaged and lost several tanks including at least one A9CS. Smoke shells from other CS tanks allowed the remaining tanks to withdraw. Next day two German tanks were knocked out, though an attempt to take a ration convoy to Dunkirk escorted by tanks was blocked. Tank strength was down to 9 Cruisers and 12 Light Tanks. These continued to patrol and engage the enemy, though with confused orders about evacuation some were destroyed by their crews. By the 25th only three Cruisers and four Light Tanks were operational which were still able to account for six Panzers that



A9E1 1326-C6 A9E1 prototype showing many differences from the production vehicle. Hull front shape changed while the conical tops to the machine gun turrets and the commander's cupola were dropped.



A9E1 wading 6668-B3 The prototype was later used for trials for wading. Various tubes were added to bring in air and remove exhaust gasses. As the tank was missing several rivets it filled with water and sank.

evening. Attempts to break out to Gravelines failed and the tanks were driven into the sea when they ran out of petrol. Just over half the Battalion's personnel were evacuated before fighting ceased on the 26th, and more were able to escape later.

2nd Armoured Brigade had landed at Cherbourg on 20th May and moved East towards the River Somme to counter the German advance. The Queen's Bays were first into action on the 24th west of Amiens. Several tanks were lost and A and B Squadrons were combined. The other two Regiments caught up with them. On the 26th the evacuation from Dunkirk was ordered. The Brigade attacked on the 27th in support of the French. 10th

Hussars moved too far ahead when a radio message failed to reach them, of 30 tanks which went into action 20 were lost and some of the survivors were damaged. The Bays also lost tanks and the two Regiments pulled back leaving 9th Lancers forward.

2RTR and 5RTR had arrived in Cherbourg on 22nd May and fought their first action on the 27th. 2RTR attacked towards Abbeville and lost a Light Tank, three A9 and an A13 Mk II with nine men killed and 11 reported missing before they were withdrawn. 5RTR lost six men killed and seven wounded at St Valery, two of its Light Tanks and an A13 were hit and lost, another A13 was bogged down and abandoned, while two more Lights and three Cruiser tanks were hit but



Think Tank - The First Cruiser Tank

◀ continued in action. Several others broke down and it would take a few days to recover them.

Due to lack of spares and replacements, by the end of May the Division were down to 65 Cruisers and 64 Light Tanks in working order. Their losses had been -

Type	Due to enemy action	Mechanical faults
A9	7	4
A10	2	12
A13	22	22
Light Tanks VIB/VIC	34	17

On 4th June 2RTR had six A9, nine A13 and 17 Light VIB. They had lost three A9, an A10, two A13 and two Light VIB in action and had one A9, ten A13 and two Light Tank VIB in various workshops. One A9 and an A13 were received on the 7th but two Cruisers were lost that evening. 5RTR formed a composite squadron known as Z Squadron on 29th May. It had two Cruisers in its Squadron HQ, two three-tank troops of Light Tanks and two troops with Cruisers although the types were not stated.

Each Brigade was then reorganised into one composite regiment as attempts were made to repair tanks. 2nd Armoured Brigade was two Squadrons of 9th Lancers with a third Squadron drawn from the Queen's Bays and 10th Hussars. On 7th June 3rd Armoured Brigade were down to 41 Cruisers and 31 Light Tanks. All available tanks were used to augment them, this amounted to HQ and two Squadrons of 2RTR, one Squadron 5RTR and a Squadron of the Bays with Light Tanks, two more Light Tank Squadrons, the Divisional HQ's own protection troop and a few Infantry Tanks which were in the area. These forces steadily withdrew in front of the German advances.

On 15th June the French asked for an armistice and 1st Armoured was ordered to evacuate. Priority was given to troops and most vehicles were left behind, most of the Division sailed on 17th June. Tanks under repair were to be transported to Cherbourg by train but these did not arrive, while 3rd Armoured Brigade with 15 Cruisers, 14 Light Tanks, Scout Cars and around 50 lorries travelled almost 200 miles by road with only one Cruiser and two Light Tanks failing to complete the march. There was not enough space to take all the vehicles however, according to the Divisional Commander's account only 14 Cruisers and 11 Light Tanks along with fifty supporting vehicles out of 1450 were evacuated from France, though others sources state nine Cruisers and 15 Light Tanks. Casualties were 58 killed, 70 wounded and 1009 missing.

5RTR recorded four Light Tanks, one A9 and six A13 were sent to Workshops on the 26th, these were all tanks taken to France so must have been among those brought back. In addition, they were to have one of the A9's taken to France and handed over to the 2nd Armoured Brigade reissued to them in North Africa some months later, so at least two A9 were returned to the UK.

Out of the total of 691 tanks recorded as lost in France including 1st Army Tank Brigade's Infantry Tanks and the Light Tanks of the Infantry Division's Divisional Cavalry Regiments, 158 were Cruisers with six of them A9 and 18 A9CS. The Germans assigned the Kennummer



Tanks of 1RTR photographed in and around Abbassia Barracks, Cairo in late May 1940.



They carried the early "Mobile Division" sign with a white circle on a red square, at this time without the famous Jerboa or desert rat. Colour scheme was Middle Stone with Dark Sand in broad bands.

designation Kruezer Panzerkampfwagen Mk I 741(e) to the A9 but did not appear to have made any use of them. Some were shipped back to Germany for tests by the Army Weapons Office and as part of a display of captured British and French vehicles. Thus an A9CS lost by 3RTR in Calais was to become one of the first British tanks into Germany during WW2.

Back in the UK, a report by 1st Armoured Division's Commander stated that A9 has proved unsatisfactory both mechanically and tactically as it was under powered, too slow on

roads with poor cross country performance, and its tracks were badly designed for wear, grip and repair. However the 2 pounder gun used on all Cruisers was described as "Accurate, hard hitting up to but excluding the German 30-ton tank, rate of fire satisfactory."

British officialdom also caught up with the tank. On 11 June 1940 instructions were issued for A9 to be redesignated "Cruiser Mk I" or Cruiser I but many documents still used the older style at times. A proposal in August that Cruisers were to be "Reptile Class" tanks would



Freshly painted after the action at Gallabat probably in Light Stone and Deep Purple Brown, this tank carried Haile Selassie, Emperor of Abyssinia and his son the Crown Prince on 1st November 1941

have meant Cruiser I becoming Krait was not adopted, when names for British tanks became common in late 1941 the A9 did not get one as by then it had had its day.

Units were re-equipped with what tanks available, 2RTR for example received one squadron's worth of A13 Mk II and two of A10 with a few A9 at SHQ and were back at full strength before they sailed to North Africa in August, while 5RTR received six A9/A9CS, 34 A10/A10CS, 22 A13 and three Valentines to be at almost full strength in July. They sailed for the Middle East in October.

A detailed list from the end of 1940 states that 1st Armoured Division had 3 A9 and 10 A9CS, 2nd Armoured Division had 6 A9CS while 7th Armoured Division in Egypt had 60 A9 including CS tanks. As new types came into use and units moved to North Africa, few older Cruisers remained in the UK. Figures for June, July and August 1941 showed 8 A9CS, 6 A10CS and around two dozen A13 Mk II in 1st Armoured Division alongside newer Covenanters and Crusaders but none with any other unit. After 1st Armoured Division moved to the Middle East at the end of September, A9 were not listed at all.

NORTH AFRICA

The Mobile Division, Britain's main tank unit in the Middle East, was renamed The Armoured Division (Egypt) at the outbreak of war. Its Heavy Armoured Brigade comprised 1RTR and 6RTR while the Light Armoured Brigade was made up of 7th Queen's Own Hussars and 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars plus 11th Hussars (Prince Albert's Own) equipped with armoured cars who usually operated separately. When the Division was renamed 7th Armoured Division in February 1940 the Brigades were restyled 4th Heavy and 7th Light Armoured Brigades. ►

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Units were often under strength and used different types of tank at the same time. In many cases the actual type was not recorded in the records which only give totals for Cruisers and Light Tanks. Luckily there are a few more specific references to show what was in service. In August 1939 7th Hussars and 8th Hussars had Light Tanks while 6RTR had both Medium and Light Tanks. When war was declared 1RTR used both Light Tanks and Rolls-Royce Armoured Cars, though by January 1940 both 1RTR and 6RTR were equipped half and half with Cruisers and Light Tanks.

In April the Armoured Brigades became simply 4th and 7th Armoured Brigades and were reorganised by swapping 7th Hussars and 1RTR between them. 7th Hussars were to have two Squadrons of Light Tanks and one with Cruiser A9. There were not enough Cruisers available though more were expected in May. 8th Hussars would keep their old Light Tank Mk III's until they could be replaced when A9 became available. 1RTR and 6RTR were to stay as they were. Tank State would then be -

	A9	Light III	Light VI
Divisional HQ	-	7	-
HQ 4th Armoured Brigade	4	3	3
8th Hussars	-	15	40
1RTR	23	-	26
HQ 7th Armoured Brigade	4	-	6
7th Hussars	7	-	48
6RTR	23	-	26
Total Available	68	25	149

A10s they were expected to start arriving at the rate of 10 a month in July and become operational in August, it was hoped to use A10 to replace A9 which would then go the two Hussars regiments.

Italy declared war on 10th June 1940 and the first actions in the Desert campaign were not long in coming. On the 14th 7th Hussars' A and B Squadrons took part in an attack on Fort Capuzzo. Six Cruisers of A Squadron engaged the fort with 2pdr guns while their Light Tanks added fire from their machine guns. No Cruisers were lost but three Light Tanks hit mines and were burned to prevent them being captured. Two days later 11th Hussars sighted a convoy of Italian trucks escorted by a dozen CV3 tankettes. A Squadron 7th Hussars and a troop of 2pdr antitank guns of J Battery Royal Horse Artillery were brought forward. Several Italian tanks were knocked out but the Italians were not afraid to fight back. At one point a Cruiser was chased by a CV3, its machine guns could do little damage and it was finally knocked out by a 2pdr shot.

7th Hussars continued fighting around Capuzzo through July. On the 9th they attacked another Italian column, its War Diary noting "For some reason the 2pdrs on the Cruisers were a failure, the first time they have been anything but 100 per cent. No tanks were lost". On the 22nd they were relieved by 8th Hussars and pulled back to rest. A summary of the operations stated "vehicles have stood up well, but this was mainly down to Lt Astley Rushton, 2/Lieut Dean and their Staff, who worked unceasingly night and day to keep us on the move". On 4th September they were three Cruisers and six Light Tanks short of their full Establishment, and by the end of the month were short of seven Cruisers and five Light Tanks. They were not to



A9 of 6RTR at El Adem Aerodrome on 14th January 1941. As it was winter the crew wear a variety of warm clothing with the tank commander in the black overalls used by the Royal Tank Regiment and others in overcoats and leather jerkins. It still carries the old-style markings but has been repainted in the Gaunter scheme of Light Stone, Silver Grey and Slate Grey.

see more action until December.

Operations continued with the Italians entering Egypt in September. C Squadron 1RTR were engaged at Abu Nir on 14th September and lost a Cruiser in action. They had one A9 at Squadron HQ, two Troops with five Light Mk VI between them and five A9 in another two Troops. Their War Diary's Summary of Events for 13th to 17th September recorded "One Cruiser tank was hit by enemy artillery on tracks and turret and had to be abandoned - three of the crew escaped, but owing to intense shellfire the remaining two were captured. Later in the day a Light Tank of A Squadron was in observation at a distance of 800 yards and fired on approximately 100 men who were grouped round the damaged Cruiser. Many casualties were inflicted on the enemy. A Squadron Cruisers destroyed a number of enemy lorries three of which blew up and caused the enemy to halt their advance while artillery were brought which finally caused our troops to withdraw."

An Italian column of trucks and seven CV3 were spotted but could not be engaged as only two Cruisers were now in action. One tank had developed engine trouble and had to be towed while one broke a track. Casualties were listed as the A9 captured and two men taken prisoner. The Italians lost four lorries and at least 100 casualties.

The report ends with "Armour of Cruiser Tank - The captured Cruiser Tank although hit some 20 times appeared to be almost undamaged. The two men left in the tank were seen to be helped away by a man on each side so could

not have been seriously wounded." The Italians later operated an A9 against British forces and it may have been this tank, so despite being repeatedly hit it was still battle-worthy. A couple of photos of what must be this tank under its new management show a large Italian flag painted on the side of the turret but still carrying the original 24 on red arm of service marking on one front mudguard and the red and white 7th Armoured Division sign on the other.

On 20th September 1RTR recorded that they had 17 Cruisers and 19 Light Tanks. Reports for later dates list tanks in some detail

- 31st October 13 A9, 19 Light VI VIA VIB
- 30th November 20 A9 & A10, 22 Light VI VIA VIB
- 31st December 16 A9 & A10, 16 Light VI VIA VIB

B Squadron 6RTR sent seven A9 and the same number of Light Tanks to support infantry and artillery of 10th Indian Brigade to capture the Italian fort at Gallabat in the Sudan which thwarted an attack on Khartoum. Starting their journey on 9th September, they travelled by train to the Nile where they loaded onto barges to be towed South. Arriving at Wadi Halfa early on the 18th they transferred to a train to move to Atbara. One A9 developed mechanical trouble and was cannibalised to provide spare wheels for the others. Last-minute preparations were made on 5th November and the attack began around 6am on the 6th. A Light Tank was left behind, one A9 and a Light Tank suffered broken tracks and another Light was ditched. Two Light Tanks supported a separate attack,

Typical of many British tanks in the desert, these Caunter-camouflaged tanks of the Tobruk garrison photographed on 12th September 1941 lack markings.

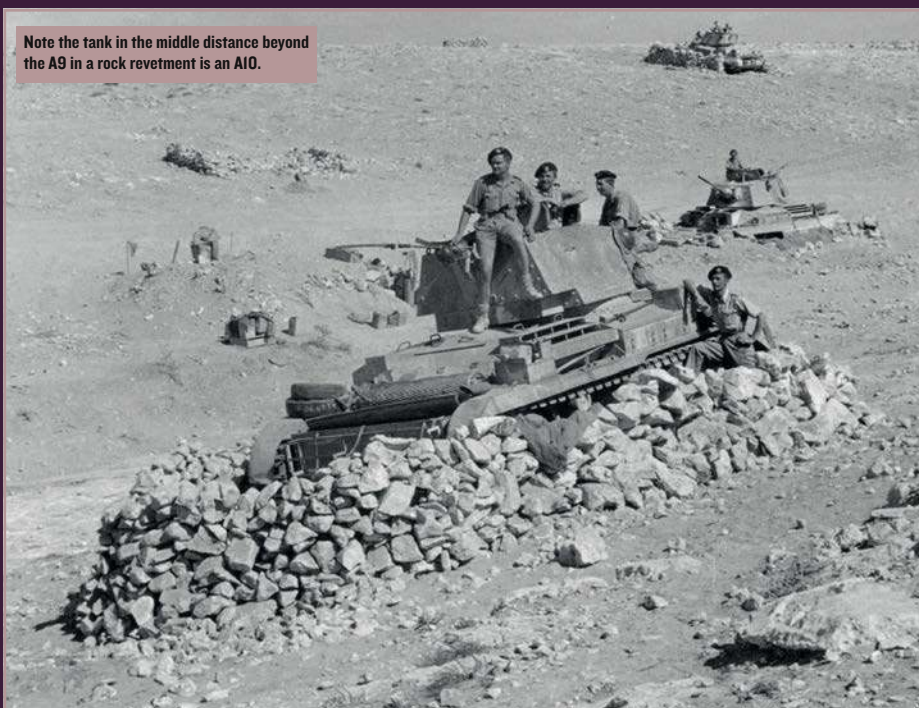


while five A9s and a single Light split into two groups and attacked the fort from opposite sides. Breaking through the outer barbed wire and crashing through the low walls, they circling around inside though most were stopped with broken tracks. Two were hit by a captured .55" Boys antitank rifle and one was then attacked by an improvised Molotov cocktail. After the action was over, tracks were repaired using a variety of rods and barbed wire. Two Light Tanks were recovered but one which could not was blown up, the Squadron Commander's A9 was hit by a bomb during a low-level air attack

the following day and was abandoned after its guns were removed. Four A9 and the remaining Light Tanks moved to Doka and the Cruisers were fitted with new tracks the following week.

A report lists the Tank Situation in 7th Armoured Division at 20th October. Their Light Tanks were all Mk VI series and the Cruisers were Mk I or A9 apart from 2RTR which had 6 Mk ICS and 45 Mk IIA and Mk IV (A10 and A13 Mk II). In addition to tanks with the Division and in Workshops, 18 Cruiser IIA were expected to arrive shortly and be ready for action by mid-November. ►

Note the tank in the middle distance beyond the A9 in a rock revetment is an A10.



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Think Tank - The First Cruiser Tank

A closer view.



◀ All these would be needed as a major offensive was planned. This was Operation Compass which began on 9th December and the situation as at 6th December 1940 has also survived -

Unit	Establishment		Holdings 20th October		Holdings 6th December	
	Cruisers	Light Tanks	Cruisers	Light Tanks	Cruisers	Light Tanks
HQ 7th Armoured Division	8	-	1	1	1	4
HQ 4th Armoured Brigade	10	-	-	3	-	3
7th Hussars	-	58	2	36	4	34
2RTR	52	-	51	-	36	16
6RTR	52	-	16	20	16	17
HQ 7th Armoured Brigade	10	-	2	5	2	5
3rd Hussars	52	-	-	51	16	36
8th Hussars	-	58	5	36	4	34
1RTR	52	-	18	24	16	22
RAC Base Depots	7	12	24	58	6	8
Workshops	-	-	-	-	41	82
Total	243	128	119	229	137	268

While in theory there were over 30 more tanks than required to equip units, many were in workshops and there was a shortage of 106 Cruisers against 140 too many Light tanks.

Operation Compass led to the Italians retreating, Sollum was captured on 17th December. Brigade records list the tank situation in the various Regiments in 7th Armoured Divisions in more detail -

4th Armoured Brigade (as at Boxing Day, after repaired vehicles had rejoined)

- 7th Hussars - 3 A9, 37 Light Tanks
- 2RTR - 4 A9, 7 A10, 14 A13
- 6RTR - 12 A9, 16 Light Tanks

7th Armoured Brigade (as at 19th December)

- 3rd Hussars - 9 Cruisers, 18 Light Tanks
- 8th Hussars - 3 Cruisers, 19 Light Tanks
- 1RTR - 12 Cruisers, 19 Light Tanks

The 1RTR War Diary for 31st December listed 16 A9 and A10 plus 16 Light Tank VI/VIA/VIB.

1941 started well enough, on 5 January Australian troops took Bardia and 40,000 prisoners were captured. On the 22nd Tobruk was captured, and on 7 February the main body of the Italian forces was cut off at Beda Fomm. British tank strength was 95 Light Tanks and around 50 Cruisers A9, A10 and A13. A column was formed consisting of the three Regiments in 4th Armoured Brigade - then 3rd Hussars, 7th Hussars and 2RTR - with infantry from the Rifle Brigade and artillery support. 2RTR was the strongest unit with 25 Cruisers, mostly A13 though after this action where they claimed 79 Italian tanks their own losses were an A13 and two A9.

A report of 15 February 1941 listing problems with the A9 and A10 reported clutch problems

due to a lack of dust proofing, some tyre failures, securing bolts on the suspension units worked loose, and some hub bolts on the track adjuster sheared. As at 20th February, the day when the first German forces were encountered, the Tank State was -

Unit	Light Tanks	Cruisers
HQ 7th Armoured Division	4	1
HQ 4th Armoured Brigade	3	-
7th Hussars	34	4
2RTR	16	32
6RTR	9	9
HQ 7th Armoured Brigade	5	2
3rd Hussars	36	14
8th Hussars	36	4
1RTR	22	16
Total 7th Armoured Division	165	82
Total 2nd Armoured Division	52	66
Base Ordnance Depots etc	172	55

On 8th March, the Middle East Tank State was 253 Cruisers and 364 Light Tanks. This was 417 short on Cruisers although 6RTR was using captured Italian M13 tanks which reduced the shortage to 365, with 246 Light Tanks surplus to requirement. A comment on 14th March stated that "Employed against German Armoured Divisions the Light Tank is useless". The Germans pushed forward on 31st March. There were still a number of A9 on strength, in total 66 with 2pdr and 6 CS tanks though over half were in depots.

No new A9 had arrived in North Africa. There had been some A10s, the big TIGER

convoy carried Matildas, Light Tanks, A13s and the then-new A15 Crusader. Those available were repaired, between 18th April and 11th July 1941 some 28 A9 were overhauled in workshops and returned to units. When 1RTR arrived by sea in Tobruk - their War Diary and contemporary maps spelled it "Tobrukh" - on 7th April they an A10, two A9 and a Light Tank in RHQ, B Squadron had 8 A9 and C Squadron with 15 Light Tanks. They were soon in action with tanks being lost to enemy action and breakdowns. On 18th April they reorganised, handing their Light Tanks to 3rd Hussars and receiving A13s from 5RTR. This left them as RHQ with three Cruisers, A Squadron with A9 and A10 and C Squadron with A13. Sub-turret machine guns were removed from the A9s at the start of June to be used as AA protection and the turrets filled with sandbags.

Other units also used A9 during this period. During Operation Battleaxe, on July 15th 2RTR had 10 A9, 11 A10 and 21 A13 Mk II though by dawn on the 17th they were down to 3 A9, 7 A10 and 5 A13. At the same period, 5RTR which was equipped with Matildas and a few Light Tanks had two A9. On 11th August, 7th Hussars had A9, A10 and A13 Mk II but their A9 were to be replaced with A10.

As at 7th September, the Cruiser Tank State was -

	In Middle East	Under Repair	Running	Schools etc	Available
I A9	48	10	38	6	32
II A10	42	9	33	2	31
IV A13	85	18	67	3	64
VI A15	67	14	53	2	51
Totals	242	51	191	13	178

On 1st November the numbers of A9 available was -

- HQ 7th Armoured Division - 6
- HQ 7th Armoured Brigade - 8
- HQ 1st Army Tank Brigade - 4
- 44RTR - 2
- 8RTR - 2
- 1RTR - 6

A report dated 4th November 1941 on the AFV Overhaul Programme stated that "Mk.I Cruiser Tanks (A.9) are no longer required operationally in Middle East, and will be used for training only." Work on them was given a lower priority than other tanks and would only be done when it did not interfere with other work. A separate report referring to obsolete Cruisers in the Middle East said there were 58 Mk I along with 52 Mk II. The A9 were distributed as - 32 in the Western Desert, 6 in Tobruk and 10 each in Base Ordnance Works and Training Schools.

The next major offensive aimed at relieving Tobruk was code-named CRUSADER and set for 19th November. This would include 1st Army Tank Brigade's Matildas and Valentines plus a few A13 and Light Tanks, while in 7th Armoured Division the only A9 present were five or six each in the Headquarters of 4th and 7th Armoured Brigade. 4th Armoured Brigade operated the then-new American M3 Light Tank aka Stuart or Honey, 7th Armoured Brigade had an assortment of Cruisers and 22nd Armoured Brigade which was attached for this operation had Crusaders.

1RTR in Tobruk still had its A9's. On 16th September orders stated that all AFVs in Tobruk would come under 32nd Army Tank



Apparently painted in overall Light Stone, this A9 and two A13 Mk IIA are being unloaded on Malta on 24th March 1942.

The command tank of Brigadier Willison, commander of 32nd Army Tank Brigade in Tobruk, had been recovered and rebuilt by Brigade Workshops. As well as the white-red-white recognition stripes, the radio aerial carries several pennants and even one of his wife's stockings!



Brigade. 1RTR had 5 A9, 9 A10, 13 A13 and 22 Light Tank Mk VIB, D Squadron 7RTR had 15 Infantry Tank Mk IIA* (Matilda) and two Light Tank Mk VIB while C Squadron, 1st The King's Dragoon Guards had 26 Marmon Herrington Armoured Cars. One A9 and three Matildas were under repair in workshops while three damaged A9 were dug-in as anti-tank emplacements on the Derna Road together with some captured enemy tanks. Some tank reinforcements came in the form of 4RTR with Matildas and some Light Tanks Mk VIC. As at 19th October the AFV strength in Tobruk has risen to 69 Infantry Tank Mk IIA*, 6 A9, 9 A10, 13 A13, 27 Light Tank VIB and 7 VIC plus 29 Marmon Herrington Armoured Cars. No other AFVs were received, such was the shortage of tanks that two of the dug-in A9 was recovered and repaired for use by Brigade HQ.

The breakout from Tobruk was part of the overall Operation CRUSADER offensive, with 70th Division's operations code-named EVEREST. As part of these plans, 32nd Army Tank Brigade Operation Instruction No 5 of 12th November was issued. This was in conjunction with Operation Order No 11 of 5th November and listed special markings were to be applied to AFVs. These listed the positions of two pennants at different times and all AFVs were two to have three vertical stripes each 6" wide and up to 18" long according to space available. These were to go on both side of turrets, both sides of the sand shields at forward and the front centre panel of the hull in line from 12th November. Similar orders were issued to other armoured units.

When operations commenced on 21st November, tanks were lost to enemy action or breakdown with any that could be repaired returned to service. By mid-December the few remaining in use were given to 8RTR and the crews withdrawn to the Delta.

After these operations, the few A9 which remained soldiered on though with more British Crusaders, American Stuart Light and later the new Grant Medium tanks available their numbers and value decreased. As at the start of February 1942 there were 36 Cruiser I in the Middle East, but of these only 10 were with units and the remainder were in Base Ordnance Workshops, while there were also 15 Cruiser II with units plus another 11 in Workshops.

A few Light Tanks and Matildas had been stationed on Malta. In January 1942 these were reinforced by A9 and A13 MkIIA. In early

September a proposed War Establishment based on its existing personnel and vehicles gives -

- No 1 Troop three "Tanks Lt Mk VIC" (photos show one was in fact a Mk VI)
- No 2 Troop four "Tanks Mk I A9"
- No 3 Troop three "Tanks Cruiser Mk IV A13"
- No 4 Troop four "Tanks Matilda Mk II" plus trucks and motorcycles.

Later a few Valentines joined them. These remained in use until July 1943 when the Light and Cruiser tanks were withdrawn and their guns preserved. Matildas and Valentines were to soldier on for a few months but most crews were flown to Egypt. What became of the tanks is not known.

Overall losses at least are known. A detailed report on tanks lost in the Middle East up to the end of 1942 recorded 24 Cruiser I - which seems a low figure - compared with 85 Cruiser II, IIA and IIACS. None were listed as being lost at sea.

Some must have remained in use for training. Army Order 52/43 of 9th January 1943 dealt with "Disposal of Obsolete A Vehicles". All the early Cruiser series I through IV including both Cruiser I and ICS were listed as to be used while spare parts allowed, if needs be by cannibalisation. This may have extended the useful lives of a few tanks but only briefly, as on 11th September ACI 1356/43 1943 ordered that all early Cruisers were to be broken up for scrap as soon as possible.

Two A9 survive. One is in the Tank Museum at Bovington, its brass data plate states "Cruiser Tank A9 Mark I Makers No 2047/44 W.D.No. T.7230 Date February 1940" which makes it a Harland & Wolff built tank. The other is in the Armoured Corps Museum, Ahmednagar in India.

Whether A9 played a great part in British AFV development and use is open to debate. They were certainly there and are worth recording. ■



The Editor checks out an interesting diorama element from MiniArt.

REVOLUTIONARY ROLLING STOCK

Russia was and is the largest country in the world. Its geography of N-S. rivers and E-W. commerce, plus, importantly, the mostly flat terrain, made it very suited to develop railroads as the basic mode of transportation.

In the early 1830s Russian inventors father and son Cherepanovs built the first Russian steam locomotive. The first railway line was built in Russia in 1837 between Saint-Petersburg and Tsarskoye Selo, and called the Tsarskoye Selo Railway. It was 27 km long and linked the Imperial Palaces at Tsarskoye Selo and Pavlovsk. Track gauge was 6 feet (1830 mm). This railway has been described as a "toy" railway, as it had no economic, political or social impact on the Russian Empire.

The Warsaw-Vienna railway in Congress Poland started operating in 1845, and fully opened in 1848, with 327.6 km length of track. It ran from Warsaw to the border with Austria and used the standard European gauge (1,435 mm (4 ft 8 1/2 in)), as opposed to all other railways in the Russian Empire which used the broad gauge (1,524 mm or 5 ft), hence it formed a system physically separated from other Russian railways.

The Department of Railways, later part of the Russian Ministry of Communications, was created in the Russian Empire in 1842 in order to oversee the construction of Russia's second major railway line, the Moscow-Saint Petersburg Railway. The railway linked the imperial capital Saint-Petersburg

and Moscow and was built between 1842 and 1851. Track gauge was 1,524 mm (5 ft) and this became the Russian standard gauge. From 1853-1862, a line was built from St. Petersburg to Warsaw, thus connecting with Western Europe.

During World War I Russia used a mix of light and heavy armoured trains. The heavy trains mounted 4.2 inch or 6 inch guns while the light trains were equipped with 76.2mm guns. Railway transportation of troops and equipment was also essential.

The railways and railway workers also played a major role during the Russian Revolution.*

IN THE BOX

MiniArt has now released a 1:35 scale Russian WWI and revolutionary era railway flat bed. The kit comprises 190 parts in grey plastic, 12 photo-etched parts and decals for Russian and Polish rolling stock.

The kit is highly detailed in all areas, as the parts count for this relatively simple piece of equipment would imply.

Most of the parts go into the chassis. It's a shame that most of the work will be hidden underneath the timber deck.

The rail wheels are presented as

one part each and are attached in pairs via a simple axle.

The wooden flatbed itself is supplied in two pieces. Woodgrain effect is subtle and convincing.

The short front, side and rear sides may be posed in the open or closed position.

A modest photo-etched fret supplies 12 detail parts.

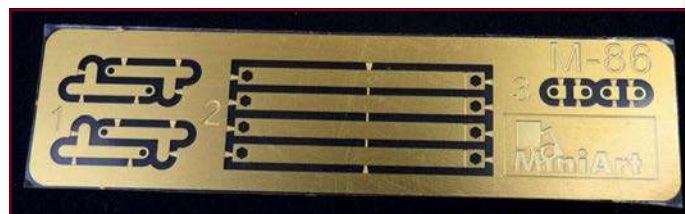
MiniArt has also included a length of Russian gauge track. These are made up from five different sleeper styles plus four rail lengths and ties.

Markings are included for eight Russian and Polish railways from the Russian Empire in 1914 until the 1920s. A full colour guide to the painting and markings of all eight options is included.

CONCLUSION

MiniArt's 1:35 scale WWI and revolutionary era railway flat bed will be a nice piece in its own right or as a display platform for a Russian vehicle or armoured car. It would also be a unique centrepiece for a diorama. ■

Thanks to Creative Models Australia for the sample www.creativemodels.com.au



The kit's photo-etched fret.

Plenty of marking options!



One of the flat bed sprues.



Woodgrain detail looks good.



Moulding quality is first rate.



Detail parts are supplied on multiple identical sprues.

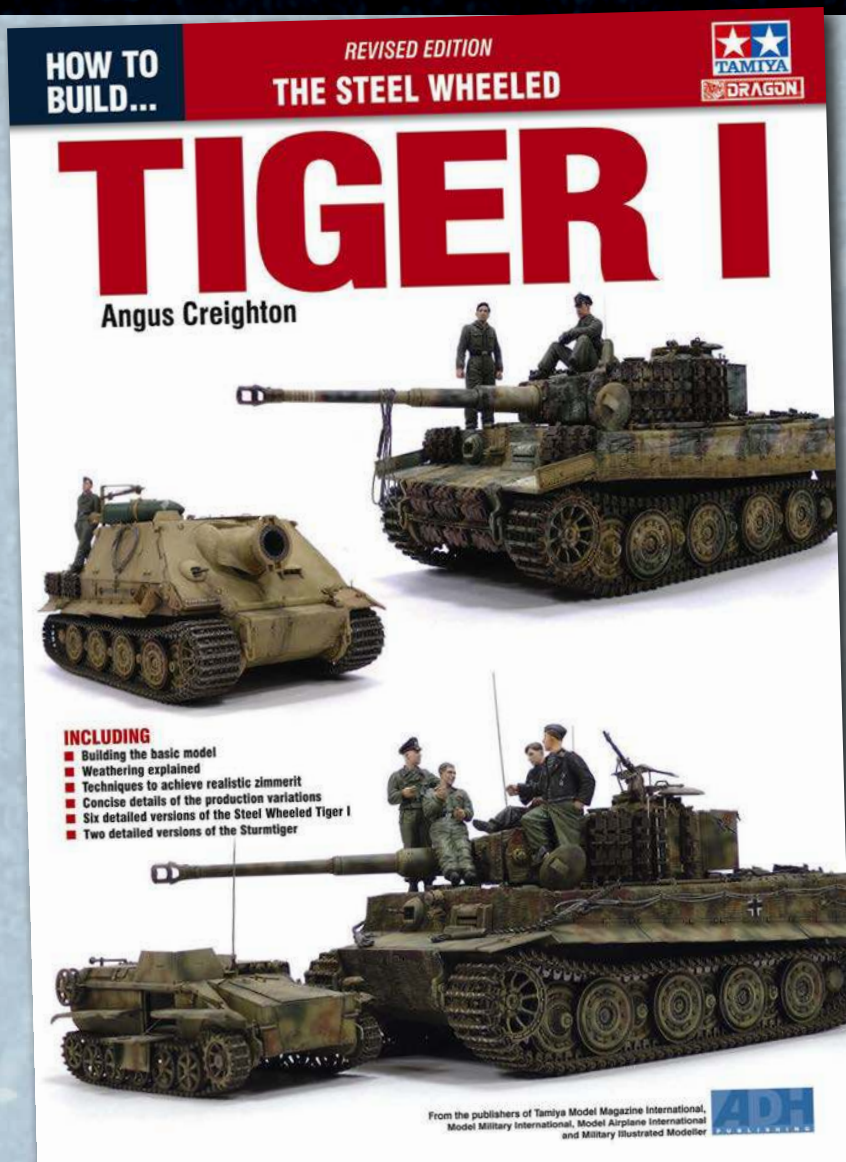


Wheel and leaf spring.



Tracks and sleepers are included.

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RAM ON!

PART TWO - PAINTING, WEATHERING AND COMMANDER

Bronco has released the first mainstream plastic injection moulded kit of the Canadian RAM II tank. **Brett Green** paints and weathers the built model.





The unpainted model with the kit tracks replaced with Dragon DS Flexible Vinyl Tracks - 1:35 scale "Double-I" WE210 Tracks taken from a Dragon Sherman kit.



The hull and turret were retextured using a thick mix of Tamiya Extra Thin Liquid Cement and Tamiya White Putty.



In MMI Issue 162 we described the assembly of Bronco's new Canadian Cruiser Tank Ram Mk.II tank.

This time we'll have a look at how I painted and weathered the vehicle.

First though, let's have a quick recap of building the kit.

CONSTRUCTION

The instructions would have you start by building the lower hull but I decided to assemble the six bogie trucks first.

Each of the road wheels is attached to the sprues at four points. Most of the other bogie parts are attached by three. This means that there is a bit more time required to remove the parts from the sprues and clean up the waste plastic, but the upside is that there are no centreline seams on the road wheels.

There are some raised remnants of ejector pins on the inside mating surfaces of some of the bogie parts though, so make sure that you completely remove these otherwise they will interfere with fit.

While cleaning up the parts, I dropped one of the upper bogie mounts straight between my legs onto the floor. Although it was not

really a tiny part and I was sure I knew exactly where it went, I couldn't find it. Chalk another one up to the voracious carpet monster!

The bogie trucks are made up from 14 pieces each. Assembly went okay, although the fit is quite wobbly until the front and rear covers are glued into place.

It feels as if one locating pin is missing from one side of each of the axle arms too, but it all comes together better than I expected after a

bit of squeezing and cursing.

Moving onto the lower hull, fit of the large sides and bottom hull pieces is perfect.

There are a couple of errors in the instructions in Step 1 of the instructions covering the rear hull plate. The exhausts, Parts A15, are shown facing the interior of the hull but of course they should face outward. Also, the rear towing parts are labelled D1 and D13, but they are in reality A1 and A13.

I decided to retexture the uniform cast effect on the kit parts. I masked off the engine deck as I thought that would have been rolled armour plate. My texturing compound of choice was a thick mix of Tamiya Extra Thin Liquid Cement and Tamiya White Putty.

I glued the two turret halves together before applying the texture. The gloopy mix was applied with a stiff brush and stippled as it dried.

When dry, the textured parts were sprayed with Tamiya Fine Grey Primer straight from the can.

Subsequent assembly is quite straightforward and fit is very good, although it is a little tricky to install the 6 pdr gun barrel and the two mounts (Parts B11). These need to be trapped between the turret and the mantlet (Part B16). A third hand would be helpful here!

Also, check the tool arrangement of the rear deck for your subject. The instructions do not seem to cover the placement of all the tools provided on the sprues and in the completed model diagrams. ►

PAINTING

Although the classic perception of Allied tanks in Europe is that they were universally finished in Olive Drab or Dark Green, this was not the case for British AFVs until around 1944.

At the time that this Ram II was travelling the back roads of Great Britain, the standard base colour was SCC.2 Brown.

Noted camouflage expert Mike Starmer has suggested a mix of Tamiya colours to achieve this shade:

5 parts XF-68 NATO Brown + 4 parts XF-3 Flat Yellow + 1 part XF-1 Flat Black.

This custom SCC 2 Brown mix was sprayed over a base coat of Tamiya Grey Primer.

A paler version of the colour was created by adding around 20% Tamiya XF-12 J.N. Grey. This was heavily thinned and sprayed in small strips, spots and patches, mainly on the upper parts of the horizontal surfaces and the top of vertical surfaces.

The model was treated to a coat of Future Floor Polish and a selective wash of Winsor & Newton Raw Umber and Lamp Black oil paint, thinned with Mineral Turpentine, was selectively applied on and around structural features.

This was followed by a dry-brushing of edges and high points using Panzer Aces acrylic British Tank Crew Highlight applied with a soft flat paint brush.

Bronco's kit decals were then applied over a further two glossy coats of Future Floor Polish. I was a bit concerned about the decals as the finish was quite flat, but they performed well. As a precaution, I cut off some of the excess clear carrier film after the decals had been applied but before they had completely set.

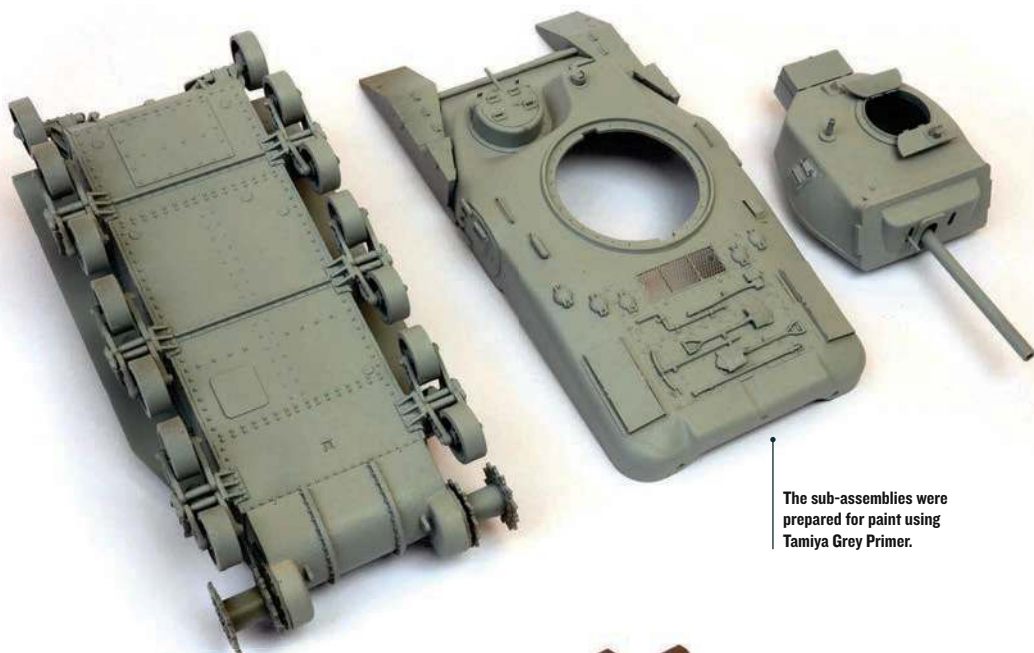
The model was then treated to a coat of Winsor & Newton Galeria Acrylic Mediums Matt Varnish mixed with around 20% Tamiya acrylic thinners.

Over this nice flat finish, I added some chipping using a sparse sponge and a mix of Vallejo Panzer Aces 337 Highlight Ger. (Black) and Model Color 70.995 German Grey.

AK's Dry Mud (Item No. AK8027) was now brushed onto the sides of the lower hull as well as the lower parts of the front and rear hull.

The tracks were painted and weathered at this stage. Each of the full lengths were sprayed with my mix of "scale black" (around 50/50 Tamiya XF-1 Flat Black and XF-64 Red Brown), then brushed with a sloppy coat of Maru's European Earth Easy Mud thinned with water. The excess mud was quickly wiped off with a dry rag.

Finishing touches included the headlights. The kit also includes photo-etched brush guards. The photo-etch is very soft, which on the upside makes it very easy to bend, but on the downside makes it very easy to bend! After a terrifying 15 minutes or so, I finally managed to manipulate the delicate metal into approximately the right shape without breaking or mangling the brush guards. ►



The sub-assemblies were prepared for paint using Tamiya Grey Primer.



The British SCC.2 Brown was mixed from Tamiya acrylics using Mike Starmer's formula - 5 parts XF-68 NATO Brown + 4 parts XF-3 Flat Yellow + 1 part XF-1 Flat Black.



The result is a fairly dark chocolatey brown.



A paler version of the colour was created by adding around 20% Tamiya XF-12 J.N. Grey. This was sprayed on upper surfaces.

An even paler mix was sprayed in small strips, spots and patches, mainly on the upper parts of the horizontal surfaces and the top of vertical surfaces.

It looks unrealistic now, but further weathering will blend it in.

Natural recessed and structural features were sprayed with a darker thin mix of Tamiya XF-1 Flat Black and XF-64 Red Brown.

The model was sprayed with a coat of Future floor polish mixed with about 20% Tamiya acrylic thinners.

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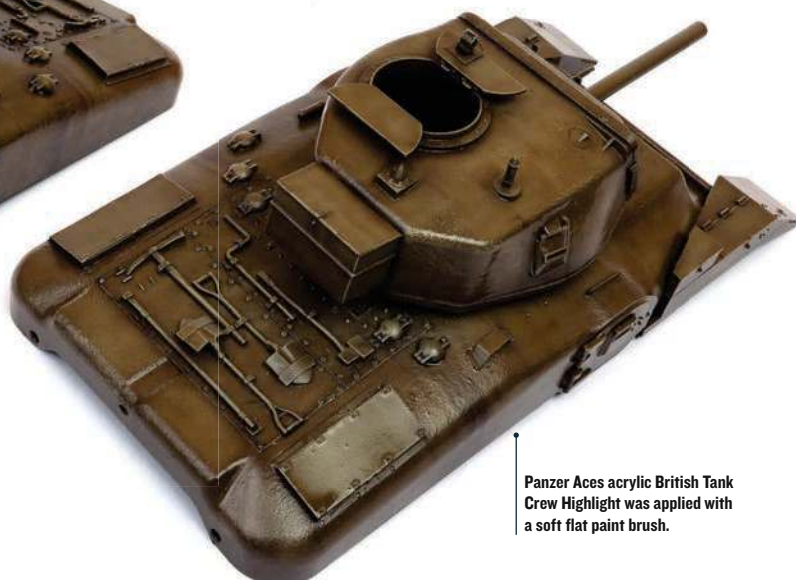
Next came a selective wash of Winsor & Newton Raw Umber and Lamp Black oil paint, thinned with Mineral Turpentine.



The wash was particularly effective around the tools and raised bolt heads on the engine deck.



This was followed by a dry-brushing of edges and high points.



Panzer Aces acrylic British Tank Crew Highlight was applied with a soft flat paint brush.

“At the time that this Ram II was travelling the back roads of Great Britain, the standard base colour was SCC.2 Brown...”



Markings are supplied for two options.



I was a bit worried about the flat finish of the decals but they performed well under a coat of Solvaset.



The model was then treated to a coat of Winsor & Newton Galeria Acrylic Mediums Matt Varnish mixed with around 20% Tamiya acrylic thinners.



Tool handles and heads, and tyres were picked out with Vallejo acrylics.



Dragon's full length flexible vinyl tracks are very easy to assemble and paint, and may be added at the end of the project.



The tracks received a base coat of scale black – a 50/50 mix of Tamiya acrylic XF-1 Flat Black and XF-64 Red Brown.



Tracks were then brushed with a sloppy coat of Maru's European Earth Easy Mud thinned with water. The excess mud was quickly wiped off with a dry rag.



AK's Dry Mud (Item No. AK8027) was now brushed onto the sides of the lower hull as well as the lower parts of the front and rear hull.



Chipping was applied using a sparse sponge and a mix of Vallejo Panzer Aces 337 Highlight Ger. (Black) and Model Color 70.995 German Grey.

The top of the hull and the turret roof were dusted with MIG pigments.



The headlights and brush guards were only added after painting and weathering was complete.



This is Ultracast's Item No. 35048 - Canadian/British Tank Crewman Europe/Italy

COMMANDER FIGURE

I have had this figure, Ultracast's 35048 - Canadian/British Tank Crewman Europe/Italy, since 2008. It stands up very well against the new generation of figures more than 12 years later. The set is still available from Ultracast.

Assembling the figure was very straightforward. I filled a few small gaps at the arm joins using Tamiya's White Surfacer applied with a micro brush.

The figure's body was primed before painting using Tamiya Grey Primer straight from the spray can. The head was primed using Tamiya's spray White Primer.

The base colour for the uniform was Vallejo Panzer Aces 317 British Tankcrew. This was followed by subtle dry-brushing of a 50/50 mix of the base uniform colour plus and 321 Highlight British Tankcrew, followed by another dry-brushing of the only highest points using 100% 321 Highlight British Tankcrew.

A wash of water, Future Floor Polish and a few spots of Panzer Aces 317 British Tankcrew and 337 Highlight Ger. (Black) was brushed over the uniform colours and allowed to dry before picking out details with more Vallejo acrylics.

Next, the face and hand were brush painted with mix of Vallejo Panzer Aces 341 Flesh Base and Model Color 70815 Basic Skintone as a base for the skin colour. This was followed by a wash of thinned Winsor & Newton Raw Umber, Burnt Sienna and Flesh Tint, which flowed nicely into low-lying areas including the mouths and eyes.

Painting of the skin tones continued with a range of mixed Vallejo Panzer Aces acrylics.

I decided to try to paint actual eyes this time rather than my usual dark slits, and I managed to fluke it first time. The eye areas were first painted a dark brown/black mix, then a pinpoint of white was spotted into the lower right corner of each eye using a toothpick. That's all!

The beret was painted a Vallejo Model Colour 70.995 German Grey.

The figure painting was sealed with Winsor & Newton Galeria Acrylic Mediums Matt Varnish. ►



The parts are perfectly cast in cream coloured resin. A few gaps around the arm joins were dealt with using Tamiya White Surfacer. The body was coated with Tamiya Grey Primer and the head with White Primer, both straight from the spray can.

The face and hand were brush painted with mix of Vallejo Panzer Aces 341 Flesh Base and Model Color 70815 Basic Skintone as a base for the skin colour.



The flesh areas received a wash of thinned Winsor & Newton Raw Umber, Burnt Sienna and Flesh Tint.

The base colour for the uniform was Vallejo Panzer Aces 317 British Tankcrew. This was followed by subtle dry-brushing of a 50/50 mix of the base uniform colour plus and 321 Highlight British Tankcrew, followed by another dry-brushing of the only highest points using 100% 321 Highlight British Tankcrew.

This flowed nicely into low-lying areas including the mouths and eyes.



The eye areas were first painted a dark brown/black mix, then a pinpoint of white was spotted into the lower right corner of each eye using a toothpick.

The figure painting was sealed with Winsor & Newton Galeria Acrylic Mediums Matt Varnish.

The Commander at his post.



“Bronco’s 1:35 scale Ram Mk.II is a nice kit. It is well detailed but the parts count for the bulk of the vehicle is quite modest. However, there are a number of accuracy and shape errors...”

◀ CONCLUSION

Bronco's 1:35 scale Ram Mk.II is a nice kit. It is well detailed but the parts count for the bulk of the vehicle is quite modest.

However, there are a number of accuracy and shape errors.

Paul Roberts has some observations about the accuracy of the model:

“There are some inaccuracies with this kit.

As shown elsewhere, the turret ring is a fair bit too small and includes a raised bullet splash lip that wasn't present on this very early Ram configuration. Similarly, the driver's side door should have an extractor fan and not a protectoscope. The external air cleaners, indicating an 82 octane Continental engine are not correct as these early Ram IIs had the 100 octane version and had external pepper pot exhausts and mufflers, like the early Lees.

The shape of the hull to the right of the driver is off by a fair amount, too.

The depiction of the screws attaching the gun mount plate to the face of the turret look weak, but I need to see one close up to know better.

All that said, it's at the very least, a far better place to start an accurate Ram than most of the resin kits that have been produced, Resicast and Formations being quite good and all the rest being flavours of awful.”

I also think the intricate workable tracks are out of character with this otherwise straightforward model. The suspension is only configured for flat ground. Live tracks such as these do not sag so there really is no need to have them workable in this case.

Here's a quick description of live and dead tracks courtesy of Wikipedia:

“Tracks may be broadly categorized as live or dead track. Dead track is a simple design in which each track plate is connected to the rest with hinge-type pins. These dead tracks will lie flat if placed on the ground; the drive sprocket pulls the track around the wheels with no assistance from the track itself. Live track is slightly more complex, with each link connected to the next by a bushing which causes the track to bend slightly inward. A length of live track left on the ground will curl

upward slightly at each end. Although the drive sprocket must still pull the track around the wheels, the track itself tends to bend inward, slightly assisting the sprocket and somewhat conforming to the wheels.”

Therefore, dead tracks (for example, those fitted to German tanks) will sag whereas live tracks (such as fitted to Sherman and their variants) will not.

I wish all model companies would adopt Tamiya's recent track policy. They now offer link-and-length plastic tracks for dead tracks such as in their Hummel and reissued Marder kits. These tracks are fast and easy to assemble and they represent the sag along the top run perfectly. On the other hand, for their recent Sherman variants Tamiya has provided full-length flexible vinyl tracks. These are nicely detailed and may be completed in minutes.

And after all this, even if model companies still feel it is essential to include multi-part individual link tracks, then how about throwing in a set of full-length vinyl tracks as an option. Pretty please? ■



The figure stayed in place without any special mount or glue.

Fuel stains were first airbrushed then emphasised with fine brushed strokes.

The top of the tracks were glued onto the tops of the return rollers and to the drive sprocket to ensure a nice straight run.

Modelspec

Bronco 1:35 Canadian Cruiser Tank Ram Mk.II Early Production
Kit No. CB35215

Accessories Used:

- Dragon DS Flexible Vinyl Tracks - 1:35 scale "Double-1" WE210 Tracks (taken from a Dragon Sherman kit)
- Ultracast Item No. 35048 - Canadian/British Tank Crewman Northern Europe / Italy 1942-45.

Tools and Modelling Products:

- Tamiya Extra Thin Liquid Cement
- Revell Contacta Cement
- Selleys Supa Glue
- Tamiya Masking Tape (various widths)
- Tamiya White Putty

Paints and Finishing Products Used (Vehicle):

- Tamiya Spray Can Primer - White and Grey
- Tamiya Acrylics - XF-1 Flat Black; XF-3 Flat Yellow; XF-12 J.N. Grey; XF-64 Red Brown; XF-68 NATO Brown.
- Winsor & Newton Oil Colour - Lamp Black; Raw Umber.
- Future Floor Polish
- Winsor & Newton Galeria Acrylic Mediums Matt Varnish
- Easy Mud - 21105 European Earth

Paints and Finishing Products Used (Figure):

- Tamiya Spray Can Primer - White and Grey
- Uniform: Vallejo Acrylics - 317 British Tankcrew; 321 Highlight British Tankcrew; 337 Highlight Ger. (Black); Model Colour 70.995 German Grey; 70.951 White
- Uniform Shading: Vallejo Acrylics - Panzer Aces 317 British Tankcrew; 337 Highlight Ger. (Black)
- Flesh: Vallejo Acrylics: Panzer Aces 341 Flesh Base; Model Color 70815 Basic Skintone
- Flesh Shading: Winsor & Newton Oil Paints - Raw Umber; Burnt Sienna; Flesh Tint

✓ Well detailed; welcome subject; simple parts breakdown (except tracks); generally very good fit.

✗ Shape and accuracy issues; tracks are complex compared to the rest of the model.

Available from

Thanks to Bronco for the sample
<http://www.cn-bronco.com/en/>

Rating ●●●●●●○○



Graham Tetley takes a look at Zvezda's extended 1:35 scale Ural-4320 truck, which now includes a new rear end and launcher.

HAVE LAUNCHER, WILL TRAVEL

The eagle-eyed amongst you will remember that I reviewed the basic Ural-4320 military truck not too long ago.

Hot on the heels of that, Zvezda has now given us the MLRS version, which is the same basic truck but with three new sprues to give the new rear end & launcher. It certainly has more 'Ooomph' than the basic truck!

Coming in a very sturdy cardboard box with an outer sleeve, there are 429 well-moulded plastic parts contained on nine sprues. Also included are clear parts for the windows and headlights, silver stickers for the wing mirrors and seven vinyl tyres. Decals are clearly printed and in register giving us marking options for two Russian Army vehicles - one plain green and one camouflaged. There is a fully detailed engine included and display options are limited to the bonnet and cab doors open or closed.

An inspection of the sprues reveals a level of detail that ranges from good to excellent. There is no flash present on any of the parts, although some mould seam lines are prominent and will require smoothing down on many items. Also, there are many knock-out pin marks on many of the parts and whilst most are cleverly placed and hidden, some will be seen and will need filling. Basic modelling skills and a good filler & sandpaper will cure most of this. The vinyl

tyres possess some good tyre wall and tread detail but the four sprue attachment parts and very prominent mould seam running around the circumference of each tyre does spoil it somewhat. Be prepared for some cleaning-up time with this build and it would be an option to seek out resin tyres.

The new rear parts are very finely moulded and oozing with detail. The fender/launcher part has some lovely ribbing detail on it although the depiction of the fender braces underneath would be a great contender for brass parts. Stand-out items for me are twin wire guard parts H15 and the separately moulded piping & plumbing. However, the rocket units themselves are provided in halves so you will have plenty of clean-up to do when they are joined together. The launcher itself will rotate but is not designed to elevate - if you want the launcher at a different angle you will need to modify parts K48 & 50.

The instructions are very clearly drawn and whilst some areas look busy, they are easy to follow. In total, we have 36 construction steps with several sub-assemblies included. The build begins with the engine in steps 1 to 3, then the winch, axles and chassis taking up Steps 4 to 17. Steps 18 & 19 deal with the new bits at the rear, Steps 20 to 30 the cab cargo bed and 24 to 30 deal with the cab. Steps 31 to 38 complete body of the truck with 39 to 44 devoted to the launcher. The last two steps

bring it all together and highlights the construction options.

At this stage I have only been able to test fit a few of the larger parts, such as the cargo bed, cab, launcher halves and fit generally is very good. Beware if you are using Tamiya Extra Thin Cement as it eats through the plastic on my sample - as it did on the basic truck kit. One little niggle that I have noticed is that the dials in the cab are very prominent and it would have been good to have decals for them included.

I have built a few Zvezda kits and have not been disappointed so far. Detail on this is very good and, coupled with clear instructions, it would be a good kit for an intermediate modeller and those rainy winter weekends. My two main reservations with it are the quality of the tyres and lack of decals for the instruments, but don't let that put you off. Some modellers may bemoan the lack of etched parts but what we have is generally very good. Current UK retail price is around the £28 mark which represents fantastic value for money.

References

Google is your friend and will show you many articles and photos of the actual vehicles.

Zvezda are distributed in the UK by The Hobby Company Limited www.hobbyco.net



Rocket tube halves.



New decals.



Tyre tread detail.



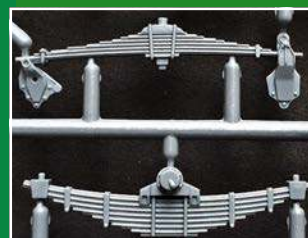
Close up of the wheel hub.



The lovely engine grille.



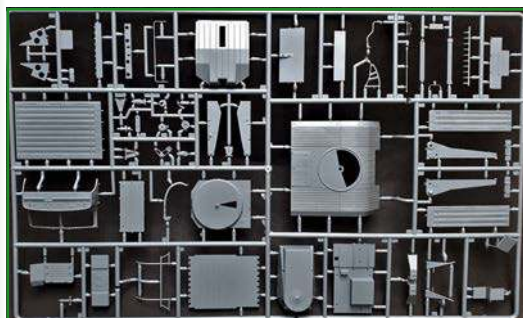
Fine detail on the radiator.



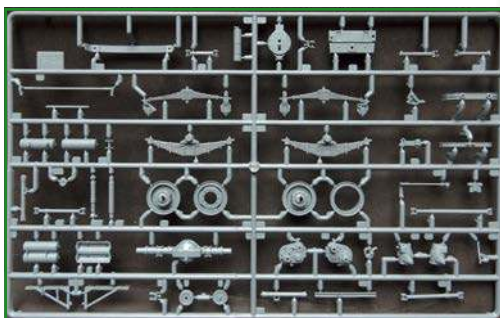
Leaf Spring close-up.



The wing mirror stickers.



New Sprue 'C'.



Suspension sprue.

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CHOP CHOP

Ian Barraclough transforms Takom's 1:35 scale T-55A to a Montenegrin Army vehicle being wrecked in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia.



I found eight images of two different T-55s in various states of being chopped-up.



The T-55s were from the Montenegrin Army.



The photos offered helpful details for the model



Every now and then you find inspiration for a build when you're not even looking for it. I can't remember what I was searching the internet for, but it had nothing to do with tanks or modelling: when I found an image of a T-55 being chopped up - my interest was piqued, I like building anything out of the ordinary! With a more searching I discovered that this vehicle of the Montenegrin Army was cut-up as part of the arms drawdown following the conflict in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY).

I found eight images of two different T-55s in various states of being chopped-up with many other vehicles shown in the backgrounds, including ARVs and trucks.

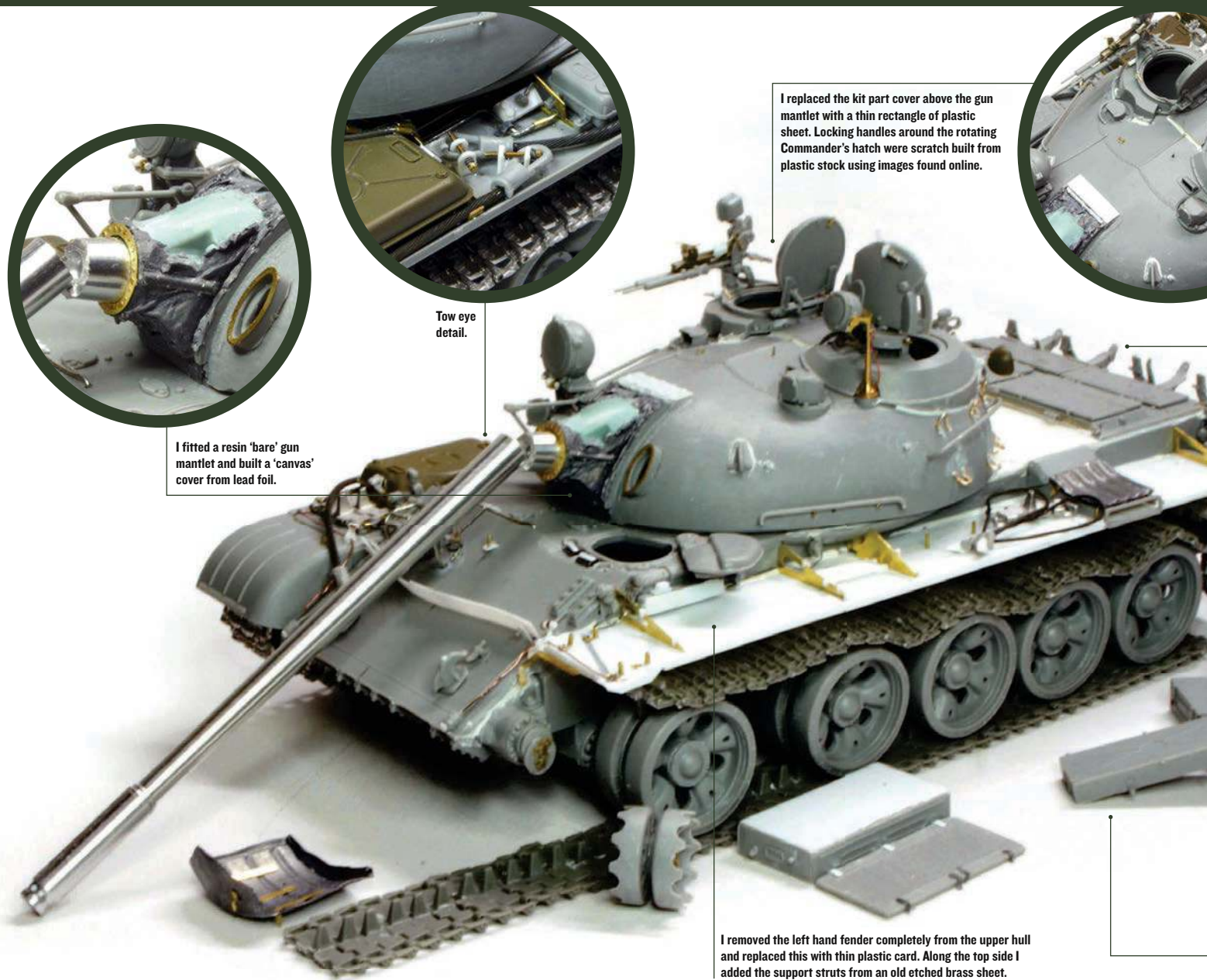
I was unable to determine if the drawdown was completed voluntarily by the Montenegrin Army; or whether the destruction was forced upon them by peacekeeping or monitoring forces - the images seemed to show 'independent' civilians doing the 'chopping' and monitoring. ►



project.

Amongst other things, the barrels were cut off.

Drive sprockets were cut off too.



I fitted a resin 'bare' gun mantlet and built a 'canvas' cover from lead foil.

Tow eye detail.

I replaced the kit part cover above the gun mantlet with a thin rectangle of plastic sheet. Locking handles around the rotating Commander's hatch were scratch built from plastic stock using images found online.

I removed the left hand fender completely from the upper hull and replaced this with thin plastic card. Along the top side I added the support struts from an old etched brass sheet.

◀ Of note was the various shades of green; and what looked to be freshly painted turret numbers, although also a lack of any other markings.

I won't go into detail here on the history of the T-55. It would take up an entire volume to do this and more knowledgeable people than I have already done so... however the T-55s shown in the images were Polish built T-55s and have some notable differences to other T-55s. The most obvious is the configuration of the engine deck: the Polish T-55s have engine and air filter access hatches like akin to the T-54, with the air filter hatch being square as opposed to the diagonal cut hatches on other T-55s (allowing this hatch to open without having to turn the turret). The engine deck also differs in its layout of lifting hooks and fittings; as well as not having the brackets for the wading screen fitted around its outside. Instead it has sealing hatches fitted to the radiator and rear hatch openings.

Moving up to the turret the Polish turrets are fitted with four lifting hooks (2 front, 2 rear) as opposed to three on Russian built turrets and the hand rail layout also sometimes differs; although I've seen Polish built turrets with both layouts. At the front of the turret the retaining bolts for

the gun mantlet cover run along the front of the protrusions at the sides of the opening, as opposed to along its sides. The Polish T-55s are also fitted with different stowage bins as well as bins on the turret; although again, I've seen ones without bins on the sides of the turrets. I'm sure that experts with far more knowledge could reel of many more differences; however, these are the ones that I made note of and implemented on my model.

TAKOM T-55A

Some enquiries to other modellers indicated that the best representation for the Montenegrin T-55 was the Takom 1:35 T-55A, Kit No. 2056, although this would require some modification. I also bought a 3D printed Polish engine deck from Shapeways. I am a prolific builder of Russian armour, so have a box full of T-55 bits and pieces. From this 'spares' box I rescued a set of Masterclub metal RSMH workable tracks (MC135049W) and some left over etched brass sets. I also had many left-over parts from a Tamiya T-55.

CHOPPING THE T-55

I set myself a target of sticking to the original

image as much as possible. This showed the gun barrel cut through, all the side bins and turret bin removed, and the track partially removed and cut-up. This meant that some preparation work would have to take place prior to starting the detailed part of the build.

I removed the left and fender completely from the upper hull and replaced this with thin plastic card. I drilled the spaced drainage holes into this and added the strengthening beams to the bottom of this from V shaped stock plastic.

Along the top side I added the support struts from an old etched brass sheet. To these I fitted the fittings which the bins would have been bolted to - these were cut through as part of the cutting-up process so I left the upper sides rough. I made up a lead foil front mudguard, using the kit part as a 'former'. A bit of fine sanding removed any folds or seams; and to finish this part off I added the three strengthening beams to the underside - these would be very visible on the final layout.

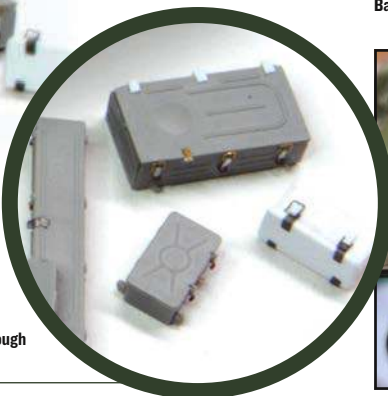
Moving onto the removed bins, Takom does provide the Polish built bins, although seem to have missed the fact that some of these bins have different latches to the Russian build variants. I used various etched brass 'spares'



Metal rod and photo-etched details were added to the rear of the hull.



Takom provides Polish built bins. I used various etched brass 'spares' to replace the latches and handles; and added the retaining bolt fittings that were cut through as part of their removal.



Basic painting and weathering is complete.



Rust underlying the green camouflage coat.



Flattened and rusty exhaust.

to replace the latches and handles; and added the retaining bolt fittings - again cut through as part of their removal. With some of the bins in the image shown upside down, I added the bottoms of the bins from plastic sheet.

The Takom kit has markings for a Polish built version, although does not have the Polish front half of the engine deck (with different engine and air filter hatches). It does however have the correct rear portion without the wading brackets. I replaced the front portion of the engine deck with the Shapeways item; although on reflection this sits quite low and I should have used spacers to raise this up by about 1mm.

On the turret, I fitted a resin 'bare' gun mantlet and built a 'canvas' cover from lead foil. Just about all images of old T-55s show this canvas cover torn and damaged. By using the lead foil for this I could use a sharp point to tear this cover up, revealing the bare gun mantlet cover underneath. With the cover fitted I used a punch and die set to add the bolts to the fronts of the turret protrusions either side of the gun opening. I also replaced the kit part cover above the gun mantlet with a thin rectangle of plastic sheet - Polish built versions had a plain cover opposed to a stamped cross pattern.

FINISHING ASSEMBLY

With the major changes now completed I followed the build sequence of the Takom instructions, using many of the leftover etched brass parts from previous projects, and replacing over-scale parts with thinner plastic sheet. A note of caution here - the instructions depict at least three different versions of T-55, with the instruction steps broken down into sub-steps for each version. This can get quite confusing; I went through the instructions before building and highlighted which steps I needed to take for my Polish build. There's no major surprises in the build and the kit parts fit perfectly. If using the RSMH tracks you need to fit the more modern 14 tooth sprockets. These are included in the kit although not pointed out as the kit only includes the older OSMH tracks (12 tooth sprockets). I also noted that the layout of the turret tie-down loops did not match those seen on Polish T-55s, so found a good close-up image and used that to fit loops I'd made from thin brass wire.

Disappointingly, Takom have missed a few of the locking handles around the rotating Commander's hatch - I made these up from plastic stock using images found online. I used

the kit heavy DShK 12.7mm machine gun parts to depict an empty mount by hollowing out the base of this part - fiddly but I have not been able to find any aftermarket parts depicting an empty DShK mount. I added a metal barrel to the tank, using a Dremel at high power to chop through it and drilling out the bore. I omitted to add any rifling but this can't be seen on the completed model anyway.

PAINTING AND MARKINGS

After a wash in warm soapy water, I primed the model in white Vallejo primer.

After allowing this to dry for a few hours I started on the unique 'Montenegrin' green. This colour seems to be a grey/green mix that I mixed by eye from Tamiya XF53 Neutral Grey, XF58 Olive Green and XF71 Cockpit Green. For the initial coat, I added a few drops XF26 Deep Green to darken the mix. This airbrushed coat is a covering concentrating on the undersides and crevices and allowing some of the primer to show on the upper surfaces.

Following this I masked off where the bins would have been fitted - this is the same effect as when you remove a picture from your wall and end up with a square of darker colour. ►



I made up the welding trolley from an old Warriors item.

The overall colour seems to be a grey/green mix that I mixed by eye from Tamiya XF53 Neutral Grey, XF58 Olive Green and XF71 Cockpit Green.

The next coat is the 'standard' mix airbrushed onto all the upper surfaces - applied at around 45

degrees to the sides and top of the model.

The final airbrushed coat has a few drops of Tamiya acrylic XF-57 added to lighten the coat. This is applied at 90 degrees to the top side of the model, only highlighting peaks and upper surfaces. I removed the previously applied masking and sealed the entire model with a coat of Future/Klear. I used model railroad white number decals to add the turret numbers, not copying the numbers exactly but choosing a number close to those depicted in the images.

WEATHERING

I touched in the colours on the detail parts with a brush and added some light chipping using Tamiya brown colours and a sponge - the real vehicles are heavily faded but show very little chipping. Once this was dry I hit the whole model with a wash of Vandyke brown/black oil paint, heavily thinned with odourless thinners. Whilst allowing this to dry I gave the tracks a coat of Tamiya XF84 Dark Iron - my new go-to track and cable colour. Once the oil wash had had a good period to dry I soaked cotton buds and flat brushes in clean odourless spirit and started to remove the excess wash, leaving the dark brown colour in the deep spots and crevices. This is long, drawn-out process which requires the brushes and cotton buds to be kept clean; but I find it gives a more realistic finish

than pin washes. Following this, I again sealed the model in Future/Klear; before dabbing small spots of Naples yellow and faded green oil paint, straight from the tube onto the upper surfaces of the model. These spots were then blended into the surface using clean odourless thinners, ensuring that the edges were well feathered and left no tide marks. After another sealing coat, I used Lifecolor Liquid pigments dust colours, sprayed through an airbrush at low pressure on the lower surfaces and running gear; as well as using the same colours to add some very light streaking to the sides of the turret and vertical surfaces. The tracks were treated with the same dust colour wash, although this time a bit heavier, before rubbing Mig Productions Gun Metal weathering powders on the track teeth, sprockets and idler wheels. The edges of the hull, turret and towing cables were also highlighted in this way and I added some rust effects in the areas where the chopped-out bins would have sat. After reassembling the various parts of the model, I gave the whole model a coat of Vallejo matt varnish and put it aside to start on the base.

THE BASE

Looking at the images I'd found, the tanks were parked on a plain concrete base. I thought this was a bit boring and drab, so I decided to make the concrete base a bit more derelict and befitting of an old Army base somewhere in Montenegro. Using a method I'd found online, I built a shallow 'tray' from plastic card, into which I placed some netting material from an old fruit bag. Over the top of this I poured a

plaster of Paris mix and levelled the top off with a metal ruler. I then sieved plaster powder over the top to give a concrete texture. After allowing to dry for a few hours, I then flexed the tray, which causes the plaster base to crack. Following the lines of the cracks with a stiff flat brush then accentuates the cracks and opens them up, giving the better definition. I also chipped out some pot holes and added some concrete seam lines using the flat edge of a ruler. I left this to sit for a couple of days before removing from the tray; the netting material keeps everything together. This concrete base was then glued on top of a photo box frame. The base was painted with various dark greys, building up the highlights with an airbrush and adding stains with Lifecolor Liquid Pigments. I used 'grass' from my diorama box to fill the various cracks and seam lines. I made up the welding trolley from an old Warriors item and the fire extinguisher came from the spares box.

I scraped out where the tracks would fit on the concrete base using a flat bladed scalpel - this allows the tank to sit flat on the base, although care needs to be taken not to make the scrapes too wide, as this would look unrealistic. I scattered the bins around the left side of the model as per the pictures and added some scorch marks around the cut track and barrel; using MIG Productions Black wreathing powder.

I printed some of the images I'd based my diorama onto white decal paper and printed using my home inkjet printer. This need to be left to dry, before sealing the inks using a high gloss auto lacquer. The decals were added to base and I was then happy to call the model done... ■

I printed some of the images I'd based my diorama onto white decal paper and printed using my home inkjet printer.



The fire extinguisher came from the spares box.



I used 'grass' from my diorama box to fill the various cracks and seam lines.



Discarded parts were positioned around the vehicle.



The base was painted with various dark greys, building up the highlights with an airbrush and adding stains with Lifecolor Liquid Pigments.



PAPER PAPER LEOPARD

Michael Franz builds HobbyBoss VK.1602 tank with Custom Scale's turret, a never released reconnaissance tank of the German Reich at late World War II



The VK16.02, nicknamed Leopard, was a projected light reconnaissance tank of the German Reich.

Development started in 1941 and serial production was scheduled for April 1943. However, the complete project was cancelled before the first prototype was completed as the concept no longer met the requirements of the battlefield of late World War II.

Actually there are two kits of this small vehicle on the market from HobbyBoss and Amusing Hobby. I do not know why, but I have decided on the first one, which comprises 653 plastic parts, although most the parts are for the tracks which I have not used.

ASSEMBLY

The lower hull builds very well without any problems. The suspension of the kit is fully workable so that it is easily possible to present the tank in difficult terrain. I kept the road wheels separately for an easier painting and mounted the lower and upper hull together with the rear wall.

Plastic glue was dabbed with an old stiff brush all around the surface of the hull to replicate the rolled steel look of the tank.

The fine details such as lamps, storage box on the rear wall, exhausts and other small parts are mounted next. I have not mounted the huge front fenders as I wanted to keep the tracks visible as much as possible.

CUSTOM SCALE TURRET

The German short run manufacturer Custom Scale offers a wonderful turret to replace the kit parts. The kit consists of only a few resin parts in highest quality. The parts do not require any further additional work except cleanup of very small casting blocks.

A turned gun barrel for the 5cm KwK39 and two fine antennas plus one star antenna are also included with the kit. Wonderfully detailed smoke launchers for the sides of the turret are in the set too.

Furthermore the new turret is flatter than the one of the kit which makes the tank much more aggressive. It is very well detailed including wonderful weld seams, hatches and more. It builds very well without any problems or difficulties.

Finally I chose the fantastic Friul metal tracks for the Panther tank, which are a real improvement to every tank model although the assembling is time-consuming and sometimes anything else but fun, but what must be must be so I have taken the time did not complain and assembled the tracks. ▶



Assembly complete with the resin turret of Custom Scale including the turned metal barrel.

VK1602 is a short, wide and flat tank with an interesting shape.



The road wheels are still removable for an easier painting.

Very aggressive – the flat turret with the smoke chargers, main gun and machine gun.



I have added some structure on the body of the tank with plastic glue and a stiff brush later for a look like rolled steel.

PAINTING

I started with Vallejo's black primer on all the parts and sub-assemblies. This primer makes sure that the surface is smooth and all the coming paints will adhere very well. A black base is also a great start for a varied paintjob with darker colours in the lower part of the vehicle.

After the black primer dried well I painted the whole tank in Vallejo Flat Red in thinly coated layers, keeping the black paint always visible under it.

Vallejo's Hull Red is the next colour that I airbrushed on the vehicle, mainly on the lower areas which are placed in the shadows, but also a very thin layer on the upper side.

A fine brush and orange paint are used next to add further highlights such as bolt heads, hatches or tool holders.

Several layers of hairspray followed before I masked the hull of the tank for the painting of the camouflage in aged white. The storage box on the rear walls are painted in the same colour as well as the turret. Some more layers hairspray followed on the turret at the storage boxes before masking once again and airbrushing the camouflage in olive green.

Removing the masking tape is always a thrilling moment, hoping that everything worked well. But everything was okay, so I could start with the chipping. Warm water, a stiff brush and a tooth pick was used to add scratches or bigger damages in the white and green colours. The smoke launchers are painted in red colour, the gun barrel in dark grey - neither area received any damage.

The rubber tyres around the road wheels are painted in dark rubber black and the road wheels themselves in red, green and white.

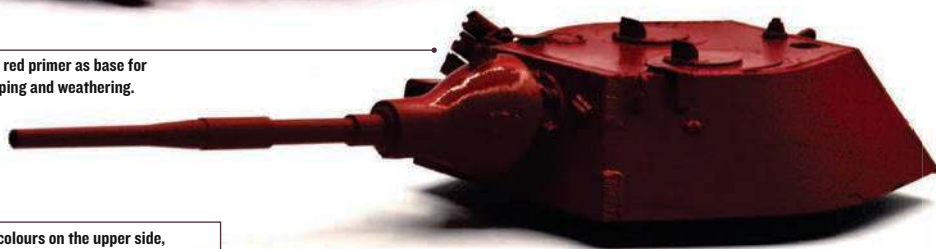
All the other details such as the tools, the exhaust covers etc. are painted in their according colours with a paint brush.

A layer clear coat is airbrushed next as base for the few decals which I added to the vehicle - German crosses and two numbers on each side. One further layer of clear coat follows to protect everything against the next weathering steps. ►



The red paint - Vallejo flat red and hull red combined to get some varied colours.

Turret with its red primer as base for the some chipping and weathering.



Lighter colours on the upper side, shadows on the lower side makes a realistic look.



The colours used for the main body.



Several layers of hairspray followed on the red primer before painting the camouflage.





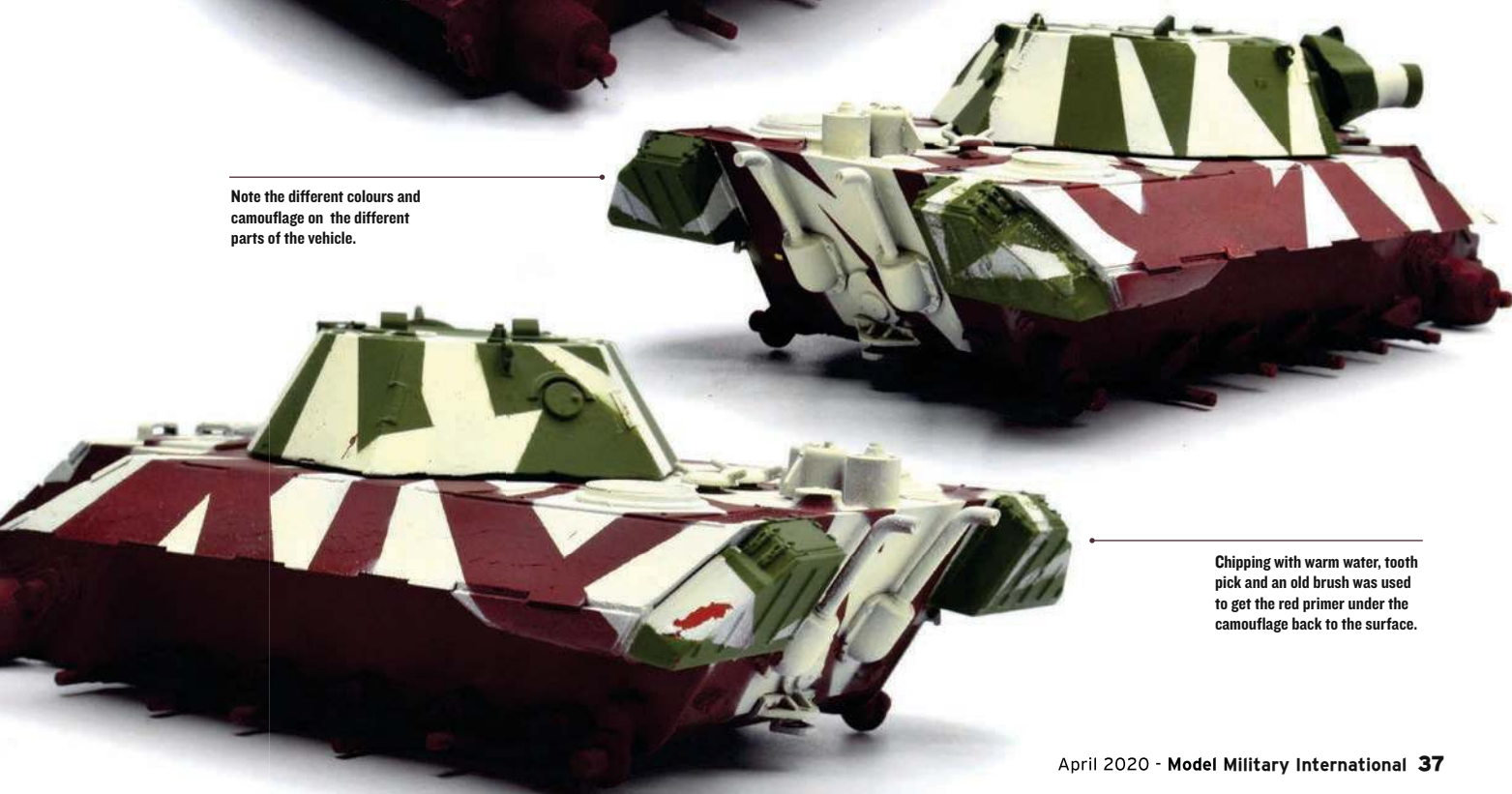
Aged white is the colour for the camouflage on the hull and as base colour for the turret.



Olive green – the colour for camouflage on the turret and the storage boxes at the rear.

All colours used for the paintjob, all the masking tape removed – looks good.

Note the different colours and camouflage on the different parts of the vehicle.



Chipping with warm water, tooth pick and an old brush was used to get the red primer under the camouflage back to the surface.

WEATHERING

Dark brown, beige, red, yellow and green oil colours are dabbed all around the vehicle and blended with withe spirit to get a faded look of the colours.

A dark wash is used at all the weld seams and welts of the steel plates. Beige and grey washes added from top down as rain and dirt marks, as well as stained on the horizontal areas as dirt spots. One last layer of ultra matt varnish is airbrushed to get a matt look of the vehicle. Several brown and dark grey pigments are worked in the surface to get further dirt on the horizontal areas as well as on the front and rear walls.

Finally the Friul Metal tracks are burnished and painted with a mixture of track primer and rusty colours, washed with track wash, beige and brown oils and pigments spread over the tracks and worked in the still wet oil colour washes. The tracks are sanded after the drying to get the bare metal back to surface then mounted to the vehicle.

Further pigments are added to adapt the weathering of the tracks to the tank. Lastly some spots of wetness, leaking oil and grease are added with Tamiya Smoke, clear coat and AK Interactive's finishing products and black pigments as soot at the top of the exhausts. A graphite pen and metal pigments are rubbed around all the corners, handles, heavy used surfaces, weld seams and around the welts of the steel plates. Lastly the antennas of the Custom Scale kit are mounted and painted in black as well as the star-antenna, made of separate turned brass rods. ►

Also the road wheels are painted in red, green and aged white with black rubber rings.

The markings – German crosses and two numbers are decals of the kit, protected with a layer of clear coat.

Polished steel on the wheels – AK Interactive's True Metal Steel is very convincing.

Oil colours and washes are used to achieve a used look of the vehicle.



Lifecolor's Rust and Dust set
- the perfect choice for rusty
exhaust pipes.

Note the red coloured
smoke chargers and the
dark grey gun barrel.

Dark washes are added
in all the weld seams, AK
Interactive's Ultra Matt
Varnish sealed everything.



Friul Metal tracks added and the base is growing with wooden spatula, earth and grass.

THE BASE

The base is made on a white wooden painting ground from Gerstaecker, which I am using as base for most of my works. Wooden spatula is spread over the ground and a slightly diagonal surface is modelled. The tank, wrapped in foil is pushed in the surface so that it

won't stand "on top the earth" at the end. Sifted earth, mixed with a bit of static grass is spread on the ground and fixed with white glue. Some single tufts of grass are added and birch seeds spread all around the tank and also fixed with white glue. Airbrushing a layer ultra matt varnish finished the base.

CONCLUSION

HobbyBoss made a very nice little kit here. The Custom Scale turret is a fantastic upgrade as it has much more details and a more realistic shape. Also the metal barrel and the antennas are great add-ons for the "Leopard". ■

“This is a nice little kit of a small but aggressive looking tank...”

Aggressive look, isn't it?
Birch seeds and grass is still missing on the ground, but the tank is finished here.

Modelspec

HobbyBoss 1:35 German VK16.02 Leopard.

Kit No. 82460

Accessories Used:

- Custom Scale VK16.02 turret (35079)
- Friulmodel Panther Ausf. D Metal tracks (ATL-33)

Tools and Modelling Products:

- Tamiya Extra Thin Liquid Cement
- Modellbau König Super Glue
- Mr. Putty

Paints and Finishing Products:

- Vallejo: Black primer (74.602), Flat Red (70.957), Hull red (71.039), Aged white (71.132), Olive green (70.894)
 - Lifecolor: Rust & Dust Set (CS-10), Matt Black (LC-02), Tan (UA-015),
 - Mission Models: Tire Black (MMP-040)
 - Revell Aqua colour: Iron (91)
 - AK Interactive: Rust Streaks, Dust Effects, Dark Brown Wash, Engine Oil, Pigments Dark Earth, Ultra Matt Varnish
 - Ammo by MIG: Track Wash (1002), Dry Steppe (1751), North Africa Dust Pigments (3003), Gun Metal (3009), Black Smoke (P023), Asphalt Texture Ground (2107)
 - Tamiya: Smoke (X19)
 - Uschi Van der Rosten: Metal powder
 - Graphite pens
- Base:**
- Gerstaecker: Gesso Board white (wooden painting support)
 - Sand and small stones, earth
 - Mini Nature: Different grass tufts
 - DioDump: Different grass tufts
 - Birch seeds

✓ A nice little kit with nice details, the Custom Scale is a welcome upgrade for it as it brings much more details to the kit.

✗ Nothing worth mentioning.

Available from

All good model shops Worldwide.

Rating ●●●●●●●○





HobbyBoss has made a very nice little kit here.



The Custom Scale turret is a fantastic upgrade.



STRETCH STUG

Andy King finds that Dragon's 1:35 scale StuG. IV is still the best of its type after more than a decade.

The StuG (or Sturmgeschütz) IV was a vehicle based on the Panzer IV chassis and was intended for infantry support initially but also used as a tank destroyer in the last two years of WWII. Although the Jagdpanzer IV was already used in the role of tank destroyer, after an Allied bombing raid on the Alkett factory in November 1943 output of the StuG III fell to just 12 vehicles so it was suggested to Hitler that the superstructure of the StuG III be fitted to a Panzer IV chassis instead. It proved to be quicker to build than a Jagdpanzer and over 1,100 were built between 1943 and 1945 with an additional 31 converted from battle damaged Panzer IV hulls.

This latest one from Dragon is a re-box of an earlier kit from 2009 and this particular example is billed as '2-in-1' meaning that you get parts for vehicles with and without Zimmerit. Inside the box you get over 20 sprues moulded in grey styrene, two sheets of etched metal, a metal tow cable, a small decal sheet, metal side skirts, one piece DS Vinyl tracks and as a 'bonus' a metal bucket.

All parts are very well moulded with little to no flash present (apart from the tracks) and detailing is excellent. As stated it is a '2-in-1' kit and you get various parts and separate lower and upper hulls for

vehicles with or without Zimmerit. Like their Tigers, Dragons' rendering of the Zimmerit is really well done and they have certainly perfected it since they first started moulding it into their kits. Typically there are a large amount of parts marked as 'not for use' so check through the instructions carefully as some sprue ID lettering is duplicated.

Interior detail is confined to radio racks either side of the superstructure, a ventilation fan on the back wall and a gun breech. The gun barrel is slide moulded and care is needed to remove the seam lines as it is very easy to 'flat-spot' it. Apart from the odd kit Dragon do not include metal gun barrels anymore so you may want to replace it with an aftermarket item.

Tracks are one-piece made from DS Vinyl and although no pin marks are present they do feature some flash which will be very difficult to remove. Also with the tracks being vinyl it will be tricky to get 'track sag' between the return rollers and you will be better of replacing these with aftermarket individual links.

Like other Dragon kits with optional parts there is no clue as to which vehicle features Zimmerit however if you look very carefully at the painting instructions the last two have a faint impression of it printed on the front and back views.

Regarding the painting instructions you get six options ranging from overall dark yellow, two and three tone and winter camouflaged vehicles with colour call outs from the Mr Color and Model Master paint ranges.

Although over ten years old this is still one of the best StuG IV kits out there and at the time of writing I'm not aware of any other manufacturer planning to tool a new one. The moulded Zimmerit is beautifully done and for that alone it's worth the price of the kit. The tracks are a disappointment but they work for some folk, however I will be replacing them with aftermarket items such as those from Fruil or Modelkasten.

Highly Recommended. ■

Thanks to The Hobby Company Limited for the review sample
www.hobbyco.net



The kit decal sheet.



Two-in-One!



Rendering of the Zimmerit is really well done.



The two lower hulls.



Hull side detail.



Nice detail on the track guards.



The rather lovely bonus bucket.



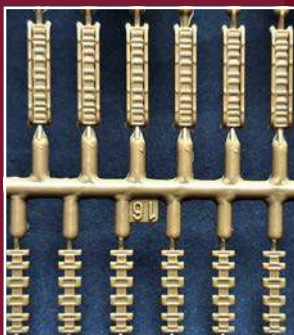
The plain dashboard.



Two-piece launching tubes.



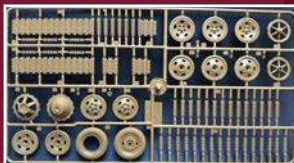
Close up of the bonnet hatches.



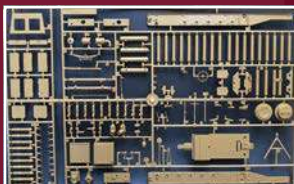
Individual track link detail.



Roadwheel detail.



Wheels and tracks sprue.



Moulding quality is still pretty good.



Main body parts.



New decals.

SWS PANZERWERFER 42

Italeri has re-released their 1990s-era 1:35 scale Panzerwerfer 42 auf SWS with new decals. Graham Tetley sees how it shapes up today.

First seen back in 1998, Italeri has now re-released this kit again. It was okay for its day and the basic plastic kit is unchanged, however we now have new decals.

The parts come on four main sprues moulded in sand yellow. Two of these are duplicates and contain the running gear and tracks. Detail is adequate but soft overall, flash is present in a few places, and there are sink marks on some bits. There is an interior included but a quick study of the instructions will reveal that very little will be seen even with the hatches open. There are approximately 340 parts to this model although about 150 are devoted to the tracks and running gear. The tracks come in link & lengths and detail is adequate, but most links have a knock-out pin mark on the inner face of each link. The decals give us markings from two vehicles, both from unknown units, but are very good and in register.

A strength of Italeri is in the clarity of their instructions and this does not disappoint. There are 13 steps to this, but all are very clearly drawn with no optional parts to choose from.

CONSTRUCTION

I built this kit several years ago and it wasn't bad. The main problem with it is that most parts

have prominent mould seam lines so clean-up will take longer than usual. We start off with the lower chassis and you need to take real care to get it all lined up straight. I recommend fitting Parts 5a and 15a to one of the chassis rails 11a and let that dry straight & level. Complete that assembly and then finish up the running gear. You will need great care in assembling the individual links so all I will say is clean up each part, take care, test fit often, and it will all fit with no short runs. Next up comes the interior to which we get shell racks & shells in the cargo section. As well as the rear hatch, there are two on the roof so, whilst the interior is sparse, there is enough to fill a hole if you want to display it open. For the driver's compartment, we are limited to the obligatory seat backs, control levers and a somewhat bland dashboard panel. No decals are provided for the dials. Only the top hatches can be displayed open so, again, it is enough to look busy. You will save 40 parts if you build it with all hatches closed. Fit is generally good once you clean the parts up and there should be no need for filler.

We next move on to the rocket launcher. These are built from separate halves and contain some very basic moulded-on wiring. You have the option of inserting shells into the launchers. All of

this is attached to a basic mount comprising of 13 parts which is moveable. The kit is finished by adding the tools & lights.

If, like me, you build Dragon kits then you should have a plentiful source of spare parts. You can make this kit look a lot better by replacing the tools, grab-handles and lights and then using fuse wire or similar for the wiring on the rocket launcher.

CONCLUSION

When first released, this kit was very good as it was the only option available in plastic. It is fair to say though that it is not up to current standards as details are not as sharp as they could be and the small parts generally are quite thickly moulded. If you want a more modern, accurate and better detailed, kit of this vehicle then (like me) you will plump for the Great Wall/Bronco version which also comes with some etch and an engine compartment.

However, the strength of this model lies in its simplicity, generally good fit, new decals and clear instructions. It is not a beginner's kit, but will please intermediate modellers and it comes at a reasonable price point. ■

Italeri are distributed in the UK by The Hobby Company Limited www.hobbyco.net



Bronco's box art, which clearly shows the markings the right way up!

MADE IN CHINA

The Editor builds Bronco's 1:35 scale ancestor of the Chinese rocket programme, the Dong Feng-1, itself an improved version of the WWII German A4 / V-2.

After the signing of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance in 1950, the Soviet Union assisted China's military R&D with training, technical documentation, manufacturing equipment and licensed production of Soviet weapons. In the area of ballistic missiles, the Soviets transferred R-1 (SS-1), R-2 (SS-2) and R-11F technology to China which itself was an improved version of the WWII German V-2 rocket.

The first Chinese ballistic missiles were based on these Soviet designs. Since then, China has made many advances in its ballistic missile and rocket technology. For instance,

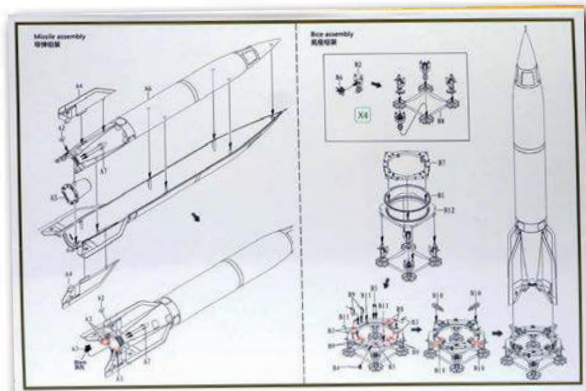
the space launch Long March rockets have their roots in the Dong Feng missiles.

The first of the Dong Feng missiles, the DF-1 (SS-2, initially codenamed '1059', while the 'DF-1' designation was initially assigned to the project which later became DF-3, was a licensed copy of the Soviet R-2 (SS-2 Sibling) short-range ballistic missile (SRBM).

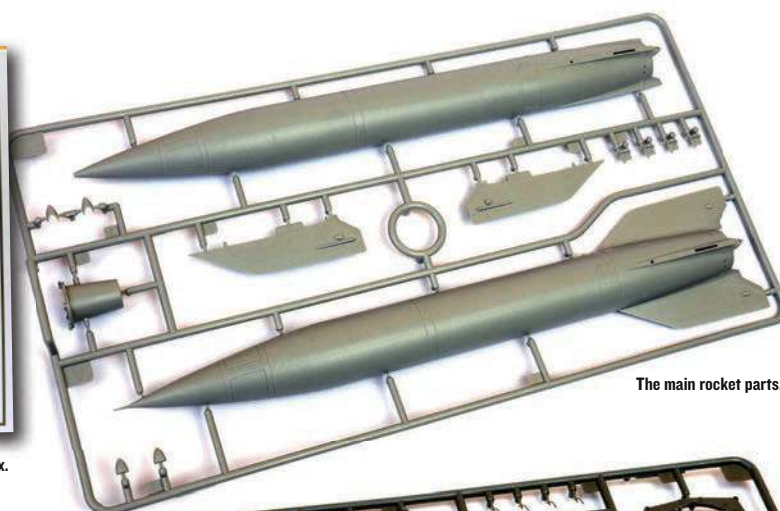
The DF-1 had a single RD-101 rocket engine, and used alcohol for fuel with liquid oxygen (LOX) as an oxidizer. The missile had maximum range of 550 km and a 500 kg payload.

Limited numbers of DF-1 were produced in the 1960s, and have since been retired. ►

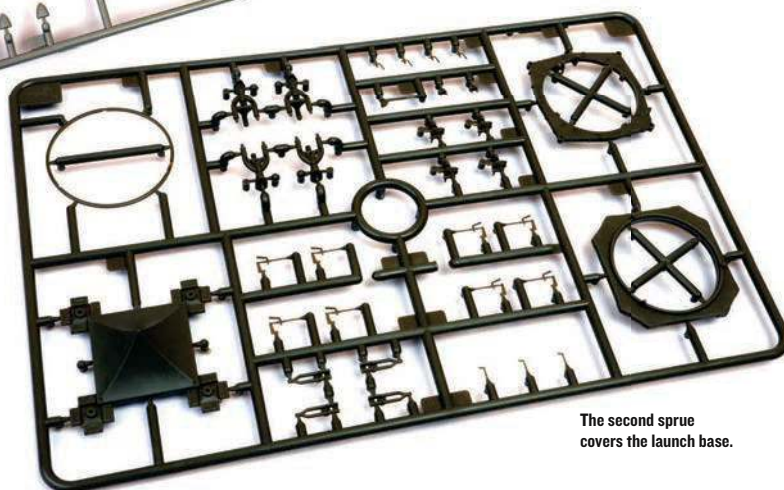
Historical text courtesy of Wikipedia.



The simple instructions are printed in two steps on the back of the box.



The main rocket parts.



The second sprue covers the launch base.

IN THE BOX

Bronco's 1:35 scale Chinese Dong Feng-1 comprises just 13 parts in light grey plastic, 34 parts in dark green plastic and decals for two marking schemes.

The light grey parts make up the rocket itself and the green parts the launch base.

Surface textures on the rocket are very nicely done, with rows of very subtle recessed rivets and raised panels where appropriate.

The side of the box suggests that this is a snap-tite kit with the enthusiastic wording: "No Glue! No Paint! Quick BUILD!", but glue is most certainly required for the launch pad. It will be needed for the small steering vanes at the base of the rocket too.

The decals are supplied on two small decal sheets. They are matt in finish but perform well. ▶



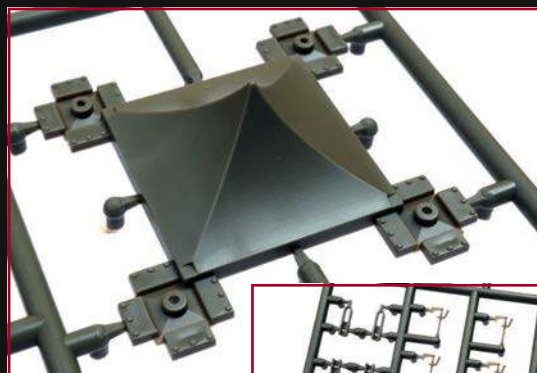
Surface textures are really nicely done.



Close up detail of one of the rocket fins.

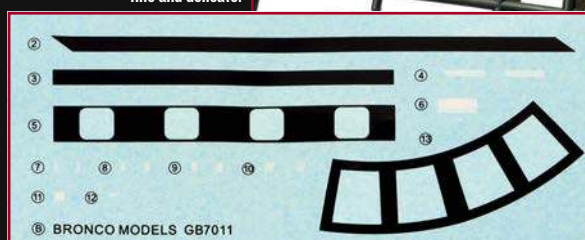


Small details are well moulded too. These are the deflector vanes.



The main mount.

Some of the other mount parts are quite fine and delicate.



Markings are supplied for a couple of different schemes.

I decided to use the striking red characters.





The rocket halves are joined using large connectors.



Locating posts on the other side.



The rocket nozzle in place on one side.



The large connectors resulted in a noticeable gap on one side.



Deflector vanes glued in place.

◀ ASSEMBLY

When I received this kit late last year, I photographed the two sprues for an in-box review but I thought it would be a pretty quick build. Less than 4 hours later I can confirm that yes, it is a quick build!

The sprue attachment points on the rocket body halves are moulded to the mating surfaces, as seems to be the current trend. This reduces the risk of scarring the visible surfaces of the plastic parts, but you have to be very careful not to remove too much material, which will result in a gap.

The larger parts of the rocket feature large peg and hole locating points.

These were assembled without glue, but the steering vanes and all the parts for the launch pad were fixed with Tamiya Liquid Cement.

Fit of the rocket body and fins was pretty good, but I needed a few smears of Tamiya White Surfacer to fill some narrow gaps and join seams.

The launch base is really well detailed with a number of very small parts.

Fit was perfect here, and the fins of the rocket slotted perfectly into their receptacles on the base.

This was a fast and pleasant build. Detail is very good, and surface texture is subtle.

“Surface textures on the rocket are very nicely done, with rows of very subtle recessed rivets and raised panels where appropriate...”



The gaps were filled with Milliput White two-part epoxy putty.



The rocket received a coat of Tamiya AS-12 Bare Metal Silver straight from the spray can. This was followed by a couple of coats of Future Floor Polish.



When the glossy Future coat was completely dry, a brushed mix of Ronson Lighter Fluid with a smear of Lamp Black and Raw Umber oil paints was applied.



After a few minutes, the excess oil paint was scrubbed from the plastic using a damp fingertip, retaining some of the dark mix in the recessed panel lines and rows of rivets.



Compared to the simple rocket, the launch pad was a bit fiddly.

Sub-assemblies ready to come together.



The completed launch pad.



The launch pad was sprayed overall Tamiya XF-81 Dark Green 2 (RAF).

PAINTING AND MARKINGS

Let me start out by pointing out that I applied the decal upside-down. At least it will be facing the right way up as it is hurtling down onto its target.

I started by spraying the completed rocket with Tamiya AS-12 Bare Metal Silver straight from the spray can.

This was followed by a couple of coats of Future Floor Polish.

When the glossy Future coat was completely dry, I applied a brushed mix of Ronson Lighter Fluid with a smear of Lamp Black and Raw Umber oil paints.

After a few minutes, the excess oil paint was scrubbed from the plastic using a damp fingertip, retaining some of the dark mix in the recessed panel lines and rows of rivets.

Decals were applied at this time, unfortunately upside-down (my apologies to any Mandarin speakers out there!).

Next I loaded up my Harder & Steenbeck Infinity airbrush with a thin mix of Tamiya XF-1 Flat Black and XF-64 Red Brown, spraying random streaks and applying shading to some of the major structural features.

Finally, the decal was sprayed with Winsor & Newton's Satin Varnish.

The launch pad was sprayed overall Tamiya XF-81 Dark Green 2 (RAF).

CONCLUSION

This is a relatively simple yet well detailed kit of an unusual - but very familiar looking - subject. It's a fast build too!

The small parts of the launch pad make it most suitable for moderately experienced modellers.

Thanks to Bronco for the sample. ■



The silver rocket responded well to weathering.



The completed model, including upside-down markings!

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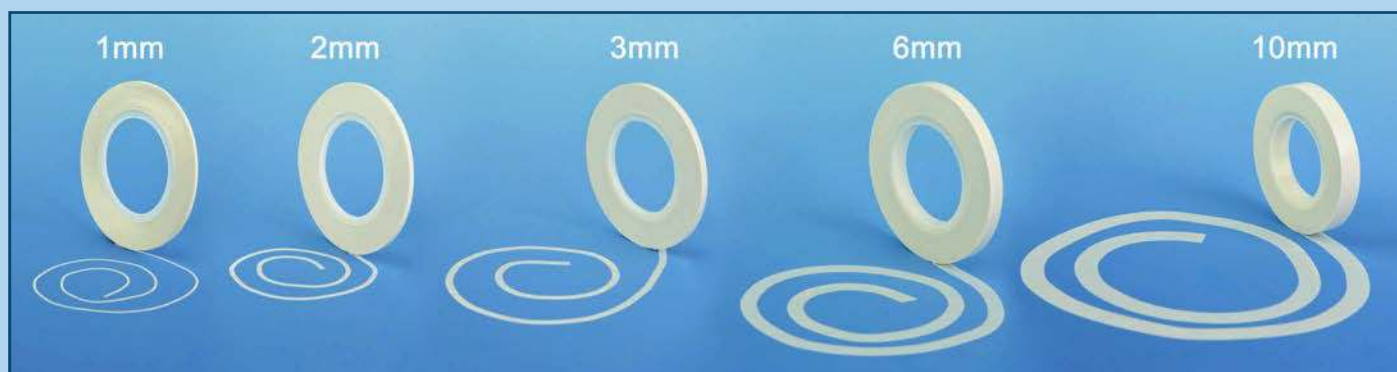
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TAMIYA BIG TANK AND BIG BOX SE

Graham Tetley continues with his history of Tamiya via box art, this time focusing on their Big Tank and Big Box series.

What we do here is move firmly into the 1970s and look at Tamiya's later 1:25 scale kits and the start of their 1:35 'Remote Control' series line.

What I want to show you is the artwork that disappeared from our shelves over 30 years ago and has not been seen since. But first, let me shed a little light on the collecting bug and the research that is available.

In the early 1980s I was buying and building the mainstream Tamiya 1:35 scale kits, and on the sides of the boxes there was the artwork. It was teasing me – there it was but the kits had gone. I vaguely remember some of it on the shelves in my local Beatties in Leeds, but I could never afford them.

In 1984, when I was 15, I got my first Saturday job in Carters in Bradford. Carters was a huge toyshop (it even had a gun store in the basement) and my dream lay on the third floor before the café where there was a huge area devoted to Tamiya plastic kits. Before long I was working up there doing the best job ever. As time went on I got proper jobs and started collecting in the late 1980's. This was before the age of the internet and eBay, so I picked kits up mainly at model shows and contacts with traders here in the UK. Then, through the pages of Finescale Modeller magazine, I discovered something called KCC, or Kit Collectors Clearinghouse.

KCC was run by a lovely American gentleman (sadly gone now) called John Burns whom I had the pleasure to meet at the IPMS Nationals in Columbus, Ohio, in 1998. John published a quarterly magazine that had histories of many companies and a 'Buy & Sell'



DT 109 T34-85 and simply gorgeous box art.



SU 100. Nice, but not as good as the T34.

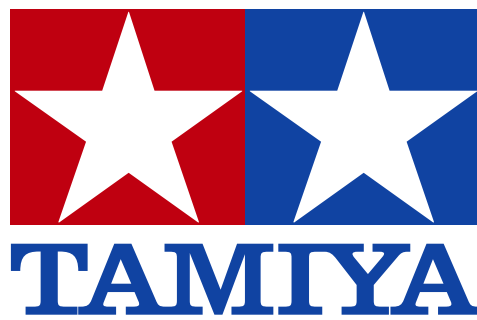


DTW III Tiger I. Possibly the Best Boxart Ever.



DTWII2 Panther A.

RIES



DTW II3 and a stunning Jagdpantzer.



DTWII4 Centurion Mk III and wrecked T34.



My favourite Panther artwork.



The single motor version, but I like it so there!

section at the back. Many a rarity was acquired by corresponding via letter (remember those?) with people in America, Germany, Japan and even as far afield as Chile.

But it wasn't just models, a great source of reference was the old Tamiya catalogues. Over the years, I have managed to get a copy of every catalogue from 1968 to 1990, as well as several pricelists. These have been invaluable in helping to fill in gaps, but also to identify what Tamiya actually made and released. Added to this, Tamiya have also put out books on their history as have some other publishers. Some are only in Japanese, but others are in English and I include them here for completeness. I should add that the 'Military Illustration Tamiya Box Art Collection' book is now quite hard to find but you can still locate them via eBay & Amazon. ►

A free history lesson.



THE LOVELY ARTWORK

As we saw last time, the 1:25 scale line started with Panthers and Jagdpanters, closely followed by the Chieftain, T34, SU100, Tiger and the last in the series, the Centurion, coming out in 1973. In recent years all of these have been re-released in various boxings. However, as you also know, Tamiya released these kits in single and dual motor versions and the artwork on every one of these re-releases has been from the single motor kits. Here I will take a further trip down memory lane and show you what that fabulous looked like.

KIT NUMBERING

In the 1:25 scale line, the kits with the single motors were prefixed 'DT1..' and the dual motor, remote control, ones 'DTW1..'. As we are looking at the dual motor, remote control ones here the details are:

- DTW 109 - T34/85 (available from October 1969 to 1982) and one of my favourite artworks!
- DTW 110 - SU100 (available from October 1969 to 1982)
- DTW 111 - Tiger 1 (available from November 1969 to 1983) and possibly the best box artwork ever!
- DTW 112 - Panther A (available from July 1973 to 1980)
- DTW 113 - Jagdpantzer (available from August 1973 to 1983)
- DTW 114 - Centurion Mk. III (available from September 1973 to 1983)

I never built any of these when they were first out but started acquiring them in the early 1990s. I refurbished a couple of Centurions and, once the gears were greased, they moved fast and climbed brilliantly. The T34 and SU100 were also able to motor around at speed. For me though it wasn't just the artwork, but Tamiya's instructions were unique in that they gave a detailed history of the vehicle. In this respect they were also very educational especially at a time when references were not as abundant as they are today. Included for you here is a shot of two of the four pages that come with the Panther and it is a shame that manufacturers today don't do the same.

It is fair to say that the Centurion is the better kit of them



How about a I-24th King Tiger.



Bandai's Jagdpantzer.



Artwork is just as good as Tamiya's.



Fancy an M60 with your Germans.



MT226 and a lovely desert Tiger.



MT208 with Ivan on the march.



MT220 but I prefer that Bandai artwork.



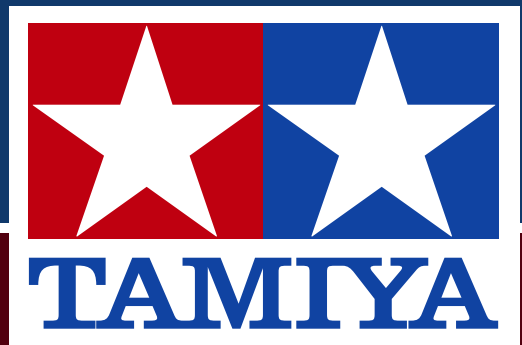
MT230 and an atmospheric Centurion.



MT223 but a bit too yellow for my taste.



MT224 and a lovely Jagdpantzer.



all. Tamiya didn't upscale their 1:35 scale kit but captured the angled lower hull and dimensions of the real Centurion quite well. Detail is a bit heavy, but I have seen masterpieces at model shows which demonstrate what you can do with this. Tamiya also released it with an interior and this was recently made available again. Sadly, this was to be their last 1:25 kit as no more were tooled up. Instead, they went into 1/16th but that is another story.

However, Tamiya may have given up on 1:25 but they did have some competition. Bandai did a series of 1:25 scale kits with full interiors and they gave us a King Tiger, Panther & Jagdpantier. Detail on them is slightly better than Tamiya's but I think that the artwork is just as good. The artwork on the M60 is better than the model in the box so we will just leave it there! ▶



MT 220 and another of my favourites.



MT225 and a Leopard on the prowl.



MT229 with another favourite.



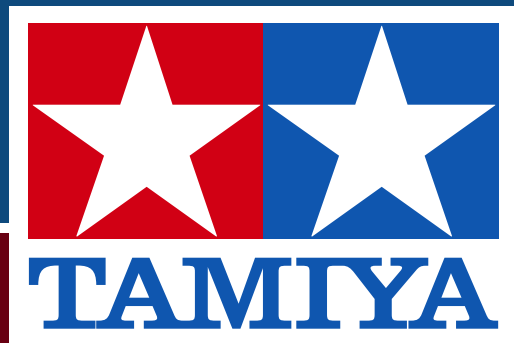
Yep, I do have duplicates.



MRC kits came from America.



This is what the Panther looks like.



◀ THE EXCITING STUFF - 1:35 GOES MAINSTREAM

In 1968 Tamiya introduced a new style of packaging, as well as altering their logo to the one we still see today. They also continued to expand on their 1:35 scale range with many kits released as dual motor remote control versions. The single motor kits were released in the now-familiar 'White Box' style but the remote-control ones came in big, oversize, boxes with fabulous artwork. When the boxes were reduced in size in 1974 some artwork was subtly changed, but I will cover that in my next article. So, in this series, we have:

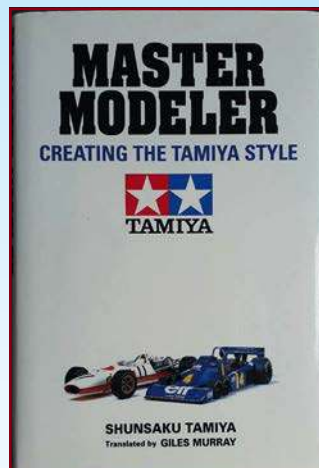
- MT220 - King Tiger (available between April 1968 to 1970).
- MT221 - Hunting Tiger (available between May 1968 to 1970)
- MT222 - Never released but MT 122 was the M36B2 Jackson
- MT223 - Panther (available between October 1968 to 1970)
- MT224 - Jagdpanther (available between May 1969 to 1970)
- MT225 - Leopard (available between October 1968 to 1970)
- MT226 - Tiger 1 (available between June 1970 to 1974)

- MT227 - Never released but MT 127 was the M42 Duster
- MT228 - M60A1 (available between June 1972 to 1974) Sadly not in my collection. The boxart featured the tank with a wading tower that was deleted from the later releases.
- MT229 - Type 61 (available between June 1972 to 1974)
- MT230 - Centurion Mk III (available between March 1973 to 1974)
- MT231 - M551 Sheridan (available between August 1973 to 1974) Sadly not in my collection. The boxart featured soldiers in front of the tank which were deleted from the later releases.

Out of the these, the Type 61 is the best and can be made into a great model today. The rest are somewhat toy-like and best left to collectors like me. ■

In the next instalment I will show you the rest of the 1:35 scale box art kits and also the subtle changes between them and what you see here. Space permitting, I will also show you the Tamiya M7 Priest. What, Tamiya did a Priest I hear you say?

“I never built any of these when they were first out but started acquiring them in the early 1990s...”



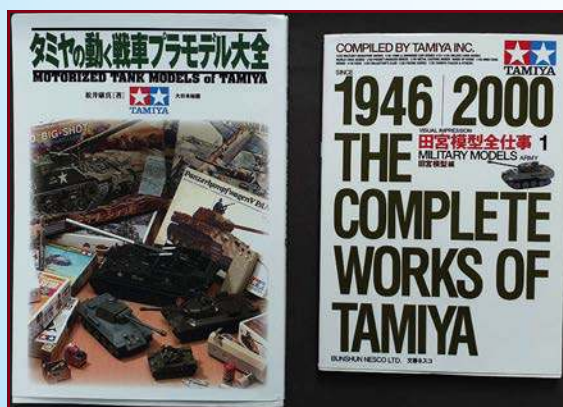
The best Tamiya history available.



Get this if you can find it.



One of the fold-outs from the Box Art book.



The two best boxart references available.



Sadly this isn't my collection.



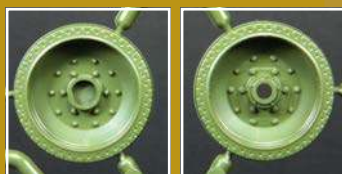
Upper hull.



The turret could use some cast texturing.



Rear hull plate.



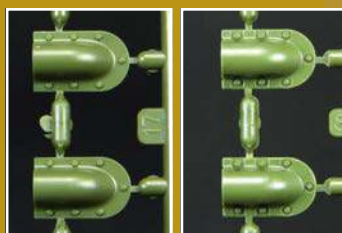
Road wheel inner and outer halves.



Link and length tracks.



Exhaust pipes.



Two styles of exhaust covers are included.



Andy King reviews Zvezda's latest 1:35 scale T-34 variant.

URALMASH FACTORY T-34

The T-34 was one of the most widely produced Soviet tanks of WWII with numbers reaching over 84,000. As well as serving in WWII from 1940, the tank also saw action in the Korean War, the Angolan civil war, the Middle East and the Balkans, even up until this year (2019) Laos were still using their T-34s until they were retired.

The tank has been produced in quite a few versions and identifying them can be a nightmare so looking at this particular kit it is the Mod.1943 Ural mash (or ChtZ depending on your reference source). This variant was produced between 1942 and 1944 and nicknamed 'Mickey Mouse' by the Germans due to the two round hatches on the turret roof when opened. Uralmash is the factory in Sverdlovsk (now Yekaterinburg) where the turret was produced, the special forge there gave the turret its distinctive rounded shape.

Inside Zvezda's typically stout packaging you get eight sprues moulded in an olive green polystyrene, two sprues of link-and-length track, one clear sprue, a length of string (for the tow rope), a sheet of plastic mesh and a decal sheet.

Moulding quality is pretty good with just a little flash here and there and some mould-pin marks are present but in hard to see

areas such as the inside of the mudguards. It's good to see there are none of those weird diagonal lines in the plastic that I have seen on earlier Zvezda kits, an issue that I *think* was due to the moulds not being finished properly.

Detailing is good with a decent attempt at weld beads and bolt heads are nicely defined on the hull although the plastic mesh supplied for the engine deck could be improved on with an aftermarket etch set. If you use the mesh supplied in the kit a template is printed on the instructions.

No interior detail is provided, not even a gun breech, so either keep the hatches closed or find some crew figures to hide that empty space. The exhausts are hollowed out to a degree and look much better than what you usually get in a kit although I personally would drill them out some more. Clear periscopes are provided which is nice as Zvezda have moulded them solid into the hull and turret before now.

Tracks are of the link-and-length type although the characteristic 'sag' is missing and will be difficult to replicate with this type of track. Zvezda have thoughtfully provided an assembly jig to help which you will find on the end of each sprue, however you will need to remove the bottom run of track (part 1) before cutting the two jigs from

the rest of the sprues and gluing them together. Pin marks are present on the inside faces but as they are raised they will be easy enough to remove, this is probably best being done while the tracks are still on the sprue. Two types of road wheel are included and these are not optional so be careful which axle they go onto.

The hull is a multi-part assembly made up of four pieces so it is essential you get this square or it will lead to fitting issues later. Tow ropes are moulded in styrene but a length of nylon string is provided as an alternative.

Marking options are for just two T-34's; 'Schoolboy of Sverdlovsk' in overall green (marked as XF-61 Protective?) and 'Fighting Friend' in a winter camouflage of white (more than likely white wash over a green base).

'Schoolboy of Sverdlovsk' is named as such after students of school no.67 collected 180,000 rubles for the purchase of a T-34/76 in 1942, the tank being deployed in 1943 as part of the Ural Volunteer Tank Corps.

From a model maker's perspective, this looks to be a really good model of the T34/76. No doubt the experts might have a different view but to me it looks okay. With the addition of some casting texture and aftermarket bits such as a turret interior, tracks and etch I'm pretty sure this will build up into a superb model. I like this a lot and it is good to see that Zvezda are improving their moulding quality. ■

Many thanks to The Hobby Company Limited for the review sample www.hobbyco.net



The kit decal sheet.



Book Reviews

PANTHER TANKS, GERMAN ARMY AND WAFFEN SS, DEFENCE OF THE WEST 1945

PEN AND SWORD BOOKS
BY DENNIS OLIVER

TANK CRAFT 18

ISBN: 9-781526-755902

Disclaimer: In the interests of fairness, openness and objectivity the reviewer declares up front that he is a personal friend of the Author. Despite this I hope you find this a factual and objective review.

This is another excellent title in Dennis Oliver's collaboration with Pen and Sword Books Tank Craft range. This is a series of books aimed at the modeller covering the better-known Tanks of World War II, in this case, the Panther Tank and its employment in North West Europe from Jun 44 until VE Day by Heer and Waffen SS Units.

This title follows the format of its successors and is a great concise history of the Panthers's employment in the North-West Europe campaign 44-45. It covers both Army and Waffen SS use. Like other titles by the Author he really fits a lot in a small space and he has researched this one well.

The book is broken into sections as follows:

- Introduction
- The Western Front
- Panther Units of the Heer
- Camouflage and markings
- Model Showcase
- Modelling Products
- Panther Units of the Waffen SS
- Technical details and Modifications
- Factory Applied Camouflage
- Product Contact Details

The Panther Tank is a very popular modelling subject and the subject of many models from almost all mainstream modelling companies. This book is therefore very welcome to modellers coming to the subject for the first time or even the more experienced enthusiasts of the panther. This title is packed full of useful information such as tank strengths, User Units and deployment and a chart of a typical late war Kampfgruppe organisation to name a few. The colour plates are what we have come to expect from the Author and cover a variety of Panther variants including elderly D's but mainly Late G's. Each has explanatory notes and detail insets for Markings etc. The Model Gallery has a range of stunningly built 35th scale models in full colour which the modeller should find inspiring. To aid them in the quest to replicate one of these a great modellers resource section covers the Major kits available and the aftermarket accessories for these.

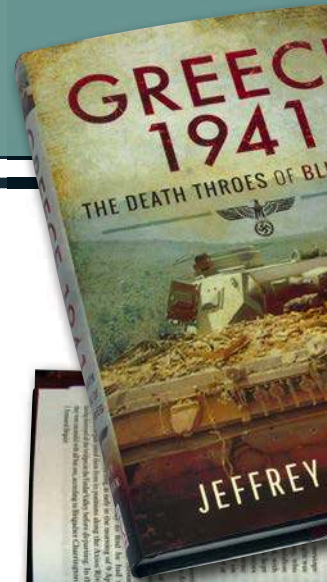
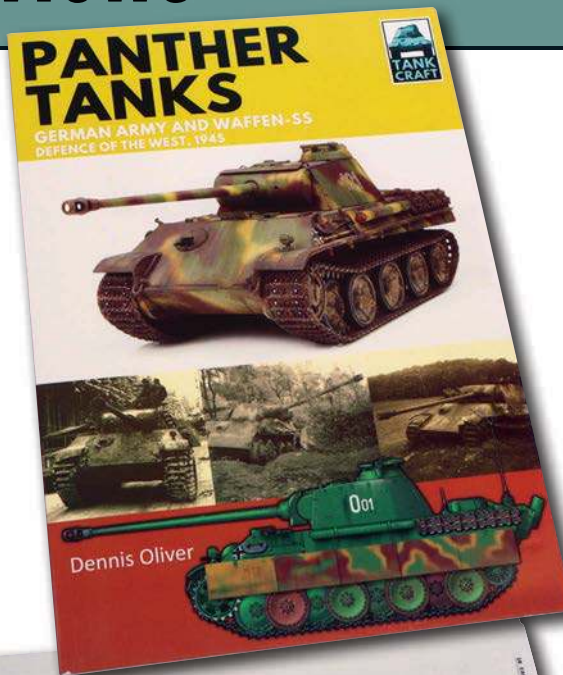
This book will appeal to fans of German WWII armour, modellers, wargamers and historians alike.

Modellers should find many an interesting scene to depict within its pages and information on how to get the resources to model one. Given all the excellent UBER kits of the Panther recently released this title from Dennis is timely and should not disappoint. Very much worth adding to the library. Highly Recommended.

Available online from Pen and Sword Books

<https://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk>

Al Bowie



GREECE 1941 - THE DEATH THROES OF BLITZKRIEG

PEN AND SWORD BOOKS

BY JEFFREY PLOWMAN

ISBN: 978-1-52763-0251

Jeffrey Plowman should be no stranger to modellers with an interest in the New Zealand Army in World War Two and has penned a number of titles on New Zealand Armour and Campaigns in a few well-known ranges of books such as the Images of War series also by Pen and Sword.

In his latest title we see a full-blown history and analysis of the successful German Campaign in Greece in 1941.

Unlike his earlier books, which could be seen as pictorials or well-illustrated abridged campaign notes, this title is a serious historical analysis of the campaign and offers valuable information and insights into the causes and effects of the campaign that last just a month in 1941. The title is thorough and detailed well illustrated throughout with a number of supporting maps throughout its 11 chapters.

The Greek campaign came after a number of lightning "Blitzkrieg" victories against Poland, France, Yugoslavia etc and true to the name it was a lightning campaign.

Unlike previous campaigns the Germans never really gained any ascendancy over the British, Australian, New Zealand and Greek forces that met them. These forces were ill equipped to fight such a campaign having mainly been plucked from the North African campaigns with inadequate equipment and air support to meet such a well-equipped war machine. Even as token a force as they were, they still managed to delay and hold up the vastly outnumbering invader well supported with armour, artillery and air support. The Author examines not only the campaign but the previous history of Greece and the geo and socio - political situations in Mediterranean prior to World War Two, which led to the campaign and concludes with an excellent analysis of the campaign. Its many chapters cover:

1. The Road to War
2. Political Machinations
3. Operation Lustre
4. The Fall of Yugoslavia
5. Breakthrough at Vevi
6. The Battle of Servia Pass
7. Repulse at Olympus Pass
8. A near run thing at Pineios Gorge
9. The Thermopylae Line
10. Evacuation
11. Operation Lustre in retrospect
12. Appendix I - Composition of opposing forces
13. Appendix II - Commonwealth and Axis Commanders
14. Appendix III - Movement of W Force to Greece
15. Appendix IV - British Tank Losses in Greece
16. Appendix V - Embarkation from Greece
17. Appendix VI - Casualties.
18. Glossary
19. Notes
20. Bibliography
21. Index

This title is a serious historical work and is well researched and written in an informative and easily read style. It is packed with information and gives good analysis of the contrasting forces and their composition. It will give the average scholar of WWII a new perspective on the campaign and an understanding of just what was learned and how it shaped future conflict with Germany in North Africa. One thing is sure you will understand just what a valiant job the Greek and token commonwealth forces did in the inevitable unsuccessful defence of Greece.

I would recommend this to students of military history, armoured warfare, wargamers and modellers. It is a great read and with one exception (Chapter 1) very hard to put down.

Highly Recommended.

Available online from Pen and Sword Books <https://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk>

Al Bowie

OPERATION TOTALIZE - BATTLEGROUND NORMANDY

PEN AND SWORD BOOKS

BY TIM SAUNDERS

ISBN: 978 1 52674 126 4

In late July 1944 after a month of hard fighting against the cream of the German Panzer Divisions, the British 2nd Army committed to Battle in Normandy was still being held in the North by the vast majority of German armour and infantry and Montgomery under pressure from Eisenhower, and perhaps even more importantly the press, needed to break out as the US forces had done during Operation Cobra against a far smaller opponent.

Unlike the US forces that continued to grow, the British Army had peaked and manpower issues were becoming critical effecting how each battle could be fought.

The Canadians who had landed on D-Day and fought their way through past CAEN were now joined by the rest of their forces and formed the Anglo / Canadian First Canadian Army which was tasked to Breakout to the South and encircle the still Substantial German forces in Normandy with the aim of their annihilation or surrender. General Simonds, after seeing how the Germans defended against armour during the previous operations Goodwood and Perch, needed to come up with a way to negate there long range anti-Tank defence and devised the novel plan of an attack at night, which was not the done thing with armour as the tanks of 1944 were hardly equipped to fight in the dark.

Operation Totalize introduced the heavy tank/AFV based APC using converted M7 SPGs to carry the infantry forward with the tanks under protection of their heavier armour. His novel ideas proved to be successful but like a lot of campaigns in Normandy the enemy reacted quickly and prevented the exploitation of the break in.

This title in the excellent Battleground series examines the operation in detail and gives a complete narration of the Operation including its background, execution and aftermath. It has been presented with many excellent supporting photos and maps of the campaign including a present-day guide to the battlefields and memorials. I have many titles from this range in my library and find them invaluable reference due to their detailed day to day, hour by hour descriptions of the battles and the units and sub units involved. I have found these invaluable in research due to the detail contained within and thoroughly recommend them.

This book is 276 pages in a paperback format printed on high quality glossy paper with numerous high quality images in B&W.

The book has 10 Chapters plus Appendixes:

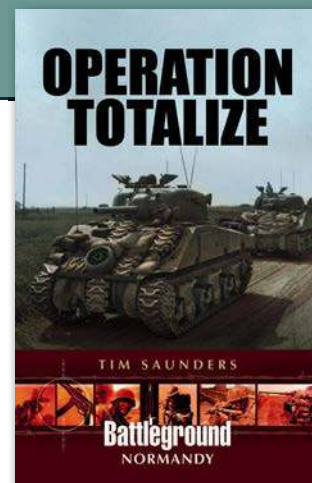
- Introduction
- Chapter 1 - Campaign Background
- Chapter 2 - Operation Spring - 3rd Canadian Div at Tilly
- Chapter 3 - II Canadian Corps' TOTALIZE Plan
- Chapter 4 - The 51st Highland Division - Armoured Advance
- Chapter 5 - The 2nd Canadian Division - Armoured Advance
- Chapter 6 - The Bypassed Villages
- Chapter 7 - The Morning of 8 Aug 1944
- Chapter 8 - The Armoured Advance
- Chapter 9 - The second Day of TOTALIZE
- Chapter 10 - The End of TOTALIZE
- Appendix I - Order of Battle
- Appendix II - Battlefield Tours of Operation TOTALIZE
- Appendix III - SS Ranks and their Allied Equivalent
- Index

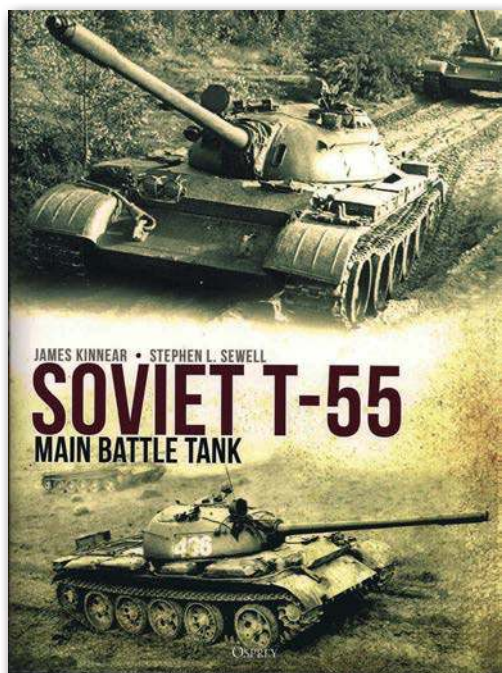
This book is fantastic treasure trove of information on Operation Totalize and how the Normandy campaign was fought by the British and Canadians It is aimed at a broad range of readers and I would recommend this to serious students of the AFV/MBT, armoured warfare, historians, battlefield archaeologists and even modellers. This is thoroughly researched and high quality information presented in an easy to follow style backed by graphics, maps and images. For the price it is an absolute bargain and I would rate this as one of the must read titles on the Canadian Army in North West Europe and Armoured Warfare in WWII. I cannot recommend this highly enough due to the high quality of material within. I will continue to be adding a lot more of this range to my library.

Highly Recommended.

Available online from Pen and Sword Books
<https://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk>

Al Bowie





T-55 MAIN BATTLE TANK

OSPREY PUBLISHING

BY JAMES KINNEAR AND STEPHAN SEWELL.

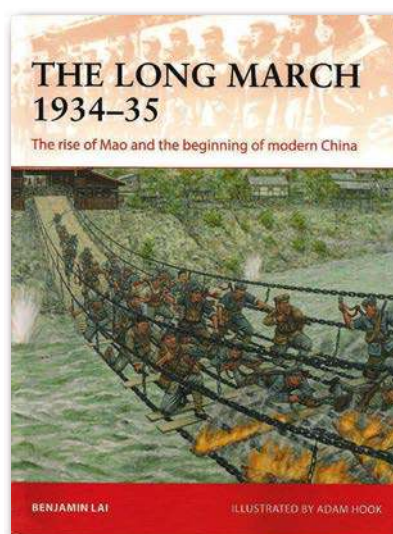
ISBN 978 1 4728 3855

In 1949 young engineer Leonid Kartsev arrived at the UVZ plant in Nizhny Tagil unaware that he would be progenitor of several generations of Soviet battle tanks still used today. The T-55 was a rationalization of T-54 improvements made at its several production factories. Continual upgrades and rebuilds of older tanks ensured longevity: first as the T-55A with nuclear warfare survivability adaptations; the T-55M upgrade packages and its main gun launched Bastion missile increasing gun range; the T-55MV reactive armour protection packs; and the T-55AD Drozhd anti-missile defence system. There are additional insights: how the radiation protection systems proved ineffective at the Chernobyl reactor disaster; and the Drozhd active missile defence unwittingly being lethal to supporting infantry. Among T-55 variants are bridgelayers, flame-throwers, engineer and mine clearance vehicles, ATGM armed versions and APCs. The definitive tank of the Cold War years, T-55s featured prominently in many proxy wars including the Arab-Israeli and Indo-Pakistani Wars, Afghanistan, and Gulf Wars. Information packed appendices includes data tables, client state T-55s, communications and OVPT underwater driving systems. Few English language accounts tell T-55 story from a largely Soviet perspective and the authors and collaborators have produced a well-researched book with manual illustrations, contemporary photos and many walk-around photo sets. Kartsev would be pleased by his protégé's lengthy career. Recommended.

Thanks to Osprey for the review sample

<https://ospreypublishing.com>

John Ham



THE LONG MARCH 1934-35 - THE RISE OF MAO AND THE BEGINNING OF MODERN CHINA

OSPREY PUBLISHING

BY BENJAMIN LAI

OSPREY CAMPAIGN 341

ISBN: 978 1 4728 3401 0

The Long March of the Chinese Red Army is a great epic of 20th Century history with all the required essentials, political machinations, heroic hand to hand battles, human endurance in harsh climates and landscapes, and an underdog versus stronger enemy struggle.

At outset, the Red Army comprised several armies each in its own provincial secure base or Soviet with Mao as only a minor leader. The Soviets, by 1934, were under siege by a well trained and equipped Nationalist KMT army and allied regional warlord forces. Breakout and retreat was the only means of survival and the Red Armies began their Long March eventually meeting and uniting in Yan'an in North-West China.

Large numbers were lost in the battles and privations of the arduous journey. Many of these battles are described in an economical battlefield relief map style but some of the most famous have lengthier descriptions: the capture of Luding Bridge where a small Red army assault group crossed a chain bridge with removed and burning treadway planks; and the Lazhikou Pass battle where the river bridge guarded from stone sangars high on precipitous ravine cliffs was successfully attacked from above by volunteer climbers using puttee "ropes" tossing grenades into the strongpoints.

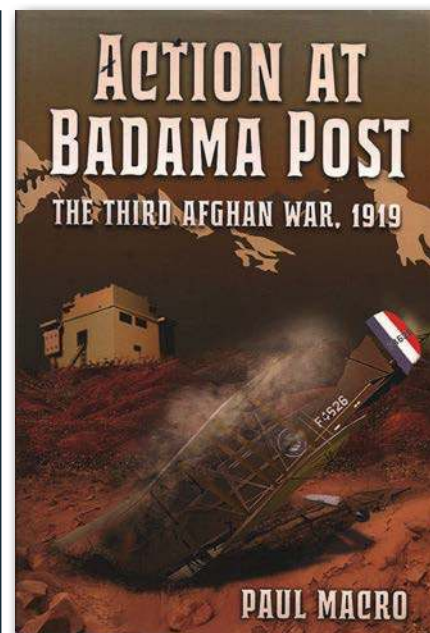
The Long March ended, and Mao's reputation as a political and military leader enhanced, Yan'an became base for the next chapters of the epic: battles against the Japanese and the conclusion of the Civil War. Thanks to Osprey for the review sample.

Recommended.

Thanks to Osprey for the review sample

<https://ospreypublishing.com>

John Ham



ACTION AT BADAMA POST - THE THIRD AFGHAN WAR 1919

CASEMATE PUBLISHING

BY PAUL MACRO

ISBN: 978 1 61200 759 5

TV family history programmes can be relied on to spring a surprise, so too with the author when he began researching the diaries and photo albums of his grandfather Sergeant Bill Macro his service with 22 Motor Machine Gun Service and its deployment to India's Northwest Frontier. It was here that the author discovered his forbear's part in the little known Third Afghan War, a short-lived invasion by the Afghan Army into British India.

The Motor Machine Gun Service was a branch of the Machine Gun Corps, another branch of which, the Heavy Section was later to become the Tank Corps of WW1. Mounted on Vickers Clyno motorcycle sidecar combinations enabled rapid movement to Vickers MG teams.

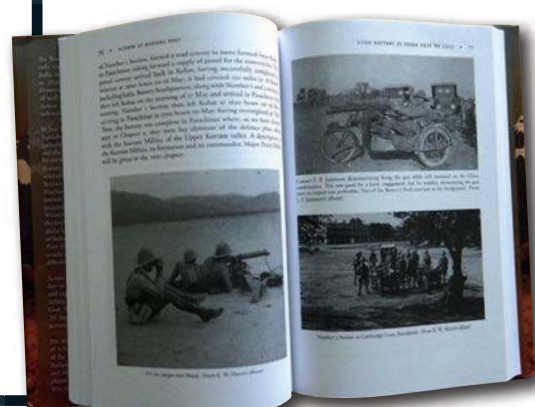
The "action" was the rescue of the crew of a downed Bristol Fighter of 22 Squadron RFC by 22 MMG and the Kurram Militia, a frontier armed police force. Each participant unit in this incident has its history recounted around the lives of its main personalities, achieved by much research delving into official archives and family diaries and, unusually, supported by family photo albums of 22 MMG on active service. Recommended.

Thanks to Tank Museum, Bovington for

supplying the review sample

<https://www.tankmuseum.org/home>

John Ham





MAGACH TANKS OF THE IDF VOLUME 3 - MAGACH 3 TANKS AFTER THE SIX-DAY WAR

SABINGAMARTIN PUBLICATIONS

BY ROBERT MANASHEROB

ISBN 978-1-7325489-2-3

At the time of the 1967 Six-Day War, the Israeli Defence Forces had a number of older-version M48A1 and M48A2C tanks. These had two main drawbacks - the petrol engine gave the tanks a limited range as well as making them flammable and an outdated 90mm gun. As they were not able to buy the latest generation M48A3 tanks from the USA, Israel instead bought new AVDS-1790 series diesel engines and the M68 version of the British L7 105mm gun to convert these and tanks captured from Jordan to the same standard. In this latest book in his series on the M48 in the IDF, the author follows this programme and the story of the tanks in the so-called "War of Attrition" and in training. This includes many clear and detailed photos of tanks in service and their crews. In addition there are three sets of 1/35th five-view plans showing variations between these tanks resulting from the original version they were converted from.

A long series of colour photos shows a preserved tank originally in the Budge Collection which ended up in the Jacques Littlefield Collection or Military Vehicle Technology Foundation in California. This gives views inside the engine compartment and a host of details outside the tank. Final section covers colour schemes and markings with explanations of the systems used and colour side and partial front paintings of seven different tanks. Plenty of detail here for anyone interested in this tank from a general viewpoint or in model form.

Recommended.

Thanks to Sabinamartin for the sample

<http://sabinamartin.com>

Mike Garside

CHALLENGER 2 MAIN BATTLE TANK 1946 TO PRESENT OWNERS WORKSHOP MANUAL

HAYNES PUBLISHING

BY DICK TAYLOR

ISBN: 978 1 78521 190 4

Reference material on British AFVs was hard to come by once upon a time but now we seem to live in the golden age where these things are available and are quality references. This Haynes title continues their quest to Document British Military by covering the latest British Main Battle Tank the Challenger 2. The Challenger MBT introduced in the early 1980s was a quantum improvement over its predecessor the Chieftain offering great mobility, Protection and most importantly Reliability. Unfortunately, as a result of its compromise procurement, it still offered the 1960's vintage gunnery control system. Whilst serviceable it failed to make the most of this impressive MBT and its excellent gun. It went on to distinguish itself in action in the Balkans and the first Gulf War but plans were afoot to upgrade this tank and unlock the potential of the design.

The Challenger 2 was the result of that upgrading resulting and a far superior tank than its impressive predecessor. It offered even greater protection with its second Generation Chobham armour and offered a state of the art Fire Control RTR system coupled with a new L30 120mm Rifled gun in a new turret. The Challenger 2 went on to serve with distinction in the Balkans and in the second Gulf war in southern Iraq where none were lost to enemy action in a challenging urban environment not suited to heavy armour.

The book is written by a former tanker - Lt Col Dick Taylor RTR who served on Chieftains and Challengers. He brings his intimate knowledge of British Armour to the fore in this well researched and presented title so typical of this range.

Most people of a certain age who have owned a car at one time have bought a Haynes Manual to aid in the service and maintenance of their cars and these were immensely popular however the complexity of modern vehicles has seen much less demand for such titles and the Publisher rather imaginatively has

branched out offering Owner's manuals on a diverse range of subjects from Tanks, Aircraft, Trains through to Sci Fi. The reader should not think less of these titles given the publisher and this title is an excellent example of what quality publications most of these are. The book is 188 pages, an A4 sized hardback printed on high quality glossy paper with numerous high quality images in B&W and colour. The book has approximately 6 chapters plus Appendixes, forewords and an extensive bibliography:

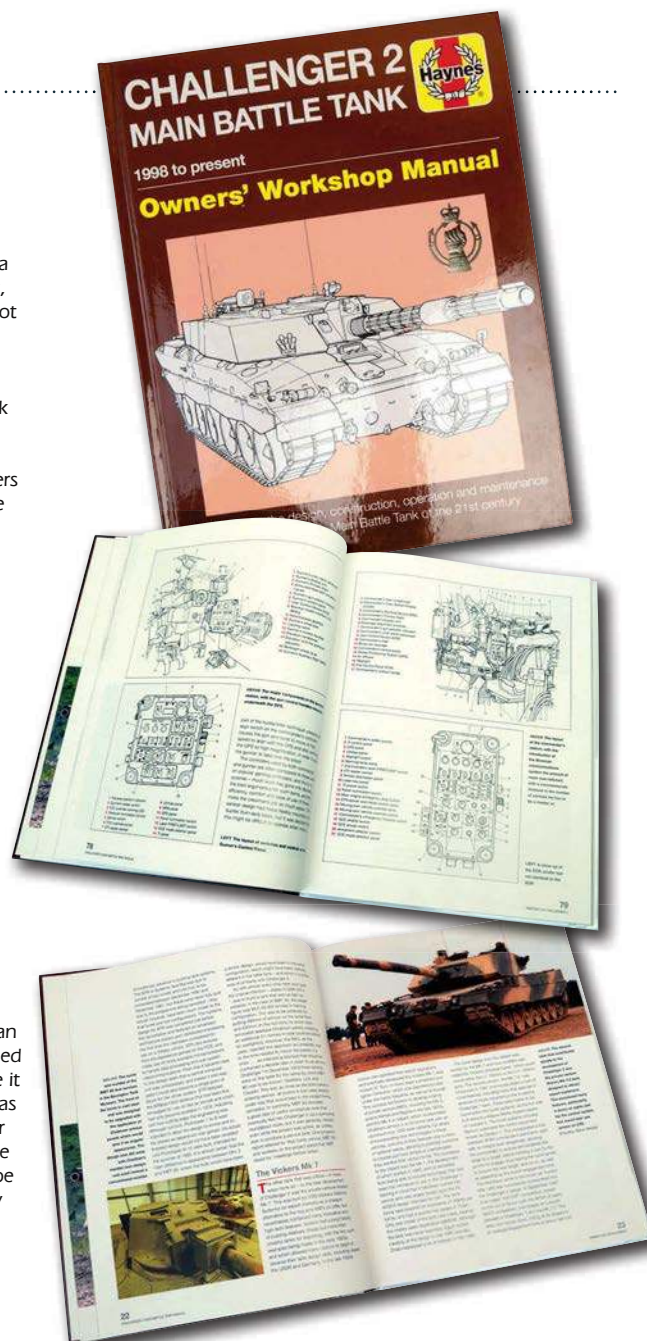
1. Acknowledgements
2. Foreword by Colonel G.H.J Deacon OBE ADC
3. Introduction
4. Design and Development
5. Anatomy of a Challenger 2
6. Challenger 2 Walkaround
7. Challenger 2 in Service
8. Challenger 2 on Operations
9. Challenger 2 Versions and Variants
10. Appendixes
11. Index

This book is fantastic treasure trove of information and images with a broader insight into the development of British AFVs contained in the forewords. It is aimed at a broad range of readers and I would recommend this to serious students of the AFV/MBT, armoured warfare historians, modellers and even former crewmen.

Do not be fooled by the novelty of it being an Owner's Manual, this is thoroughly researched and high quality AFV reference. For the price it is an absolute bargain and I would rate this as one of the must read titles on the Challenger 2 MBT. I cannot recommend this enough due to the high quality of material within. I will be adding a lot more of this range to my library Highly Recommended.

Available online from Haynes UK <https://haynes.com/en-gb/challenger-2-main-battle-tank-manual>

Al Bowie





TAMIYA

1:16 SCALE

**U.S. AIRBORNE TANK M551 SHERIDAN
DISPLAY MODEL
ITEM NO. 36213**

The M551 "Sheridan" AR/AAV (Armoured Reconnaissance/Airborne Assault Vehicle) was a light tank developed by the United States and named after Civil War General Philip Sheridan. It was designed to be landed by parachute and to swim across rivers. It was armed with the technically advanced but troublesome M81/M81 Modified/M81E1 152mm gun/launcher, which fired conventional ammunition and the MGM-51 Shillelagh guided anti-tank missile.

The M551 Sheridan entered service with the United States Army in 1967. At the urging of General Creighton Abrams, the U.S. Commander of Military Forces in Vietnam at the time, the M551 was rushed into combat service in Vietnam in January 1969. In April and August 1969, M551s were deployed to units in Europe and Korea, respectively. Now retired from service, it saw extensive combat in Vietnam, and limited service in Operation Just Cause (Panama), and the Gulf War (Kuwait). The Australian Army also trialed two Sheridans during 1967 and 1968, but judged that the type

did not meet its requirements. The Sheridan was retired without replacement officially in 1996. A large bulk of Sheridans were retained into service at the National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin, California and as AOB officer training at Fort Knox Armor Training Center, Kentucky. They worked as simulated Soviet armoured opposition force (OPFOR) to train U.S. military units on simulated tank on tank armoured combat to test on combat effectiveness in a desert environment. They were finally retired from the NTC in 2003.*

Tamiya released a brand new 1:35 scale M551 Sheridan last year. They have wasted no time to also bring two 1:16 scale kits to market – one radio controlled and one static display model. The box is impressively large and it is full to the brim of multimedia armour goodness. Tamiya's 1:16 scale M551 Sheridan Display Model comprises 232 parts in dark green plastic; 22 parts in black plastic; 11 parts in grey plastic 20 parts in clear plastic; 41 cast and turned metal parts; bags full of

This is a seriously big box!



screws, nuts and washers plus tools including a box wrench, screwdriver, wrench and two hex wrenches. Tracks are supplied as fully assembled and articulated loops with pads and pins in place. This compares to 336 green plastic parts in the 1:35 scale kit. The main reason for the lower plastic parts count on the larger model is due to the 1:16 scale kit's pre-assembled tracks and metal components. The tub is made from pressed metal and is pre-drilled with holes for screws and running gear. The road wheels are plastic while the idler wheels and drive sprockets are metal. The suspension is fully sprung. The

instructions are clear as to how many bolts, screws, washers etc that you will need for each step, as well as diagrams to show you where they all go. The legacy of the original Radio Control version is obvious from the many metal screws, washers, bearings, E-rings and more. Tamiya supplies most of the tools that you will need to assemble these – a screwdriver, two Allen keys, a wrench and a box wrench – but you will need to have a few of your own tools such as pliers and a pin vise yourself. The fully assembled tracks look really good. The instructions direct you to cut off the raised ejector



The plastic upper hull.



Pressed metal and pre-drilled lower hull.



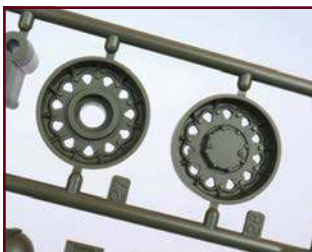
The upper and lower turret saucers.



Lots of locators for screws on the inside of the turret.



One of the all-plastic road wheels.



Plastic idler wheel.



Detail from the .50 cal machine gun.



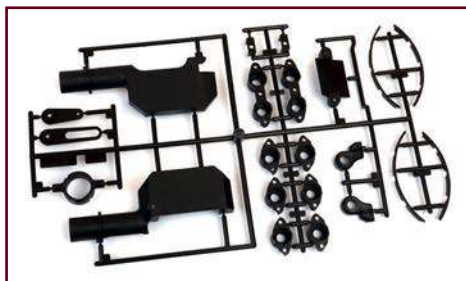
The clear parts sprue.



Facial detail is remarkable.



Fabric texture is beautifully done too.



Black plastic parts.



The fully assembled tracks.

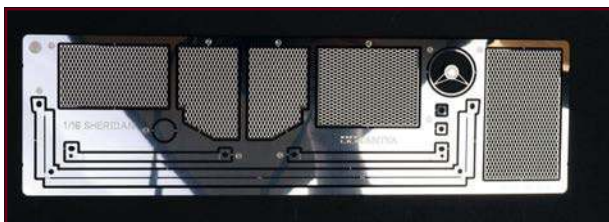
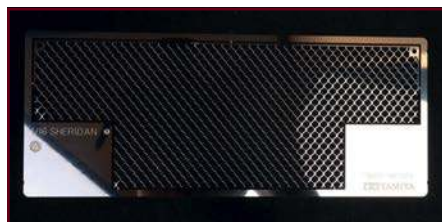


Photo-etched engine deck screens.



Front fence wire armour.



The turned metal barrel.



Cast metal swing arms.



Metal drive sprockets.



Decals are supplied for one vehicle.

pins on the inside surfaces of the track pads, but otherwise the tracks are ready to go. The track links are moulded in a metallic grey and the track pads are black. I will add some light weathering but I won't be painting mine. Installation is as simple as pressing down the workable suspension and looping the tracks around the wheels.

The turret race is made up from a toothed ring and ball bearings – just like the real thing. The instructions helpfully suggest that you should be careful not to lose parts! The upper hull is a plastic part and assembly here is more like a

conventional kit. Tools and fittings are plastic too. Tamiya also supplies a large photo-etched fret with mesh covers for the engine deck vents. The driver's hatch may be left to rotate open and closed, although a driver figure is not included.

Tamiya also supplies an improvised fence wire front armour with a plastic frame.

The turret is assembled in upper and lower halves. The gun features a nice shiny turned metal barrel. The lower half of the turret saucer must be attached to the upper hull using screws. The upper turret then appears to click into place.

The upper turret has plenty of stowage by way of ammo boxes and jerry cans. The cupola includes clear individual vision blocks and mount and armour for the .50 cal machine gun. The .50 cal is a nice little model in its own right, being made up from 17 parts. The turret-mounted searchlight is included too. The light and the lens are clear parts. A Commander figure is provided in 11 grey plastic parts. The facial features and the uniform textures are truly outstanding, and painting should be fun in this large scale. Markings are supplied for one vehicle. Overall detail is roughly the same as

the 1:35 scale kit. You're not getting a super-detailed replica here, but there is certainly potential to upgrade some of the surface details and smaller parts such as tool clamps. Tamiya's 1:16 scale U.S. Airborne Tank M551 Sheridan Display Model is a big and impressive kit. The large multimedia content will make this a different experience from the standard plastic model. ■

Thanks to Tamiya for the sample
www.tamiya.com
 Tamiya kits are distributed in the UK by The Hobby Company Limited www.hobbyco.net

ITALERI

1:9 SCALE

ZUNDAPP KS750 WITH SIDECAR KIT NO. 7406

The Zundapp KS750 along with BMW R75 were the principle motorbikes used by the German Army during WWII. Previously, civilian motorbikes were adapted for military use but in 1937 the Oberkommando Des Heeres (German Army High Command) requested the development of a motorcycle that could carry a payload of 500kg (over 1000lbs, equivalent to three soldiers and their equipment), have a constant speed of 80 kph (nearly 50 mph) when fully loaded and have a substantial cross-country performance. Production began in 1941 and over 18,000 motorcycles were built in an eight year period. Although production of the military version stopped in 1945, it was resumed in 1946 and more were made for the Finnish military and the civilian market up until 1949.

If you want to talk about 'legacy' or 'heritage' kits then this one is a real oldie as it first appeared in 1973 under the Esci label. As a 10 year old kid in 1974 I remember being really impressed by Bill Hearne's article about this kit in the May edition of Military Modelling magazine from that year. I still have the article too. It has been at the top of my want list since then but I never got hold of one for various reasons (out of production for years and collectors prices being two of them) until the kit was recently re-issued by Italeri.

Considering the scale, there are just six sprues moulded in grey polystyrene, a vinyl sprue for the seats, one clear sprue, a bag of springs and vinyl tubing, a decal sheet and four vinyl tyres. For a kit that is approaching the half-century mark the moulding quality is surprisingly good, in fact I've seen worse on much newer kits. There is some flash on parts obviously but nothing outrageous and pin marks are in hard to see areas such as under the mudguards, the only sinkage I could find

was on a set of pliers that goes in the toolbox. Even more remarkable was the quality of the vinyl tyres as I expected these to be the worst aspect of the kit. There is a line of flash around the circumference and the tread pattern where the tyres were attached to the sprue are a bit deformed but all you need to do is have these at the bottom. It is quite a solid vinyl so the flash should come off pretty easily with a light sanding. Detail-wise it is pretty basic and chunky in places but the foundations are there for you to build on. The sidecar mounted MG34 still looks good and with some work it will really stand out. One thing I'll be looking at is the replacement of the wheel spokes with wire as the kit ones are a bit thick even for this scale.

Four marking options are included; one machine in overall dark grey from the Panzer Lehr Brigade, Eastern Front, September 1941, one from 51st Gebirgsjager Korps, Albinea, Regio Emilia 1945 in overall dark yellow, one from Panzerjaeger Abt. 171, 71st Infantry Division, Dalmazia, September 1943 in a three-tone scheme and a Luftwaffe

registered machine in overall dark yellow from the 2nd Nachtjagdgeschwader (Nightfighter squadron), 1944 which features a rather impressive 'England Blitz' emblem on the front of the sidecar. Decals are by Zanchetti Buccinasco and are well printed and in register.

For such an old kit it is still pretty impressive how well the moulds have fared over the years as I have seen a lot worse and even just straight out of the box it will make a good model.

To my knowledge there are no aftermarket goodies available for this kit at the time of writing so you will need to sharpen your scratch building skills if you want a really stand out model, however it's worth noting that there is a lot of reference material available online such as manuals, parts lists, photographs etc. and these will be invaluable for super detailing.

Highly recommended if you are looking for a large project with plenty of scope for extra work. ■

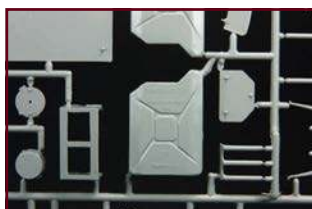
Thanks to The Hobby Company Ltd for the review sample www.hobbyco.net



One of the main frames.



Spoked wheel.



Lots of opportunity for detailing in this large scale!



Moulding quality is still pretty good after all these years.



One sidecar half.



Vinyl saddles.



The vinyl tyres hold up pretty well after a half century.



The kit decal sheet.

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When using power tools, side cutters or any tool that can suddenly break or create high-speed airborne particles, wear approved eye protectors with hard, clear lenses. Please always model in safety!

Due to many influencing factors, we cannot guarantee the appearance of the above projects, but we'll try our best!

Model MILITARY INTERNATIONAL

ISSUE No.168 April 2020,
Published 5th March 2020

Editor; Brett Green
Group Editor; Marcus Nicholls
Publisher; Alan Harman
Graphic Design; Alex Hall
Advertising Manager; Richard Andrews
Office Manager; Paula Gray
Administration Manager; Hannah McLaurie
MMI Website; Doolittle Media Web Team

Distributed by;
Seymour Distribution
2 East Poultry Avenue, London, EC1A 9PT
Tel; 020 7429 4000

Newstrade;
Select Publisher Services
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Tel; 01202 586848
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Model Military International is published on the first Thursday of each month by; Doolittle Media, Doolittle Mill, Doolittle Lane, Totternhoe, Bedfordshire, LU6 1QX UK
www.modelmilitary.com
Tel; +44 (0)1525 222573
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The Last Post...

AUSTRALIAN ARMY OPERATION BUSHFIRE ASSIST

Since the 4th January 2020, the Australian Army has moved to a significantly enhanced operational footing, to assist state and territory authorities with the bushfire emergency support.

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) has commenced Operation Bushfire Assist 19-20 and established three Joint Task Forces to facilitate ADF support to emergency services in NSW, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania.

The ADF is working alongside government agencies in the State Emergency Operations Centre in Sydney to ensure Defence assets are deployed to communities where they are most needed.

The ADF is providing transport and other assistance, such as aviation, route clearance, logistics, engineering and accommodation support to the firefighting and recovery effort.

ARMY RESERVE CALL OUT

For the first time in Australia's history, the Governor-General of Australia, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), approved the Call Out of Australian Army Reservists to provide additional support to state and local authorities to assist fire-affected areas. ■



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SCALE

1/35

PARTS

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LENGTH (CM)

35,5



"Le Buffle" 21st Combat
Tank Battalion, June 1940



Big Shoes to Fill

1/35 Military Miniature Series French Light Tank R35 (Item 35373)

A successor to the French masterpiece FT17 tank from late WWI, the R35 was officially adopted in 1935. It utilized rolled steel lower and bolted-on cast upper hull designs, was armed with the short barreled 37mm gun, and featured armor of up to 40mm. When hostilities with Nazi Germany burst into life in May 1940 the R35 was right in the front line as support for the French infantry. Now, it is ready to enter the front line in your model collection too, as it joins the famed Tamiya 1/35 Military Miniature Series. There is plenty to marvel at in this compact model, from the accurately captured rounded form to the "scissors" suspension, and with plenty of accessories and a figure on hand to lend the model even more life.

Length: 114mm, width: 55mm

23rd Combat Tank Battalion,
June 1940



Assembly type tracks
have natural 'sag.'

Figure fits neatly
and cleanly into
the turret.



Features realistic cast surface textures.

● A length comparison
in 1/35

R35
114mm

SOMUA S35
153mm

B1 bis
192mm



★The complex, rounded R35 form is accurately depicted. ★Turret utilizes slide molding for superior authenticity and a fulfilling build. ★Accurate gun elevation and traverse ranges add to the realism. ★Assembly type tracks feature one-piece straight sections. ★A single commander figure is included for installation upon the turret rear hatch. ★Comes with two early WWII marking options.

A strong French presence in the 1/35 Military Miniature Series

From the imposing, heavily-armored B1 bis to the highly effective SOMUA S35 and the UE Armored Carrier, there is plenty of native French armor (and figures) in the 1/35 Military Miniature Series to accompany your R35 masterpiece – why not expand your collection?

1/35
SCALE


French Battle Tank B1 bis
(Item 35282)



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(Item 35344)



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