

MADE IN HOLLAND

A PORTFOLIO OF DUTCH
MASTER MODELLERS



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AFV
modeller

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Foreword

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Foreword

Dear readers,

It is with great pride that we present this book “Made in Holland” to you, and with it, a long-simmering idea, has finally been realized.

Why a book by and about Dutch Modellers? A plausible question, and not so easy to answer. Perhaps we simply wanted to show you that the Netherlands have more to offer than cheese, tulips, windmills, wooden shoes and the city of Amsterdam.

Is there such a thing as a Dutch modelling style? A style as distinctive as for example the Scandinavian or Spanish school or our southern neighbours, the Belgian modellers have? I tend to lean towards the theory that Dutch armour modelling is certainly most influenced by the modelling scene in Belgium, but at the same time is a melting pot of styles. Like most modellers all around the globe, we pick up certain techniques and apply those that we are most comfortable with. We all create a style that fits us best, and that is perhaps the best answer to the question. All modellers represented in this book have their own approach towards modelling and all have very different styles and interests.

Most of the modellers represented here haven't published their works in printed form ever before or in other cases, only a very few times. Some names might ring a bell, if you visit the various internet forums. And although the internet is a great source of information these days and an easy way to share your work with the world, it also is a fast medium, where even the best models are forgotten after a few weeks. Models, presented in a printed form like in this book, have a substantially longer shelf life in peoples' memories. We have opted for a “Coffee table-style” book, and not for a step-by-step approach of each project, unless it would contribute to the value of the article. Other books, and also many sources on the internet, deal much better with that.

With “Made in Holland” we hope to have added something of value to the world of military scale modelling. Not only can you find inspirational work that may be familiar but several contributors have also built one or more projects especially for this book. We truly hope that “Made in Holland” will be an inspiring source for you in your modelling efforts, for years to come and if that happens, we have achieved our aim!

Robert Crombeecke



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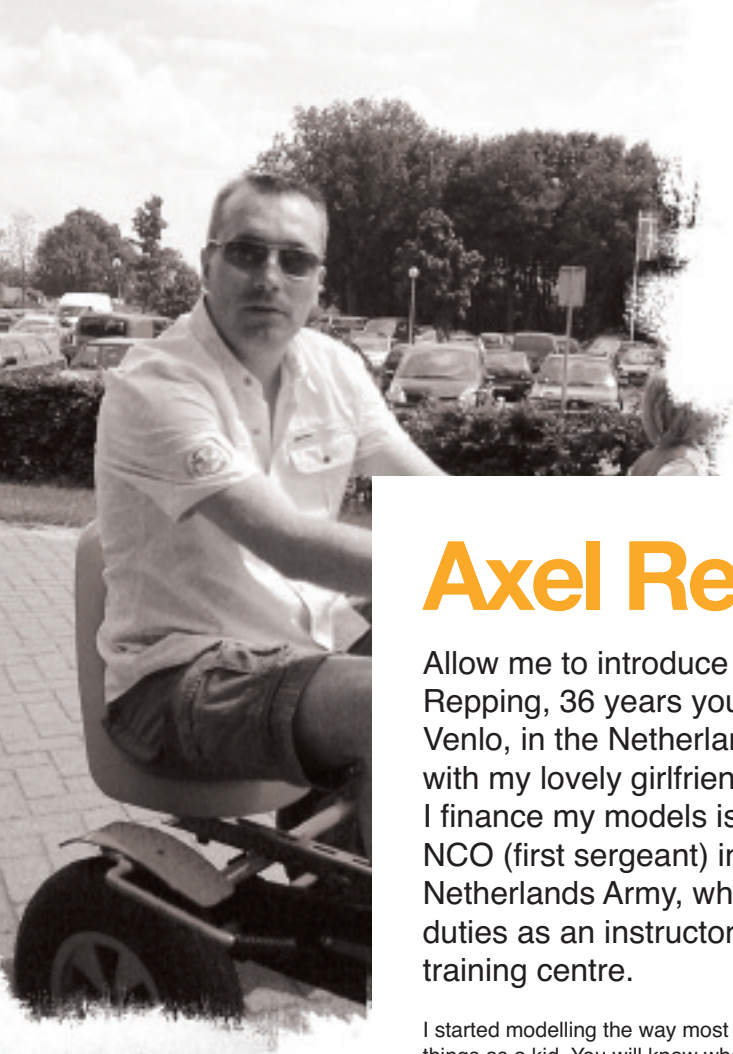
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Axel Repping

Allow me to introduce myself. I'm Axel Repping, 36 years young and I live in Venlo, in the Netherlands. I share my life with my lovely girlfriend Andrea. The way I finance my models is by working as a NCO (first sergeant) in the Royal Netherlands Army, where I fulfill my duties as an instructor at the NCO training centre.

I started modelling the way most of us did: building flying things as a kid. You will know what I'm talking about with the old 1/72 Airfix, Matchbox and Italeri kits. I caught the diorama virus, when one day I went to my local hobby store to buy another airplane kit, and there it was, standing in a showcase. A diorama showing the 2cm Flakbunker from Verlinden Productions. I still remember how excited I was. Man, that was great stuff. "So you think that's cool huh?," said the shop owner. "Well how about this, for a change", and he showed me the centre pages on the Tamiya catalogue. Looking, and drooling over those well known pages, my heart almost skipped a beat. This was it, I was hooked for life.

I started building dioramas as most of us did, by trying to recreate some diorama I had seen in a catalogue or maybe a photograph from a history book. Those were the days, no Internet, no forums, just some hardcopy catalogues and books as reference. No one to tell right from wrong when you messed up the construction or paint job. In short: no criticism.

After a couple of years I started to spend my hard-earned after-school work money, on the more expensive stuff, Tamiya models, Verlinden figures and accessories. When the internet began I joined up at the Dutch TWENOT

forum which was an eye-opener. New techniques I had never heard of.

I also started to buy the Verlinden magazines, just to look at those lovely models, and absorb more modeling inspiration. Just looking at Francois Verlinden's, Lewis Pruneau's and Bob Letterman's work, I wished I could replicate their work.

My first modelling expo and competition was a great experience. It was the annual TWENOT meeting, and all that merchandise, I just couldn't believe my eyes! In the competition, I entered one model and one diorama, and won a gold medal with both of them. What a day that was.

Going to more exhibitions, and learning more on different forums every day, I got more and more infected by the diorama virus. Nowadays, with all the forums, feedback, Internet shops and online reference material, there just seems to be an inexhaustible supply of inspiration.

Over the years I have developed my own style and way of working and finishing my models, and that's how I enjoy modelling these days. Getting the right idea, doing the historical research, gathering the materials, doing my modelling thing, and most of all, being happy about other people liking my work and the enjoyment of sharing my work with fellow modellers all over the world, so they can shoot at it.

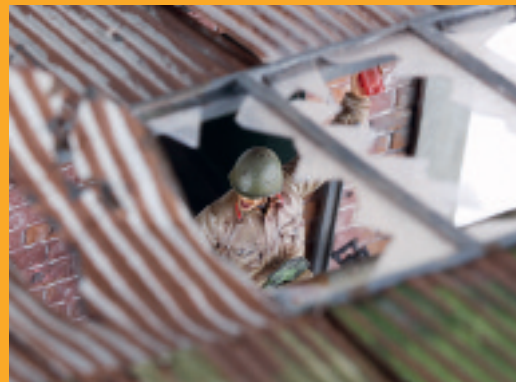
So, enjoy the work in this book, and shoot.

Axel





Baptism of Fire
Stalingrad , October 1942



BAPTISM OF FIRE

Stalingrad, October 1942

Ever since I started to build dioramas, I had plans to build a factory scene. I just couldn't find the proper motivation or inspiration for it.

One day I was doing some research on the SIG 33 on PzIII chassis, and learned that some 24 of these vehicles were sent to the Stalingrad area to be put into operational use for the first time. All 24 were lost. They were simply not equipped for fighting in built-up areas. Looking at Roy Schurgers' diorama "Firestarter", I was mesmerized by the idea and how he displayed it, so I decided to tell the same story, only this time the Russians would be the fire starters.

The idea was that a Sig33 had to drive through a tractor factory in Stalingrad to support some infantry. The Russians started to hunt down the vehicle. The opportunity presented itself via a raised walkway for the Russians to get above the German tank and attack it with a Molotov cocktail.



I started with the basic layout of the factory first. Using Evergreen strips and polystyrene sheets to build the brick wall. The walkway was constructed using mainly Evergreen and balsa wood. The staircase was done with Evergreen and Aber tread plate sheets. I found out that it's very important to have good reference material. You simply cannot imagine how steel constructions are built. I wanted the roof to be of corrugated sheet iron, so I started searching for the right material. I finally found larger sheets in a shop for architectural needs. The concrete slab floor was achieved by scribing panel lines into a 4cm thick plate of polystyrene. The concrete texture was made by simply pressing a piece of 100 grain sand paper down on the base, leaving imprints of the sand paper on the floor.

I wanted to create some height and depth into the

scene, so after some advice from Roy Schurgers, I decided to add a sulphur silo on the outside of the factory, which when looking at the inside view of the hall, protrudes from behind. The silo was made out of an old deodorant can and parts of my Lego collection. I drilled many small holes in it, to give it a real peppered look.

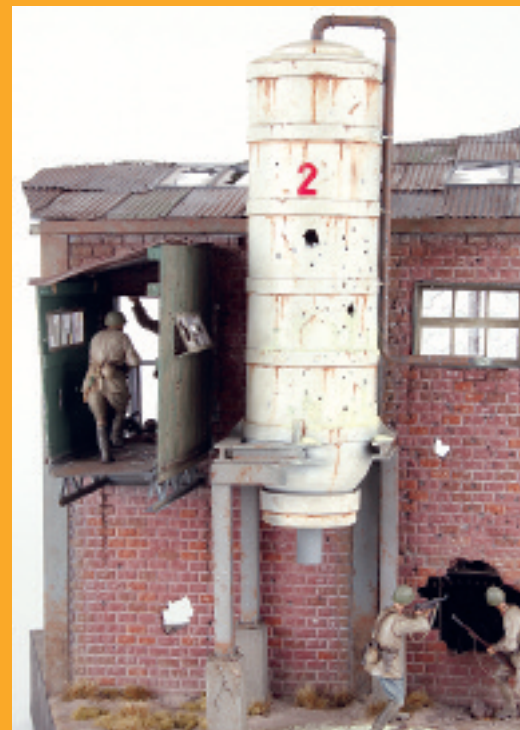
After all of this was done I started on the details and other things to be found in a tractor factory. The pedestal drill, workbench and blowtorch cart are from Plusmodel. The bent and battered drums are from the excellent set by Reality In Scale. All the ironwork lying around is from evergreen strips and stuff from my scrap box (it's great to have a fully loaded scrap box.)

Painting the metals parts was done by using a small sponge and using all those nice rusty colours. A small

poster of Stalin, on which a German has made a little cartoonish improvement was added. I always like to put a little humour into a diorama. The main thing is not to overdo it.

During the paint job I had a mishap. When I was doing the washes on the floor, it slowly started to melt, despite having primed it very well. I felt in total despair, I had come this far without any problems. It was bound to happen some time. No time to sit down and feel sorry for myself, I got back on the horse and made a new floor. It turned out even better than the first version (as it usually does).

The corrugated roof was weathered using the hairspray method, taking care to use different base colours to get some variation in the overall look.





The vehicle is the old Dragon kit, which needed some minor detailing. For this the Eduard set, a Lion Roar barrel and Fruiil tracks were used. The build was fairly simple and straightforward. The painting was done with Tamiya acrylics, Sin Industries filters and Mig pigments.

As for the figures, now that's a different story. Figures are the items that bring life, action, and drama into a diorama. If you don't get the interaction right, there's no use in putting them in. I wanted all five figures to have some sort of interaction with each other, in which two figures (the SPG commander and the Russian throwing the Molotov) would tell the story. I converted four figures from Tank to tell the Russian side of the story, of which the main figure "Ivan the Baptist" had undergone the most surgery. A mix of Tank, Dragon, and Warriors figures were used to achieve the poses I was looking for. The German SPG commander is a mix of Verlinden, Royal Model and Hornet. The figures were all painted with Vallejo acrylics, and sealed with a matt varnish.

All in all this project was a very fun project to develop and create. Using techniques and materials I hadn't used before (Copper sheet, sulphur, hairspray, sponge, etc). I'm glad this project turned out exactly like I had it in mind. It was very pleasing to see it grow and develop day by day and step by step.

My main aim was to create interaction and linking. For example: The staircase links the upper and ground level. The glass on the floor, and the chain hanging from the hoist binds the roof to the floor. The Russians looking through the hole in the wall connect inside and outside. It's important to connect objects and parts of a diorama together. If not, you get a mishmash of loose ends and disconnected items.

Onward to the next project, comrades.



Axel Repping

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BY BRITISH STANDARD

Tunesla, 1941

As a young modeller, I always thought that the Tamiya Quad gun tractor was a nice kit. The vehicle itself, had a nasty, mean and robust look to it. One to build someday, but somehow I just couldn't find the inspiration to build it.

Some time ago, I came across a picture of a Morris Commercial which was captured by the Germans in Africa. An idea was born and the research period began. During my search I discovered that the Quad was used in both the European and African campaigns. When British troops had to abandon or discard their equipment, they usually made sure that the Germans or Italians could not put them back in service. When in a hurry, disabling an engine and throwing away tools, would have to do. I wanted to depict a Quad that was put back into service by the Germans, somewhere in Africa. However the Quad develops a flat tire, and the Germans didn't have the proper tools to fix or replace it. The original British tools were no longer on the Quad, and the Germans had to use their own. German tools, all were metric sizes and wouldn't fit the British imperial system wheel nuts - hence the title, 'By British Standard'.

The idea was to build a Quad that looked like if it was 'in country' for quite a while and survived one sandstorm too many, with a fairly new gun in tow.

Thus the construction began. The Tamiya Quad is a fairly old but decent kit, and the addition of the Eduard PE-set would be enough to create an accurate model. I discovered that on the back of the real truck, there

was normally a spare tire-rack installed. So this had to be scratched from Evergreen-strips. The Dragon PAK 40 was built out of the box, and it is truly a little gem of a kit.

Since I wanted to give the Quad the old weary look, I decided to try out a new technique. Laundry washing powder. ARE YOU MAD? I discovered that detergent has an aggressive reaction to acrylic paint where it kind of absorbs it. I used Humbrol paints for the two-tone camouflage scheme. Since Humbrol is an enamel paint, the detergent would not do any damage to it, and it seemed to me that it would provide a good base coat.

After the base coat had hardened for 36 hours, the whole model was covered with Tamiya XF59 Desert yellow. I set the model aside to dry for about 20 minutes. In those 20 minutes I made my preparations for the Laundry powder treatment. I filled up my bathroom sink with warm water and placed some washing powder in a bowl next to it. After the 20 minutes I dipped the Quad into the sink to make it soaking wet. The model has to be wet when you undertake this technique. When it was wet, I gently, and grain by grain, dropped some washing powder on to the model. After 20 to 30 seconds I rinsed off the powder under a running tap. I repeated this procedure until I was satisfied with the results. The 20 to 30 seconds is a maximum, any longer and the powder will eat away almost all of the acrylic paint. The washing powder method is very hard to control, and the basic rule is not to overdo it with the powder.







After the complete model had dried, the basic weathering with filters, pin washes, chipping and pigments was done.

The PAK was airbrushed with Tamiya XF 60 (dark yellow). Basic highlights were done with Tamiya XF 57 (buff), and after it had dried sufficiently, only some minor weathering and chipping was added.

The build up of the diorama is the classic '3 step' way, but I didn't want the focal point to be in the centre. I decided that all of the action should take place in front of the vehicle. The construction of the groundwork took me about 8 hours, and was fairly simple to do.

The rock sections were cast in plaster from the Woodland Scenics rock moulds.

After they had dried for two hours, I took them out of the mould, and carved them up a little more, since the basic moulds weren't to my satisfaction.

The smaller rocks and pebbles lying around are simply smashed up pieces of plaster (a neat little trick, that

Marijn van Gils taught me). The sand is in fact real Sahara sand. A friend of mine brought it with him after he came back from his African expedition. Great stuff I may add. The colours I used for the base were the basic red-brown and yellowish tones.

After the filters and washes I decided to give the smaller rocks and stones different tones, just to break up the monotone brown-yellow colouring. The plant life was done with mostly dried plants from my garden pond. Except for the Aloë Vera plants, which were made with paper.

The figures are a mix of Verlinden, Hornet and Dragon. They were all painted with Vallejo acrylics. This was my first experience with Vallejo, and I enjoyed working with them very much. I wanted the German crew to look like they didn't have a clue why they can't get the wheel with the flat tire off the truck.

Why didn't their tools fit? They just didn't get it!





Bas Hermsen

I am 25 years old and I live in Zutphen. I am an environmental planner for a consultant agency where I make development plans for cities and towns in the east of the Netherlands.

I started building scale models as early as 1993. After a few years I started to build 1/35 military vehicles. My first serious attempt to build and paint models as realistically as possible was not until about 2002, at which point I started adding aftermarket products and

scratch built parts. When I discovered the possibilities of improving my models with Evergreen sheet, rod and copper wire I knew that I found the direction in which my hobby was leading. My passion and drive to build, paint and weather military vehicles is to create something that is as real as possible, given the limitations of scale problems in detail and colouration. At the same time it is a great opportunity to expose your creative freedom in this wonderful hobby.

Baz





BMP



The BVP-1K was bought by the Finnish forces from the former East German army. The BVP-1K is a recon and liaisons variant of the BMP-1.

The Finns have abandoned the use of it now, but it does employ several BMP's still. In the Finnish army this vehicle is referred to as "Bemari", which is actually a nickname for a BMW.

I used the Zvezda BMP kit of this vehicle, although I knew before I started that it had some serious flaws. During the build I found this out the hard way. The shape, as well as the details on the cupola are incorrect, as are the hatches on the rear deck. To add even more of a challenge, I also had to change the model into a BVP-1.

This meant that the details on the upper deck would be quite different from the ones on the BMP-version. I did use the tracks provided in the kit, but I added bolts on the sides, as on the real ones which made a significant difference. The punch and die was used for this task.

The wheels are resin offerings from Mini Arm, which are much better detailed than the ones from the kit. The only parts that remained unchanged are the side fenders or mudguards.

All in all I spent six months of severe reconstruction to get the basics up to par and to create my version of the BVP-1K.



I painted the model with Vallejo Air acrylics, and I am very enthusiastic about this paint. It allows you to spray the paint on in thin layers, not obscuring the many small details and once dry it provides a nice satin sheen. This satin finish provides a perfect base for the next steps of weathering.

The tones I used to spray on the basic colour and camouflage pattern were mixed from many different colours. To achieve the hard edge camouflage I used the low tack Tamiya tape, which is especially useful for paint jobs such as these.

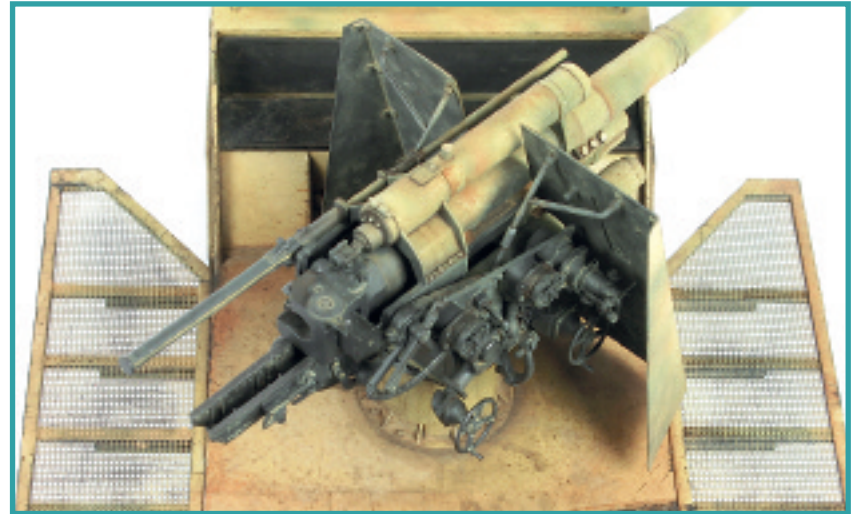
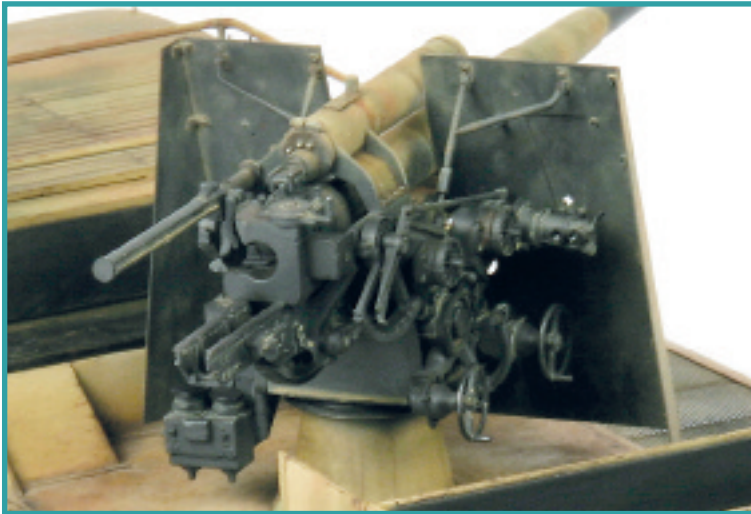
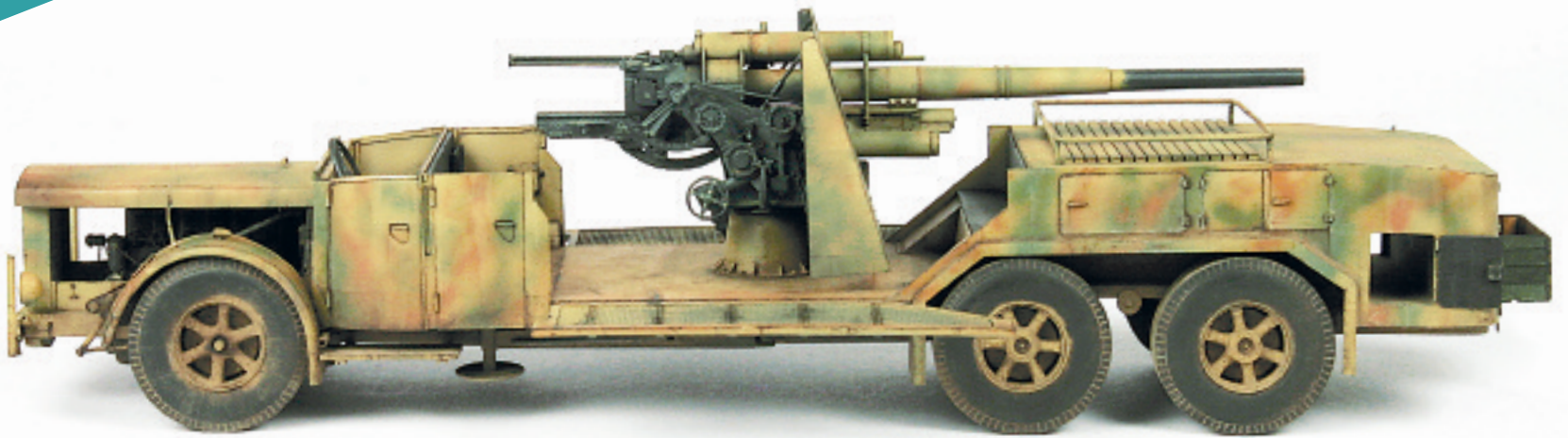
For further weathering I mainly used artists oil paints. The colours Van Dyke Brown and Burned Sienna were used mostly.

I finished the model by adding mud, for which I used the by now famous and almost obligatory Mig pigments. To create variation in the colour tones I mixed several different colours to good effect.





VOMAG





The Vomag company had some 20 chassis ready to serve as a base for a transport vehicle destined for Die Deutsche Post, the German Mail Services. These chassis were the starting point for the Vomag Waffenträger. (Weapons Carrier)

The German Army's primary conditions for the vehicle were that it could carry the Flak 18/36 and that the gun could actually be fired from it. Obviously the Waffenträger was necessary to ensure mobility. No other vehicle was able to fulfill this requirement as well as the Vomag. How many Vomag's exactly received a Flak 18/36 remains unknown.

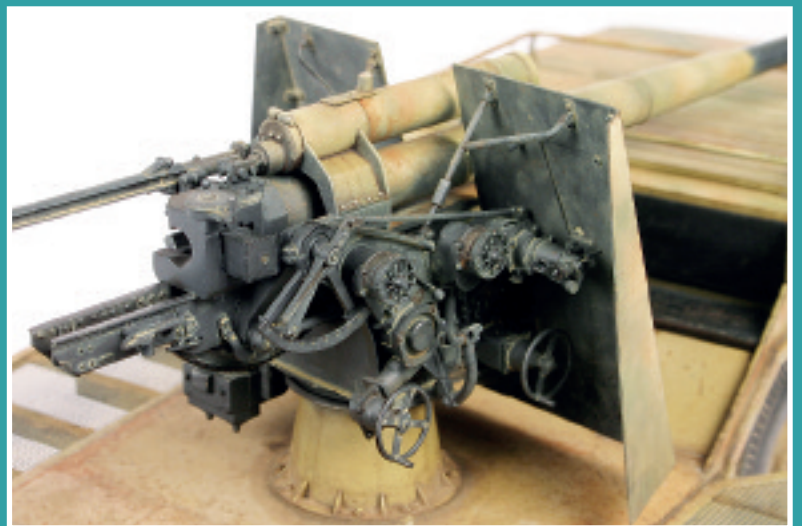
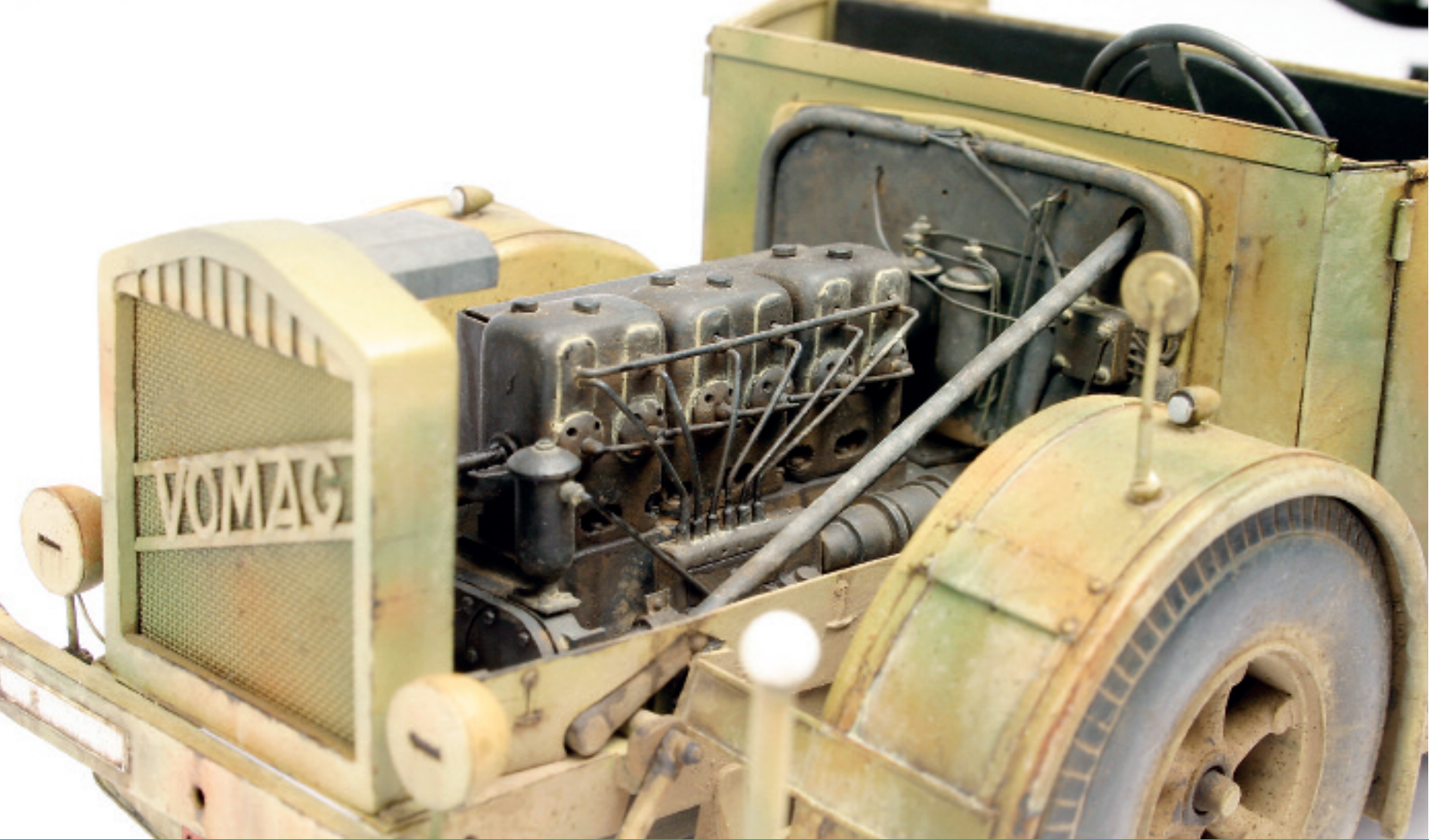
The idea to build this model goes back as far as 2005. As a starting point I had a few scale drawings made by Pedro Andrada. He also kindly provided me with a set of wheels, the basics for the engine and the drive shafts. The Flak 18/36 is the AFV Club offering. I have added some extra details to this wonderful model, but basically it was built out of the box. The Vomag is built mainly from Evergreen sheet styrene and profiles. For the chassis alone I already used 1.5 meters of Evergreen styrene bars. Other materials used were brass sheet and brass rods. The sheet was used to fashion the mud guards and the hood for example.

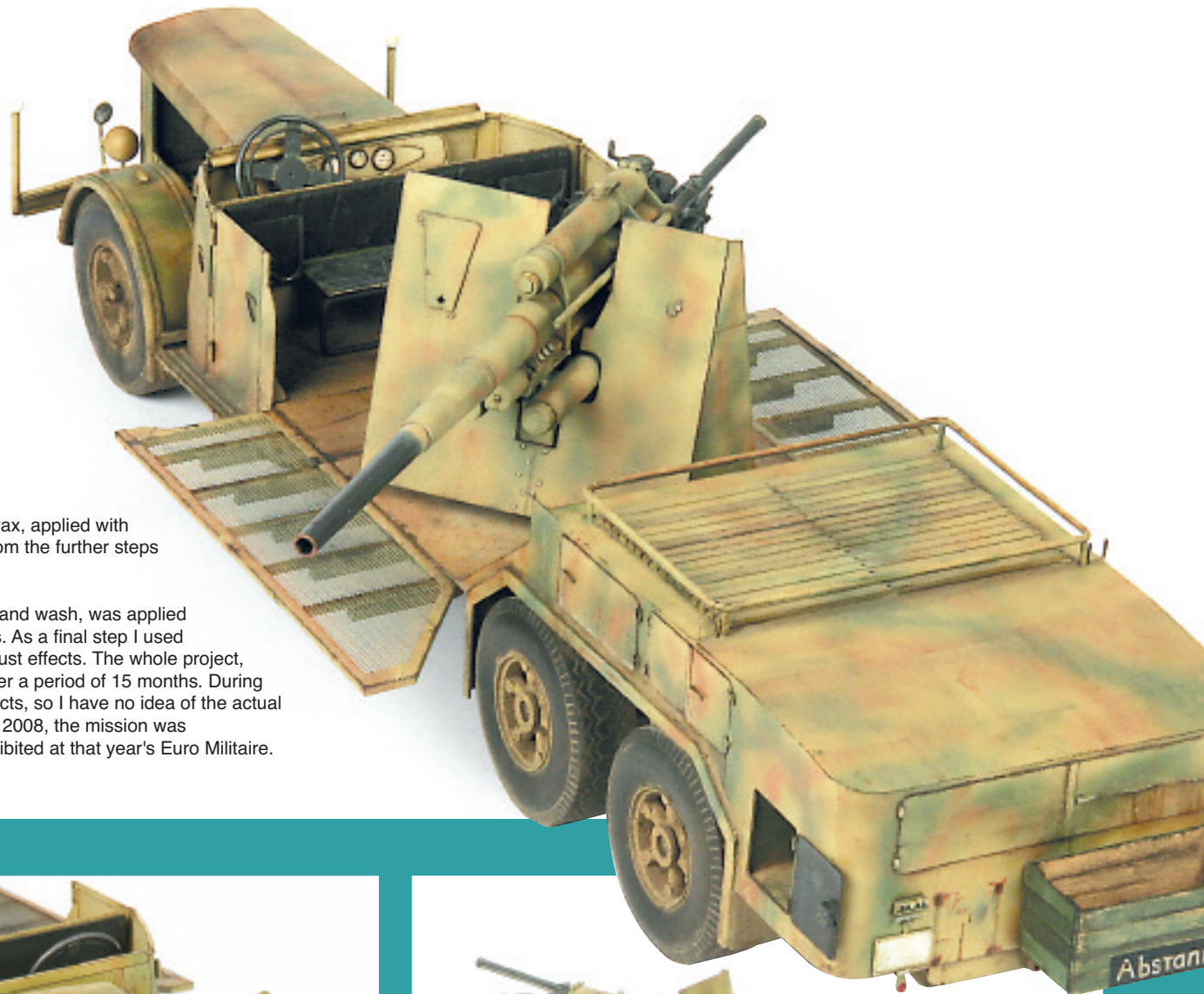
The Vomag logo that you can see on the radiator grill was made on my computer, scaled down and printed on paper. The logo was then stiffened with CA glue and then carefully cut out.

One of the bigger challenges I met during the build, was to make sure that in the end the wheels were flat level and that the large panels did not warp. This seems perhaps obvious, but given the size of especially the panels that made the back of this huge vehicle, it turned out to be a bigger challenge than I anticipated.

My version of the Vomag was to represent the ones that saw action late in the war in Hungary. As a reference I used a rather poor black and white image from a copy of "Waffen Revue", a German war time journal. After close examination this picture suggests the use of a very faded three colour camouflage scheme.

For the basic colours and camouflage I have used Humbrol's enamel paints. To add some depth and more brilliance into the colours I spiced up the brown (186) with a tiny bit of orange. For the Panzer gelb I mixed Humbrol colours 94 and 61, and the green was mixed from 120 and 61.





I used some Johnsons Future Floor wax, applied with an airbrush, to protect the paint job from the further steps in the weathering process.

This weathering, with chipping, filters and wash, was applied using a variety of paints, including oils. As a final step I used pigments to create more fading and dust effects. The whole project, from start to finish, was completed over a period of 15 months. During this time I also engaged in other projects, so I have no idea of the actual hours spent. But finally, in September 2008, the mission was accomplished and the model was exhibited at that year's Euro Militaire.





Eelke Warrink

The story of me as a military modeller begins at the moment I was born. In true military fashion, my twin brother Rutger went ahead to do some reconnaissance. A few minutes later, when the coast appeared to be clear, I decided to come out into the world.

We grew up together in a quiet town in the middle of The Netherlands, sharing many common hobbies. At the age of ten, we were introduced to the art of modelling by a classmate who built 1:24th scale truck models. We cut our modelling teeth mainly on Italeri DAF trucks. Inexperienced as we were, the end result was invariably a bit shaky, stained with glue and with a speck of paint added here and there as an afterthought. True 'art', it certainly wasn't, but I learned some very important lessons back then, such as 'don't glue back loose decals using plastic glue'. Impressive as trucks may be, we soon discovered even more impressive vehicles: tanks and armoured cars!

The next couple of years saw us dabbling in modelling a bit, building many models but never actually getting better at it. We did have fun filling the really old and bad ones up with firecrackers and setting them ablaze, filming the melting wrecks and the drooping, distorting grimaces of the model soldiers with a video camera. Amusing as it was, it did sum up our attitude towards modelling and eventually, we both quit the hobby for a few years.

Most boys of that age discover girls, but we had to settle for the second-best option, video games and Star Trek...

Around 1997, the internet came alive and the number of modelling sites soon exploded through the roof. Our inspiration returned, and as we built British and Soviet WW2 vehicles mostly, the appearance of new generation kits of Allied vehicles at the same time made us return to the hobby, this time for good. When we started afresh, we finally took the hobby more seriously, taking more care during cleanup and construction, and paying more attention to detailing. We gradually did more research before starting our projects, and our skills at model construction improved dramatically.

As you may have noticed, I've constantly been talking about 'us', because we really worked together on every model we built. Having a brother around certainly helps in modelling. When we both still lived in our parents' house we would share nasty jobs such as cleaning up road wheels and tracks. But it also meant that we had to decide who got to do the nice and interesting bits of construction! Now that we live apart, we mostly build our own models. We do take an active interest in each others' models, and we regularly share new knowledge and news through e-mail or chat. Rutger spends much more time at research than I do, and without his knowledge my models wouldn't turn out half as good. The Jagdcromwell featured in this book is a true joint effort, in which Rutger built the model and I painted it. It felt good to physically work together on a model again, and I'm looking forward to painting more of his models in the future.



Once I realised this, my painting skills improved a great deal in a short time. I began to actually apply the techniques I had read about for so long. I started using shading and highlighting, filters, highlighted chippings and lining. This experimentation cost me a few models that didn't really come out presentably, but looking back they're necessary sacrifices that made me turn new corners.

All this may sound like I consider myself an accomplished modeller now, with fully developed skills, but nothing is further from the truth. I often still feel like a beginner, and there is a myriad of techniques and materials that I have never tried out (for example, I still hate PE and don't use it if I can help it).

The skills of other modellers from all over the world continue to amaze and humble me. But I hope that my models convey my love of the subject and will inspire someone out there to go out and build a model, whether it be Russian, British, German, or whatever!



AEROSAN

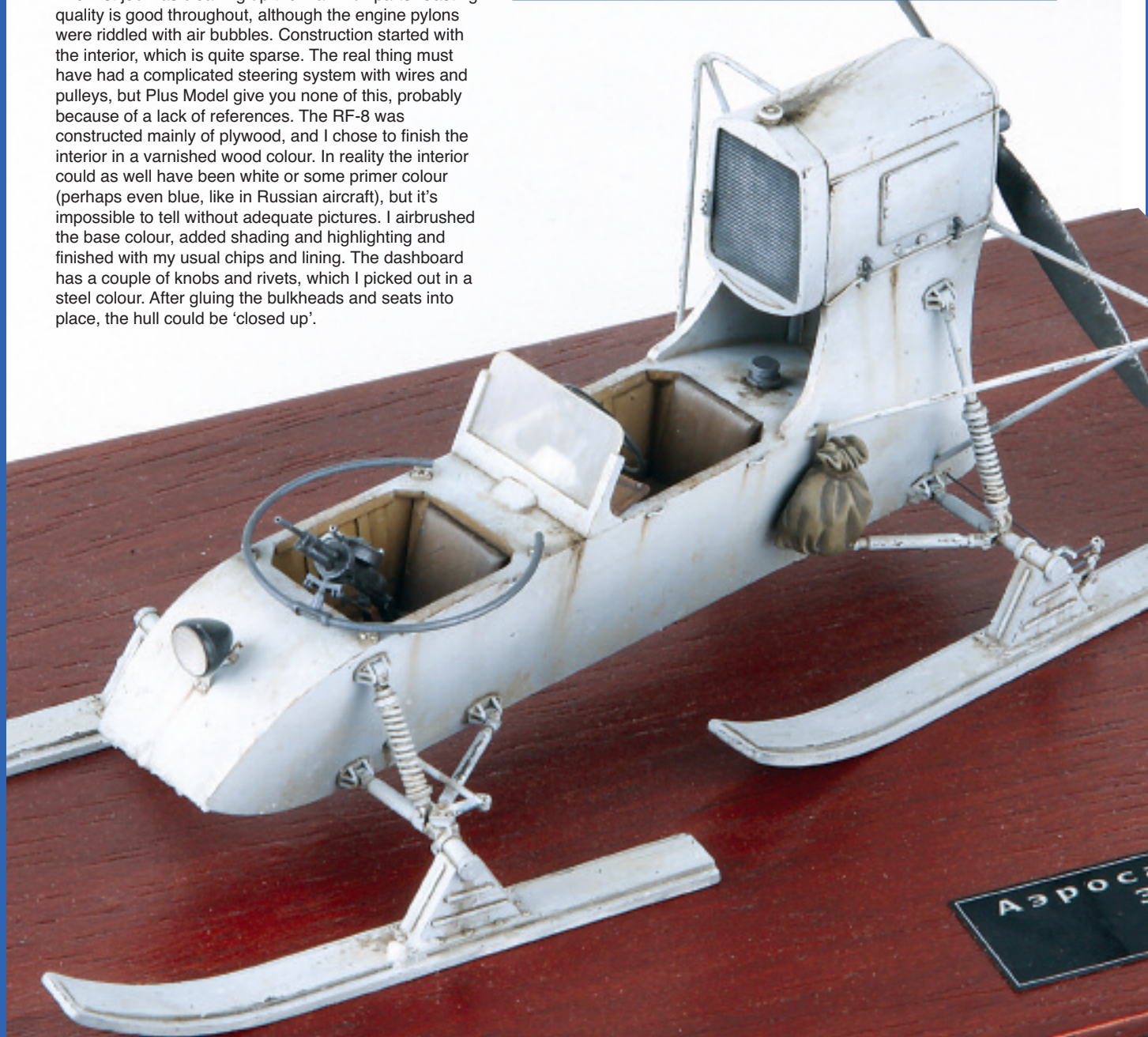
Winter 1942

Some of the most interesting vehicles from World War 2 were the Russian Aerosans, literally 'aero-sleighs'.

These snowmobiles, looking like an unholy marriage between a bobsleigh and a desk fan, are a prime example of Russian inventiveness: they were of simple but unorthodox construction, and very effective. Aerosans were used for transport and scouting missions in deep snow or on ice, where no other vehicle could go. In late 1941, the GAZ car factory designed a simple scout type named RF-8. When Plus Model released a new kit of this type, I picked it up as soon it appeared in the hobby shop.

Interior decoration

The first job was cleaning up the main hull parts. Casting quality is good throughout, although the engine pylons were riddled with air bubbles. Construction started with the interior, which is quite sparse. The real thing must have had a complicated steering system with wires and pulleys, but Plus Model give you none of this, probably because of a lack of references. The RF-8 was constructed mainly of plywood, and I chose to finish the interior in a varnished wood colour. In reality the interior could as well have been white or some primer colour (perhaps even blue, like in Russian aircraft), but it's impossible to tell without adequate pictures. I airbrushed the base colour, added shading and highlighting and finished with my usual chips and lining. The dashboard has a couple of knobs and rivets, which I picked out in a steel colour. After gluing the bulkheads and seats into place, the hull could be 'closed up'.



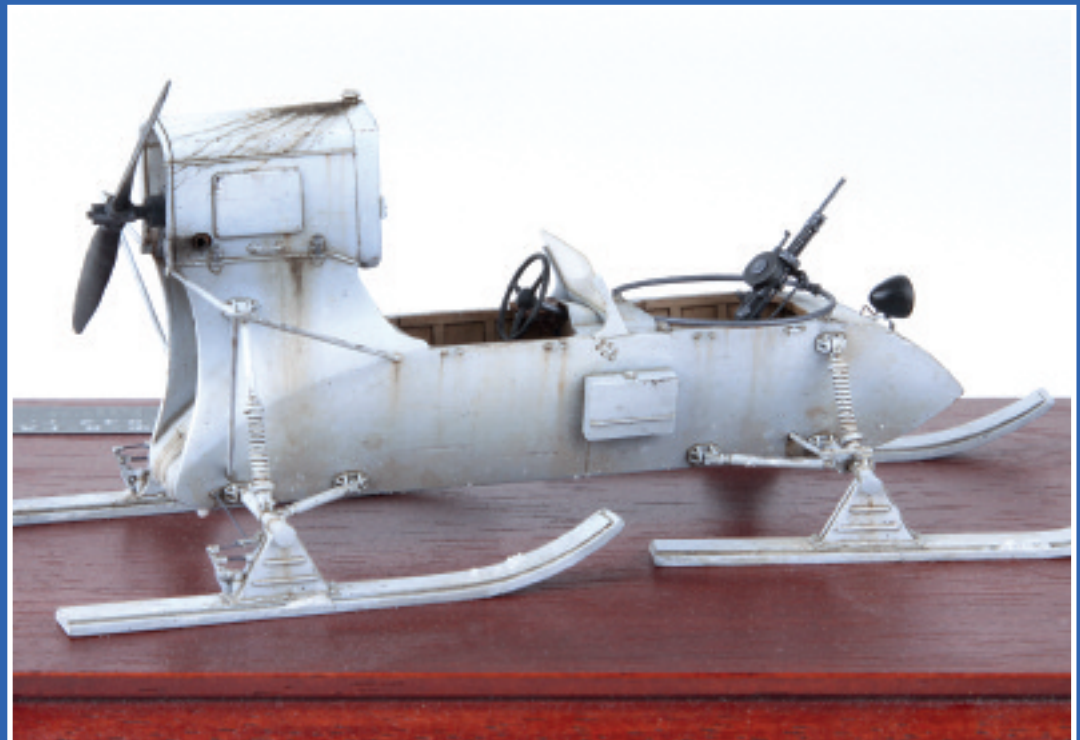
Building the exterior

With the interior done it was time for the exterior of the hull. The engine pylons have some shape issues which I left alone, but I did adjust the sit of the engine and engine cover. Plus Model's engine is noticeably slanted forward, but pictures show that in reality it was level with the ground. To remedy this, the engine pylons and engine supports were carefully trimmed until the engine was horizontal.

The engine was painted and installed on the engine supports. I also painted the inside of the engine cover at this time as it would be impossible to reach once attached. I was relieved to find that after changing the sit of the engine, the exhaust still lined up with the hole in the engine cover! The many support rods for the vehicle's skis are very flimsy, and I strengthened as many joins as I could with wire. Plus Model provide wire for the propeller guards, and using the supplied jig they were very easy to make. Note that they should have a slight upward angle unlike the model in the box top picture.

The Aerosans were not just snazzy recreational vehicles, they mounted a ring-mounted DT machine gun that was operated by the observer. I remade the ring from plastic rod, as the cross section should be round, not square like the kit part. I scratch built the mount and added detail to the gun.

With the major components done it was time for the final details, such as details on the engine cover, the headlight support and tie-downs on the sides of the vehicle. I replaced the steering wheel from the kit with one that I had lying around, but I later found out that it should have four spokes as opposed to three.



ани РФ-8-ГАЗ-98
Зима 1942 г.
Aerosan RF-8-GAZ-98
Winter 1942

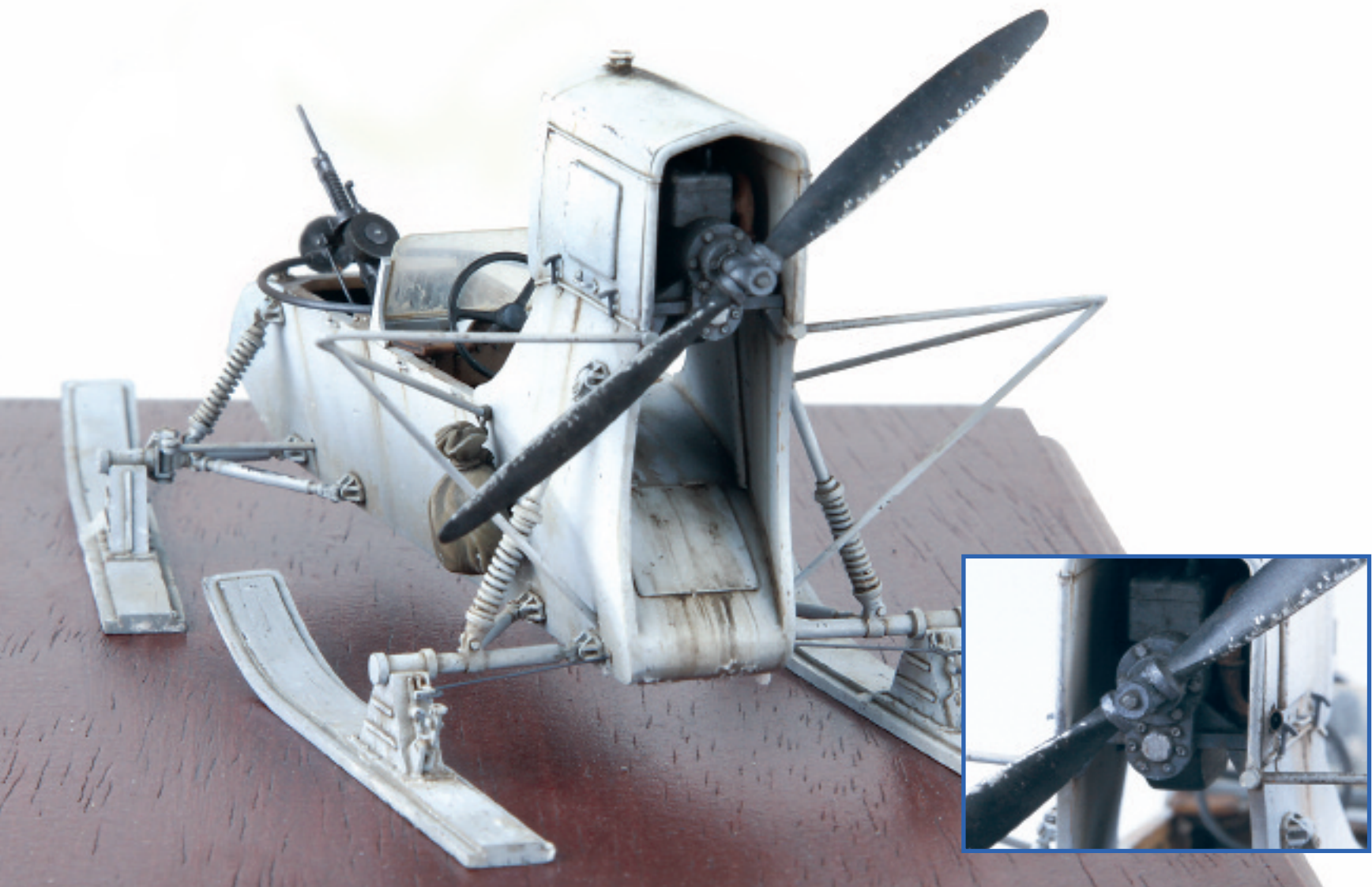


A whiter shade of pale

I was a little apprehensive when I started painting, because I had never painted a white vehicle before. In the end I figured that it would be best to start with a base coat of...white! I masked off the two 'cockpits' and applied a layer of pure white. With a base colour this bright it would be easy to overdo the shading, so I mixed up a light, warm grey and sprayed it onto the lower part of the body, suspension struts and the engine cover. The other surfaces were given a quick pass as well, so that I could highlight the uppermost surfaces later using pure white. The Russians often used black headlights straight from the automotive industry, and this gave the model a splash of 'colour' that it needed. Pictures reveal that the MG ring was left in bare metal.

After that, I added the usual chips, scratches, rust streaks and oil stains, using acrylics and oils. I copied the spilled glycol from the radiator from a well known photograph, the fanned out streaks of glycol adding a lot of interest to the model. The propeller received more chipping than usual, because I imagined it would quickly get worn by rocks and other small debris kicked up by the skis. When all was done, I glued the skis in place, and I was glad to see that all four of them touched the ground.





Finishing off

I kept stowage to a minimum, mainly because I was getting tired of the project. I had to include some bottles, without an ample supply of vodka the crew would not be able to withstand the rigors of winter! I covered a nasty spot of chipped paint with a picture of Stalin, printed on my ink jet printer. I didn't glue the propeller on, but merely pushed it in place, because I was afraid it would be a prime target for inquisitive fingers – 'Does it actually turn?' So far the model has stayed in one piece!

T-34

1941





For most modellers, the T-34 doesn't really need an introduction. It's arguably the most important and most numerous tank of the Second World War, but most versions were largely ignored by kit manufacturers until recently.

I was excited when Dragon announced a cast turret version of their model 1941 kit, because to my eyes it's the best looking tank ever produced. I decided to turn the kit into an old banger, a battered autumn 1941 survivor of the previous summer, and ultimately it was my love for this particular version that carried me through some of the more tedious parts of construction and painting.

Construction

Dragon's cast-turret Model 1941 shares some issues with its stable mates that need to be corrected. The nose fillet doesn't fit quite right and I modified the front wheel arm to better match the early version of the real part. The engine hatch on all early T-34 kits doesn't fit, and I made a new one using a master part that I made earlier. Before adding any details, I cut off all fenders and replaced the side ones with .005 plastic card. Using thin plastic allowed me to dent them up nicely while still being able to glue them easily, as opposed to metal foil.

The kit includes an etched transmission cover grille, but it's just as awful as all the other etched bits in the kit. It doesn't fit the hole in the transmission cover at all! I fixed it myself with etched mesh and plastic strips. I fitted some very simple armoured louvres below it to at least fill the gaping hole. I decided not to replace the solid radiator intake grills, because all etched replacements actually look worse, and my skills were not up to scratch building them. If I make another early T-34, I will probably sand away the rear portion until the slots open up.

The hull sides are largely devoid of detail, except for the fuel tanks. I decided to leave two of them off so I could make some experimental rust effects later. I added clamps for two spades on the left-hand rear corner that were regularly fitted to early T-34's but are rarely seen on models. On the right-hand fender I added empty clamps that held the jacks until Ivan lost them somewhere along the way. They were a terrible pain to build, but in the end I think it was worth it.

The tracks are by Friulmodel, and they're a bit tight for Dragon's T-34. I decided to stretch them by simply pulling them slightly apart link by link, and this was just enough to make them sit more naturally.

The turret didn't need much work. The weld beads around the roof and on the mantlet were too simple to my taste, so I replaced them with softened sprue textured with a sharp tweezers tip. Finally I added a subtle texture to the cast parts by stippling Tamiya Liquid Surface Primer.





Painting

As usual I airbrushed the model using Lifecolor acrylics. I mixed up a base colour of several greens and yellows, and added shadows mixing black and brown into the mix, and highlights with more yellow. These early machines rarely carried markings, but there are exceptions. I airbrushed a white recognition stripe on the turret roof and painted turret numbers freehand. There aren't many details to paint in a different colour tone, but one exception is the front hull MG ball mount, which in reality was often left unpainted. After a gloss coat (Vallejo Model Colour, the best I've tried so far) I added a couple of layers of dust stippled on with a brush to tone down the gloss and make a good base for the next step: lining.

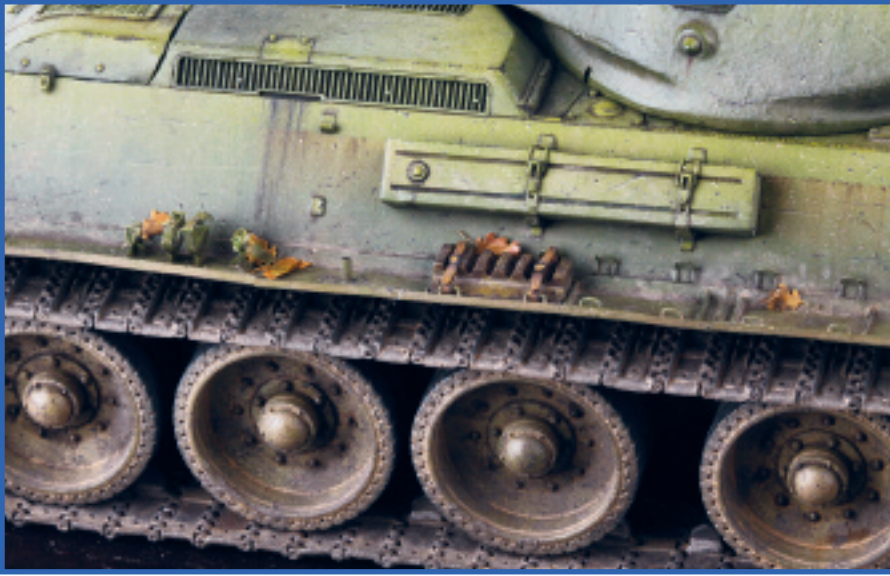
'Lining' is a technique that, as far as I know, was pioneered by members of the KMK model club from Belgium. It involves tracing all seams and corners of the model with a thinned mixture of oil paints. Use a thicker mixture than you would use for a wash and build up the colour with several passes.

I used Van Dyke brown and sepia oil paints applied with a W&N 000 brush. After this, it was time for chips and scratches. I highlighted these with the highlight colour. It is with this step that the model gets its colour depth and really 'comes to life'. I masked off the areas where the fuel cells once were and added several rust effects using airbrushed acrylics and burnt umber oil paint. Using more oil paints I added grime, rust spots, oil streaks and tone variations ('filters') to selected areas.

Next I dusted up the model with my usual dust mixture, stippling and spattering on many thin layers to gradually build up the effect. This method requires a great deal of patience and control, and although I learned a lot on this model, I feel that I have still not mastered it. I added wall filler and darker colours to the mixture for spots where mud would build up, mostly on the lower hull, wheels and tracks. The exhaust stains were airbrushed on, and I added a thin line of gloss varnish below each exhaust pipe to replicate exhaust water trickling down.

I didn't add much in the way of stowage, firstly because Russian tanks of this vintage were seldom seen with much stowage, but also because I needed to finish the model in time for the Scale Model Challenge 2008 show in Eindhoven! I did add a couple of autumn leaves from Plus Model. These minuscule laser-cut paper leaves look very realistic, but I felt I needed to enhance their colour somewhat, using pictures of real autumn leaves as reference.

All that was left to do was paint the headlight reflector, and for this I had bought a bottle of Alclad II Chrome paint earlier. This is a lacquer-based paint that has to be applied over a coat of gloss black enamel and can only be applied with an airbrush. I built up the needed courage, masked off the model with a rubber glove and carefully sprayed the Alclad at a very low pressure setting. After two thin coats I was amazed by the effect. It really looks like real chrome! After some touch-ups and adding a light bulb from stretched clear sprue, the model was finished.



T-34 06P
T-34 06P

JAGDCROMWELL

Construction - Rutger Warrink Painting - Eelke Warrink

The concept of the Jagdcromwell came to me in a sudden flash of inspiration in 2002. I took a picture of a Cromwell I had found on the internet, removed the superstructure in Photoshop and printed the result on paper.

With a pencil I drew a fixed fighting compartment onto the lower hull. I tried to make it look as if British engineers had been inspired by German Jagdpanthers and had tried to come up with a home-grown equivalent, mounting a 17-pounder gun. I christened the resulting vehicle 'Jagdcromwell' (my inspiration apparently having run out!). A lack of necessary skills and experience kept me from actually converting a Cromwell in 1:35th scale. In early 2007, I felt my skills had improved sufficiently to give the conversion a try. To keep the project simple, I decided to concentrate on the superstructure and do only the essential work on the hull. I loaded a new blade into my hobby knife and set to work.

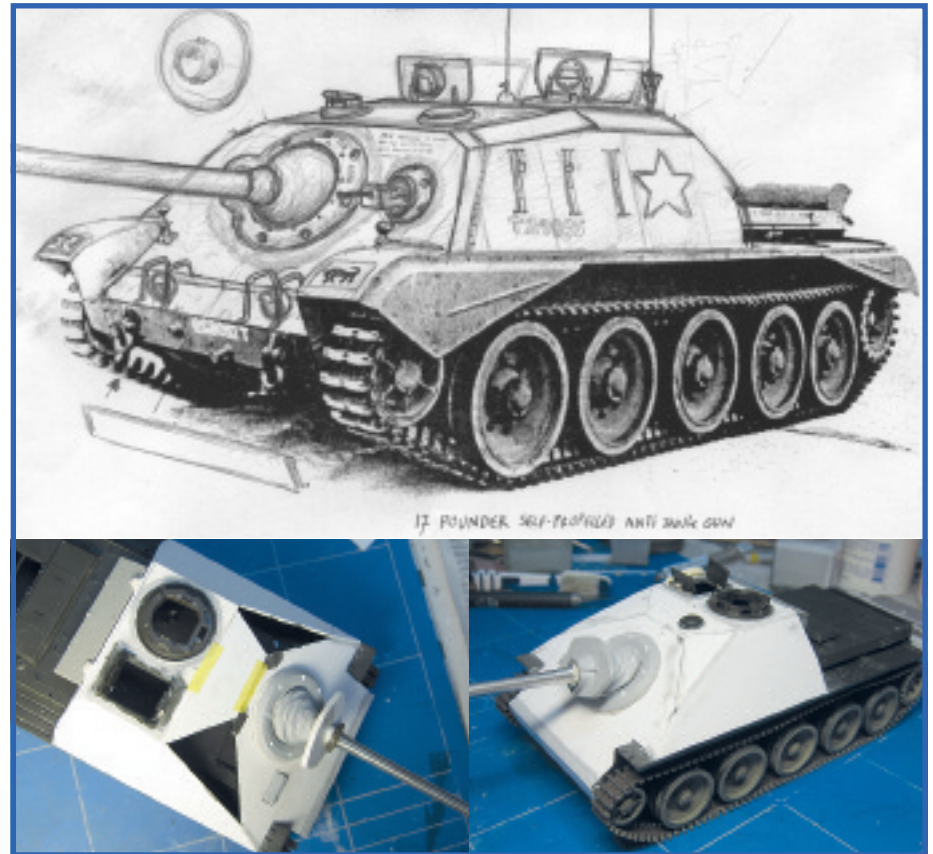


Lower Hull

Tamiya's Cromwell is a typical Tamiya kit: basically fine, but to keep the kit easy to build, some smaller details have been simplified or are missing entirely. Most detailing is needed on the hull front which would be covered by the new superstructure, so I avoided some tedious work in that area. While assembling the hull, I noticed there was a gap between the lower front plate and the glacis. A quick check of parts fit revealed that everything was straight and true, so the cause remains a mystery to me. I added a sheet styrene armour plate to the lower front plate, set at an angle to bring it back in line with the glacis. A second section of extra armour was then added to the lower nose plate for good measure.

I left the kit's tool clamps as they were for this project, but I did add nozzles to the fire extinguishers. The final drive oil filler tubes were made from brass wire and punched disks to replace the unsightly blobs on the kit parts. I kept the kit's smoke dischargers, but added wire leads to them to give at least an impression of detailing in this area. The exhaust cover received a piece of generic Aber mesh cut to size.

As I prefer the look of Cromwells without side skirts, I removed the locator tabs, thinned the edges of the fenders and drilled bolt holes in the appropriate places. A set of Friulmodel tracks completed the lower hull. I bought these fully assembled from a fellow modeller, although I did remove one link on each side to improve their fit.



Scratch building the Superstructure

The superstructure was largely built from 1mm Evergreen styrene sheet; the roof plates are 0.4mm. Construction started with the glacis. This was designed to rest on top of the kit's driver compartment, which meant getting rid of the moulded-on periscopes. The other plates were cut to fit only where absolutely necessary: I cut them overly large in places, then trimmed them flush with the adjoining plates when the glue had set. If done carefully, this method results in sharp and tidy edges with a minimum of exact measurement involved.

With the Jagd Cromwell being fictional, I made no effort to build the hull to precise measurements. If I had, the construction method I used would probably not have been the most suitable. I did find that certain seams had a habit of splitting because of the small contact area between plates in some areas. The roof plates received hatch and ventilator apertures cut from the kit turret roof and were glued to the superstructure to complete basic construction. I then gave the entire superstructure a coat of Tamiya liquid surface primer to cover the inevitable nicks and dings, followed by a thorough wet sanding. Then the seams popped open again! Some filling and cursing later I was ready to move on to the details.

Superstructure Details

The ring surrounding the mantlet was made from two rings cut from styrene sheet, the bevelled edge between them was made from Milliput. For the main gun I used a Jordi Rubio metal gun barrel. The gun shield is sheet styrene with a 1:87 M113 cupola fitted in front, blended together with Milliput. More Milliput was used to sculpt the canvas cover.

An Ultracast stowage box was added to the rear of the superstructure to balance the model's rather front-heavy look. A spare wheel of the same company and the kit's searchlight (with a scratch built plug and socket) were added to the left side of the superstructure to spice things up. As an afterthought, I scribed a drivers hatch into the right superstructure front, detailed with sprue and strip. On the glacis, I added the kit's headlights with new brush guards made from steel wire. New fender stays had to be made from styrene.

The main attraction on the roof was to be the commanders cupola, which I took from a Tamiya Churchill kit. I added strip periscopes and undercuts to the hatch ring, detailed the inside of the hatches, corrected the shape of the opening and added the chains and their associated hardware as well as head pads to this area. The hatch stays were taken from an Aber fret.

By this stage, I had become completely fed up with the model, which by then had taken over a year of intermittent work to build. I decided to glue the loaders and drivers hatches shut, practised my best pleading puppy look and asked my brother Eelke if he could add a few final details, to which he kindly agreed. Then he whipped out his airbrush to add some long-awaited paint to the beast.



Painting – Eelke Warrink

When Rutger handed over the Jagdcromwell to me, I couldn't resist his pleading puppy eyes and added some final detailing. The front looked a little plain to me, so I attached a couple of splash strips below the mantlet. On the right superstructure side I put an ejection port which I carefully cut from the kit turret. Years after its conception, the Jagdcromwell was finally ready to be painted.

Being a late-war vehicle, there was little option but to paint it SCC 15 Olive Drab. I sprayed the model in my usual way, mixing colours from Lifecolor acrylics, adding black and brown for shadows and lemon yellow for highlights. I use a strong yellow instead of sand yellow to keep the highlights vibrant and saturated.

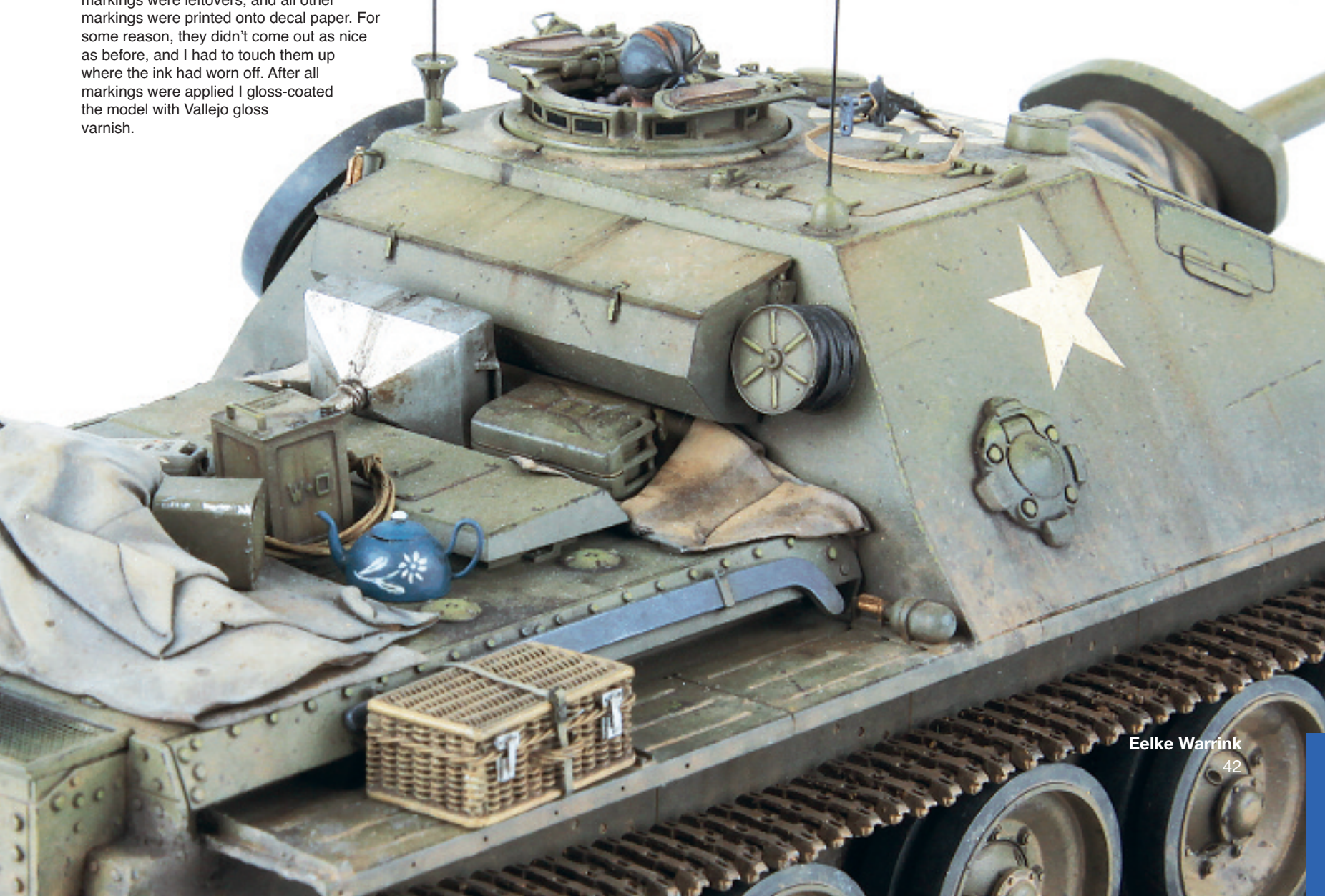
Once the paint was on, I added the markings. The stars and census numbers came from Archer sets, the bridging disk and 11th AD markings were leftovers, and all other markings were printed onto decal paper. For some reason, they didn't come out as nice as before, and I had to touch them up where the ink had worn off. After all markings were applied I gloss-coated the model with Vallejo gloss varnish.

Weathering was the usual affair. I started with a couple of layers of dust coloured acrylics stippled on, just enough to take away the shine of the preceding gloss coat. After that, I lined the model using oils, and added chips. Highlighting the chips creates an illusion of depth. While it takes a lot more time to paint, the effect is well worth the effort. The model was then dusted up more by stippling on diluted acrylic paint in many layers, making sure to let the mix build up in corners and crevices. Streaks and other colour effects were added with oils, and dark, wet mud was made by mixing dark earth coloured acrylics with wall filler.

Stowage and Figure

No WW2 British tank is complete without a mountain of stowage on the rear deck, and I decided to give the Jagdcromwell its share. I made tarps from rolled Milliput, and used assorted scrap to provide some volume.

The jerry cans came from the ancient Italeri set and are still quite usable. I spiced them up a little and added the centre weld by sandwiching thin plastic card between them. The cable reel, biscuit tin and fuel funnel are from one of Resicast's very useful sets. The wicker basket is by Plus Model, and whoever made the master must have terribly good eyesight. When I posted the model on internet forums, several people mentioned that the vehicle didn't look very British. To counter the criticism I made up a blue enamelled teapot from a British RAC helmet. I finished the model with a Sten submachine gun on the roof, ready for the commander to grab in case of an emergency, which was fairly standard practice in some British units. The commander himself is the upper torso of a figure included in one of Dragon's Firefly boxings, with a Hornet head. The figure was painted in acrylics. Finally, I added the figure and glued the cupola over its head. Six years after its first conception, the Jagdcromwell was ready for tank busting!





Eric Vogel

I am Eric Vogel, born in 1970 and I live in Rotterdam. I work as a technician; calibrating, testing and maintaining industrial X-ray equipment.

My first encounter with scale modelling was when I was a little boy and wanted to build houses which were so much needed to stand next to my train that was driving endless circles on my bedroom floor. Then the interest switched to the famous 1/72 Matchbox airplanes and battleships from Airfix.

When I was 10 years old I got a Stug IV as a gift and from that moment on it was only tanks and trucks. All of the tanks got a thick hand painted layer of paint and there were even some attempts to make a diorama like Verlinden did, but the ones I made looked slightly different than the ones on the pictures from the Verlinden books.

The Tamiya catalogue was like the bible for me and it was hard to make a decision what to buy next, but certainly, there was always a shortage of money.

Later on, the interest in the hobby slipped away and it got back my attention, some 10 years ago. First I went to the meetings of the Dutch Twenot, found a great hobby shop and saw amazing stuff on the modelling expos in Belgium.

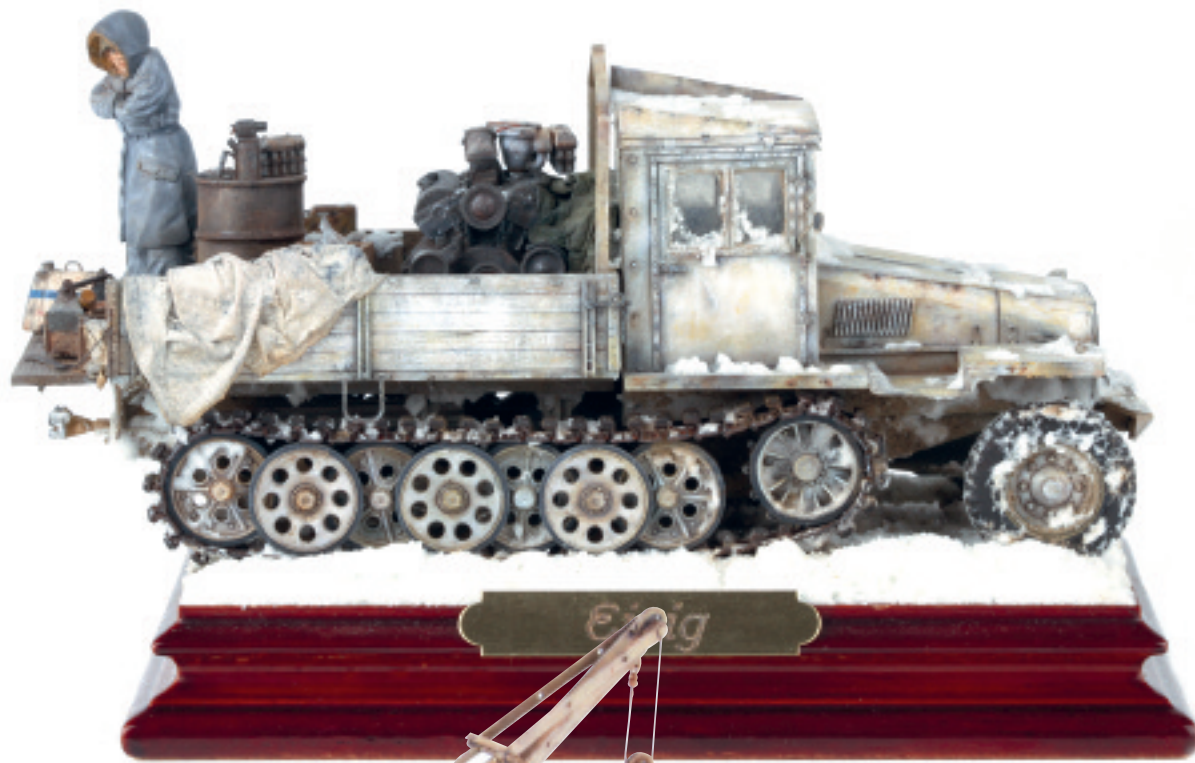
At the same time, I started to buy books about the Eastern front in WW II, and I was interested in the winter scenes shown in the pictures. Reading more stories and collecting more pictures, I was impressed by the logistics and maintenance done at that time, to keep the tanks running.

So my interest moved to this and everything with cranes on it and broken engines got my attention. More books and hobby magazines were added to the ever growing collection.

These days I like to plan my projects. Mostly I work on 3 kits at the same time, so I can use the well known painting techniques on one kit and work with after-market stuff on the other or struggle with a resin kit. I never can tell when I finish a model, as there is always something that needs some more attention. But to me, that is still the joy of doing this hobby.

Eric Vogel





Bergepanzer

The Bergepanzer was a make shift solution of the German Wehrmacht to answer to the demand for more salvage vehicles. From January 1944 onwards the obsolete Panzer III's were converted to Bergepanzers. Until March 1945 some 167 Panzer III's were converted by adding a wooden superstructure and derrick crane.

The Model

Tamiya's Panzer III Ausf. L was used as a base for this conversion. CMK makes a completely resin conversion set and for the additional details I used a photoetch set from Eduard.

CMK's conversion kit is finely cast and provides no problems at all, resulting in a straight forward build and I can say that I did not meet any construction or fitting issues along the way.

Due to the large wooden surfaces of the upper structure, I thought that a white wash would be a nice challenge for finishing this vehicle. The base colours were sprayed on by using an airbrush and various Tamiya acrylic paints. The structure of the wood was imitated with oil paints. Oils give you ample time to work, as they dry slowly. This property makes them also very forgiving, as mistakes can be easily corrected, if necessary even several days after applying them.

For the application of the white wash, I also decided to use oils paints. Although the so called "hair spray" method was already in use when I made this model, I decided to play it safe and to just be patient and I stuck to my more time consuming method of painting the required effects with oil paints. Final weathering touches were done with MIG pigments, mainly on the lower hull, wheels and tracks.

Additional accessories were scrounged from my elaborate spares box. The tools are from the Eduard range. The source of the various engines that I used in this project is the Tank Workshop. The transmission box is from CMK.

Eric Vogel

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zer III









Eisig

Sd.Kfz11, Late Version.

The Sd.Kfz 11 had been developed for the German army as a towing vehicle for various artillery pieces such as Paks and Howitzers.

Production of the Sd.Kfz 11 started in 1937 and ended only at the end of WW II. The vehicle has served on all fronts in a variety of versions. The late version that I built, can be distinguished by the completely wooden upper structure; the cabin as well the cargo bed. The obvious reason for using wood is the lack of steel, an issue that had troubled the Nazi economy from day one, and of course only worsened the longer the war was prolonged. The constructors also used a number of parts of the Sd.Kfz. 251. All in all, the late version looked very different from the initial 1937 design.

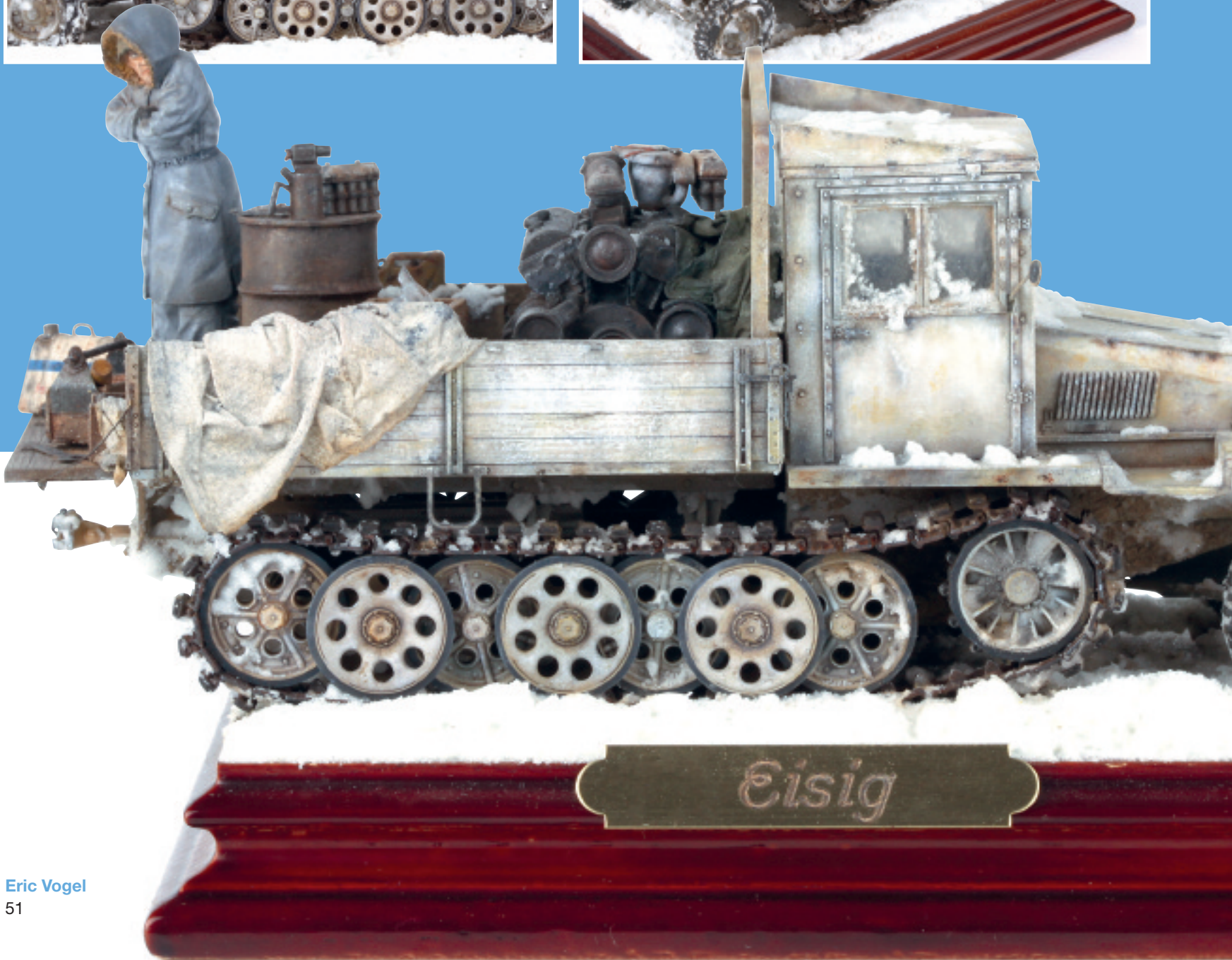
The Model

I have used the model from AFV club which was built straight from the box without any major additions or improvements. Having said that, some parts were replaced by left over PE parts from other projects. The finishing was done in the usual way, described in other sections of this book also. So I won't repeat myself again, except for the fact that I used Tamiya acrylics for the basic colours and further weathering was done with oil paints. Admittedly, working with oil paints is more time consuming, but the results are well worth the extra effort as they provide excellent control over the effects one would like to achieve.

The wintery groundwork required lots of snow, and I reproduced this with micro balloons, tiny glass beads that give a very nice effect, as the material has a natural shine that represents the glistening of real snow perfectly.

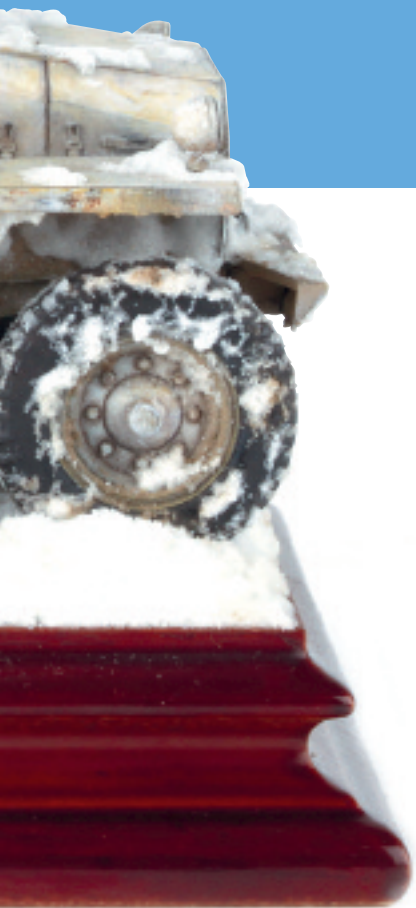


The engine in the cargo bed is from Calibre 35, and represents a Maybach HL 120 TRM engine from the Panzer III. The figure is a Hornet product and its pose fits the winter scene perfectly of course. It was purposely picked to show the extreme circumstances in which maintenance had to be conducted. The tarp was fashioned from tissue soaked in thinned white glue and was painted with various colours of Vallejo acrylics.





I deliberately left only the front panel of the cargo bed in an upright position, to clear the view into the cargo bed and emphasize the details added to it. Situated at the Eastern front in January 1945, this half-track provided support to the maintenance units of different divisions. The cargo bed is ideal for maintenance work, but could be adequately used to transport anything that needed to be moved from one place to the other, spare parts for example.



Opel Maultier

The Opel Maultier was a variant of the successful Opel Blitz that had been in production since 1938. It was especially designed to be used at the Eastern Front where the difficult conditions of the terrain put heavy demands all kinds of transportation.

In fact, the German engineers used the 'undercarriage' of the obsolete PzKpfW I, and applied it to the Opel Blitz, and a star was born, the Opel Maultier. It could carry 2t loads and appeared to function well in the field.

The Stug Abteilung 210 made a field conversion in the autumn of 1943, by adding a 1.5t lifting crane onto a Maultier. The crane was simply welded onto the Maultier's chassis and proved to be a valuable asset when it came to dismounting or placing engines from the various Stugs. Besides for rigging engines the converted Maultier could also be used for towing smaller vehicles.

The images I found of this vehicle, show it being deployed under heavy Ukrainian winter conditions in December 1943.

The Model

The base for my conversion is the well known Italeri kit of the Opel Maultier. This kit has it's flaws, but despite it's age it is basically still a good kit. Nevertheless, I decided to spice it up 'bit by bit' using a PE upgrade set and I improved the windscreen frame with Evergreen strips.

The crane was provided by New Connection Models. This manufacturer offers an extensive resin conversion kit with the crane, but also with a complete chassis. My aftermarket frenzy on this model was completed with the addition of a set of white metal tracks from Friulmodellismo.

The conversion turned out not too difficult, pretty straight forward, as a matter of fact. Painting and weathering however, was a totally different story as it turned out. The chassis is largely exposed and visible requiring extra attention during the finishing stage. I painted the base coat of the model with Tamiya acrylics, shot through the airbrush. Subsequent layers of Vallejo acrylics were airbrushed to add more tones and depth. Further painting was done with oil paints, a brush, and lots of white spirit. Washes, filters, chippings, pin washes etc. For all of these weathering techniques I use oil paints, as they provide ample time for rearranging or correcting if necessary.

The tools are from an Eduard PE set and the accompanying figure is from Wolf which received a new head from Hornet. Since this vehicle operated in harsh winter conditions I decided to add a resin grill cover, a MIG productions offering. Finally, the engine dangling from the crane is a Maybach HL 120 from CMK.











In 1942 an order was given to develop a simplified half tracked vehicle that could replace the existing 3t and 5t half tracks that were in use up until then. The company Bussing/NAG finally got the orders and in 1943 the production of the Schwere Wehrmacht Schlepper (Heavy Army Towing vehicle) or SWS slowly started up. The SWS was built to tow loads of up to 6t and carry a load of 3t.

The vehicle was also used for some variants. There was an SWS with a 15cm Raketenwerfer (Rocket launcher) and as a platform for Flaks.

Engines On





The Model

The model I built, was actually the only plastic model of the SWS on the market at the time and is an Italeri kit. It was built straight from the box, except for the addition of white metal sprocket wheels and tracks, both from Friulmodellismo.

I wanted to depict the vehicle as a part of a withdrawing German unit, overloaded with materials.

For the cargo I selected engines from Verlinden, Tank Workshop and CMK. Other accessories, like the Opel wheels are from MIG Productions. The gas tanks are from the classic and always useful Italeri tool set.

Another detail that I wanted to work out in this project is the various states in which the different engines are to be found. Although they are all Panzer III engines, I deliberately showed them in different conditions. After all, the unit to which the vehicle belongs is in retreat and maintenance was suddenly interrupted, with assembly and disassembly being in different stages. Other engines are from an Sd.Kfz 251 and a Panzer IV, of the latter I also added a transmission unit.

Tamiya acrylics were used for the base paint coats, and for the white wash. However, I decided to use the hairspray method for the weathering of this beast, so several thin layers of hair spray were added before I sprayed on the white wash. With oil paints I emphasized the details by repeatedly applying pin washes of oil paint, thinned with white spirit. I also painted the wood grain onto the upper structure using oil paints throughout.







Luc Klinkers

This is me: Luc Klinkers, born in 1960, ordinary bloke, married, and two children. I work as a crime scene investigator for the Dutch police, and that's all there is to know about me.

I would like to share some things from my biggest passion. That's modelling, of course. This passion started when I was a little boy. I've been gluing these plastic bits for nearly 40 years now. I grew up with these fantastic little Airfix 1/72 kits, packed in plastic bags with the instructions folded and stapled to it. I remember the little Panthers and Tigers moulded in yellow plastic.

Yes, tanks, jeeps, soldiers, that's what I wanted, and the more the better.

The years passed and modelling has changed, for all of us. I am still hooked on the tanks and the soldiers, but now in 1/35 scale.

Ever since the early days, the soldiers drew my special attention. I think they are the eye catchers at modelling shows. Well painted, they always are a joy. For a few years now I have been infected by the sculpting virus. Fascinated by Japanese modellers in magazines like *Armour Modelling* and *Model Art*, I also wanted these figures that no one else had or would ever possess.

The sculpting is now my core modelling thing. I still build the tanks and vehicles, but they are no more than props for my soldiers. Every once in a while I buy and paint some stock figures, and that is because there is still a lot of beautiful figure stuff out on the market. But my own sculptings are my little darlings.

There is no greater joy than the face of a fellow modeller at a modelling show when he asks: "where did you buy the crew for that half-track?" and the answer is: "They are not available, I made them from wire and epoxy putty."

Luc Klinkers





Sd. Kfz 250/8

I usually try to keep my modelling projects limited. That means: not too big, not too elaborate.

My space for storing models and dioramas is limited. Another limitation is time, as I don't want to spend months on one project. Somehow this always is the biggest problem. These little things seem to end up extremely time-consuming. The same goes for this project: a tiny, neat little half-track with only a crew of three, on a small diorama.

The Scene

The figures play a main role in the scene. I have a certain preference for late-war, cold weather scenes. The German army gives the opportunity to mix all kinds of uniforms and styles.

I don't put much energy in creating exact things like this or that division, dates, locations etc. If you do that, you always run the risk that some smart guy will make well intended remarks like: "I believe this unit never had these vehicles" or "September 14, 1944, and the rifle slings you modelled are not correct in this period". I hope you get the point. So I am very careful with these kinds of gadgets. I hardly ever put things in my scenes that will point to exact locations, units, or certain events. So for this scene there is no particular story. Somewhere in Europe, Eastern or Western front, final stage of the war, Germans reach a ruined bridge. An officer descends from the vehicle and studies his map for other available routes to continue.

Luc Klinkers

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The Model

The 250 is a very popular subject for modellers. The vehicle was used throughout the war by the German army, seeing action on all fronts. Basically designed as a personnel carrier, the vehicle evolved and several versions with a variety of tasks appeared. Around 1943 the design was simplified. I built the later version. I chose the version with a 75 mm gun mounted on top. And maybe this was not the best choice.

The Kit

In plastic kits there were two options: Tamiya or Dragon. The 250's from Japan are nearly vintage, lack detail and have bad, extreme incorrect dimensions. So, I opted for the Hong Kong brand with the Dragon logo. Basically these guys in China make fairly good 250's. The 250/8 version is a bit of an exception. In fact they simply stuck a 75mm gun and mount on a 250/1. The rear fighting compartment is incorrect and that's when my real problems began in this project. So I searched for pictures and other reference material.



Through several sources I heard that the search for the Holy Grail would be more successful than the quest for interior pictures of the 250/8. At that point it came in handy that I custom made my crew. The rather bulky gun breech would cover most of the interior. Most of the rear was going to be obscured by the crew. I assembled the kit in a few evenings. I made some subassemblies for easy painting.

I first painted the interior of the halftrack before complete assembly. The exterior received a coat of Tamiya acrylics applied with the airbrush. The camouflage pattern was obtained by masking with tape. I applied some chippings, washes and local dry brushings. But there are other modellers that can tell stories, much more interesting, about this subject.





The Figures

Now that's my kind of thing. I wanted two guys in the fighting compartment of the vehicle (remember: to obscure the interior) and one officer beside. When sculpting these I took a few shortcuts. Usually I start with my own homemade brass wire armatures. For these figures, I took Tamiya and Dragon plastic figures. I removed the upper details with a motor tool and started sculpting with Magic Sculp. This method saves time. It is also much easier making a correct pose. These plastic figures are usually anatomically correct. Of course one is a bit more limited when it comes to exiting or dynamic poses, but in this case, my guys stood and sat fairly relaxed and uncomplicated. I used Hornet heads and other bits from plastic kits. I sculpted the officer in three evenings. The figures in the vehicle took substantially more time. Fitting them in a small vehicle is always more complicated. I painted them in oils and enamels.

The Scenery

The bridge was cast in plaster, using a mould made from plastic card. All the rest of the groundwork was built up in a very traditional way with scenic grass, sea foam, and finished with airbrushed paint, dry brushing and local washes.







Sd. Kfz 251

In this article I would like to show the joy and true pain that comes with more elaborate sculpting projects. On one hand this will show the almost unlimited possibilities, on the other hand the problems one meets if everything has to fit into the limited space of an open topped vehicle. I think this is not for the faint-hearted. This project took me more than a year to finish. For me that is a very, very long.

The Scene

In fact the whole thing is no more than an elaborate vignette. So there is not much of a story, and once again: it's all about figures. A German half track is driven carefully along a slope in a Russian field during winter. The crew is a mixed group of soldiers and officers. Some guys attention is drawn by something hostile close to the horizon. That's it.

The Model

The Sd.Kfz. 251 was a vehicle commonly used by the German army on every battle field. It's the 250's big brother. Several, exotic versions with different tasks were designed and produced. For this project I chose

the rather basic 251C/1 personnel carrier. I wanted a lot of figures in one vehicle, so this was an obvious choice. This half track was a true war taxi that had space for ten troopers and light equipment. So this one would offer enough challenges to fill the model with a crew.

The Kit

I took the Dragon kit which has been on the market for a few years now. Of course the vintage 251C from Tamiya is still available, but the Dragon brand from Hong Kong has completely superceded this fossil from the seventies in accuracy and detailing. The Dragon kit is of high quality, though not perfect. It has a fine running gear and very nice tracks. The kit comes with a lot of parts. As a bonus a previous released figure set is provided. These figures are infantry men from the Gross Deutschland Division. A nice extra but they ended in my spares box. The fit of the larger vehicle parts was not perfect and the joint of the main hull parts needed filler. These are things one can live with, but the new, state of the art Tamiya kits definitely fit better. The kit is very well detailed. I found no mistakes in accuracy, but my knowledge of things like this is limited. The only things I added, were some putty tarps, weapons and smaller equipment in the bins of the vehicles interior.

Everything went together rather well. I made subassemblies because of the sculpting of the crew. During the sculpting some of the interior detail was ruined. For the sake of a better fit of the figures I removed some of the interior parts. Fortunately in the event most of these omissions were obscured by the crew.

Luc Klinkers







The figures or how many Germans will fit into a can?

As I said before, I wanted a crowded vehicle. I was looking for something dynamic. So ten guys sitting neatly on the benches enjoying a comfortable ride in the Russian fields was not an option, so I chose a scene where the vehicle is driving down a slope. The crew is standing more or less and holding itself during the downhill ride so I tried to express the movement in the poses of the figures. The guys in front are more or less on the lookout and keen on any hostile Russian movements. The crew members at the back are less interested. The trooper looking backwards should have the beaten and battered looks with the bandage around his head. The officer in his sheepskin coat, standing straight up, is intended as the most prominent figure in the scene.

The scene is winter, a personal preference. Seven guys wear the typical parka, commonly used by the SS. It is in the modellers scene often referred as the "Charkow parka". I depicted the later model with full front closure instead of the first model pullover styled. The guy at the right front side is wearing a non-standard sheepskin vest. The sculpting process was very tricky and time consuming. Everything had a very narrow fit. It was a constant process of test fitting and trying. A big frustration was the fact that a lot of interior parts were ruined. So during the process I decided to discard several of the tiny bits inside the vehicle, hoping that most of this would be obscured by the crew. I used heads from several brands. Hands and feet were taken from plastic or resin kits.



The Driver

The driver deserves some special attention in my story. Of course I needed a driver. The omission of a driver would not fit in the scene and the drivers compartment is visible enough to see if there is somebody behind the wheel. For the record: I hate drivers. They make a modellers and especially a sculptors life miserable. They never fit. The sculpting or converting and fitting process ruins a complete interior, everything breaks off. At the moment they finally sit comfortably behind the wheel, most of the work is invisible! The kit comes with some vague character that should drive this thing around the Russians steppes. Now this is typical Dragon humour that I don't appreciate. What's the problem? This guy doesn't fit. He doesn't fit at all. I don't know for which kit or vehicle this one is intended, but I hate him. He lacks a proper pose and details.

So I had to fix this. First I decided to make a driver from scratch. To save some time I changed plans and converted the ugly guy I described above. I replaced his head, made new arms and sculpted the sheep skin vest. To make him fit properly I completely cut off his legs (that felt good, that will teach him!). All in all this turned out to be a hell of a job and I think the converting was more time consuming than a completely sculpted driver. And the final result: he sits comfortably behind the wheel, hardly visible. Yes, I hate drivers!

Painting the figures

Don't worry! I am not going to bore you with painting stories. First of all, I am a mediocre painter. And so it is much easier to refer to the sparkling painting examples, lessons and stories of modellers like Jaume Ortiz and Calvin Tan. You want to know something about painting? Ask them, read their books, meet them on the web. I had the privilege to meet Jaume Ortiz in person a few times at modelling shows. He is a nice guy willing to share his tips and skills. The only thing worthwhile mentioning, is that these figures were completely painted in acrylics. It took some practice, but this medium is much easier to work with. I got the feeling that the results are getting better. For these guys I used Vallejo and some Andrea colours. All the parkas have different colours and shades. This brings more life to the scene instead of seven guys wearing coats in exactly the same colour.

Painting the Model

An open topped vehicle equals two painting sequences. First the interior, then the rest. I painted the interior in a rather traditional manner, using Tamiya acrylics, applied with the airbrush, followed by the usual washings, filters and local dry-brushings. Again, I kept it to a minimum. Most of it would be obscured by the crew. The exterior took a bit more effort. I first painted the base coat of panzer grey, then masked the camouflage and applied the white. The pattern is completely fictional, not based on any genuine reference. I just wanted something different. I think the large splinter pattern looks quite "German"! The rest was traditional once again.

The base

The base is small. This way most of the viewers attention is focussed on the figures. I started with a cheap picture frame and plastic card. I created a slope for the drama. I filled everything with Styrofoam sheet, cut and shaped to size. The groundwork consists of wall filler, sand and plants. Several coats of different earth tones applied with the airbrush did the job. The snow is created with micro balloons, fixed with diluted white glue.

Wrapping it up

This was a nice and challenging project. I am aware that I could pay more attention to the finish of the vehicle, but for me the figures are the main course. Figures rock!!! They bring the true joy and play the main role. The same goes for the historical research. I need the liberty to mess around a bit when it comes to the true facts of uniforms, vehicle colours etc. I want modelling to make me happy..... and it does.

Luc Klinkers







Diorama Gallery







Figure Gallery







Marcel du Long

I inherited the scale modelling virus from my father. He started somewhere in the 1950's with vacuform and wooden airplane models.

In the 1980's I must have made my first model. I have forgotten which model it was but most likely it was a 1/72 scale Matchbox airplane.

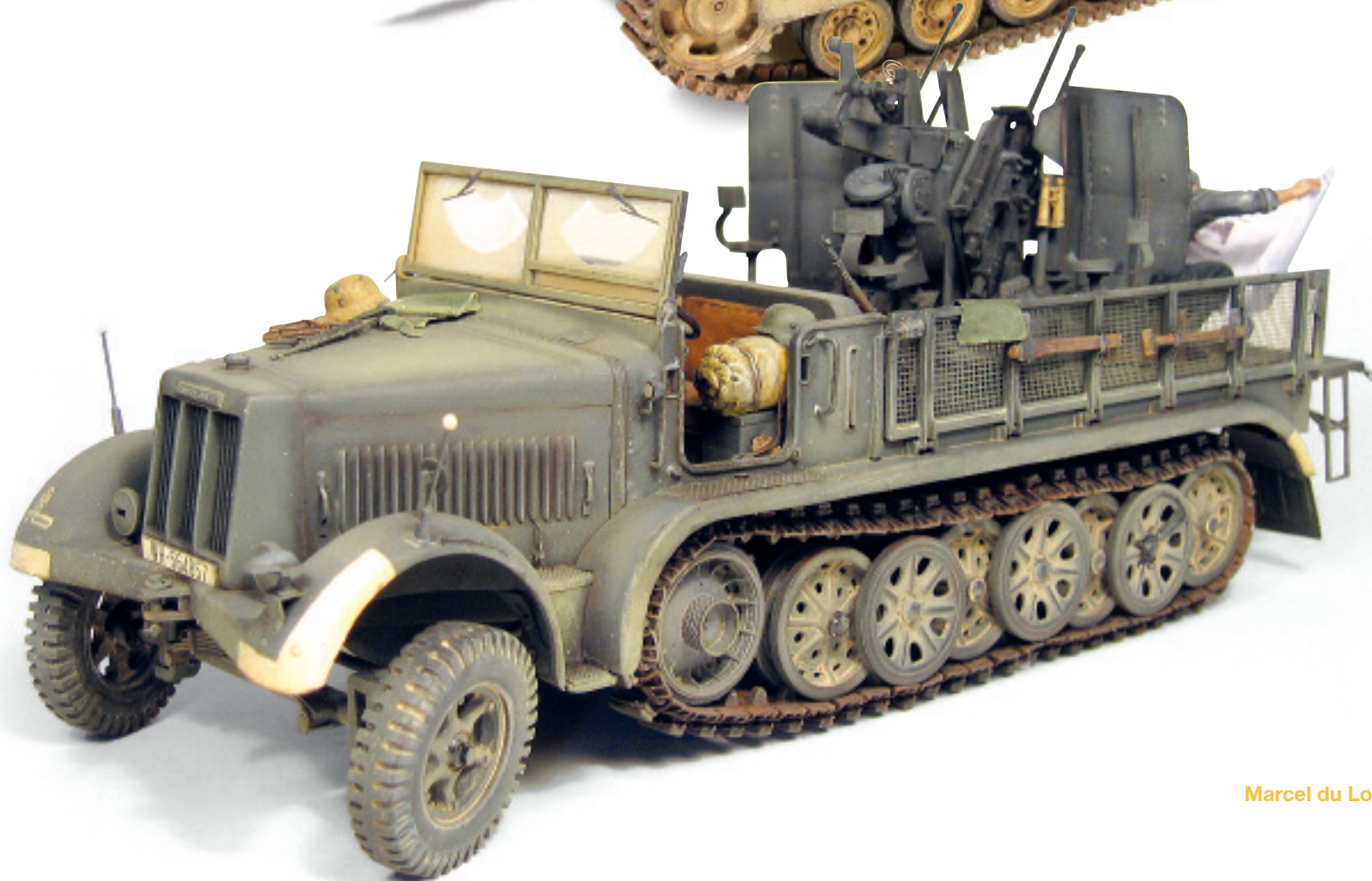
For years I only built airplanes, until one day I saw a book by Francois Verlinden with really impressive military vehicles. I was hooked right away and started with a Kübelwagen, a King Tiger and an SdKfz 223 (these were all Tamiya kits of course). Not only were these top notch models, but you also got that amazing box art with it, for free!

During my modelling career I have never taken to building dioramas. I consider the construction and finishing of the vehicles and figures enough work as it

is, so I am a little hesitant to get myself into more work before I can call a project finished. I slowly tend to drift towards that side of the hobby though, but I am not completely convinced, yet. Currently my challenge is mainly the combination of a good vehicle with spicy figures without a whole scene around them.

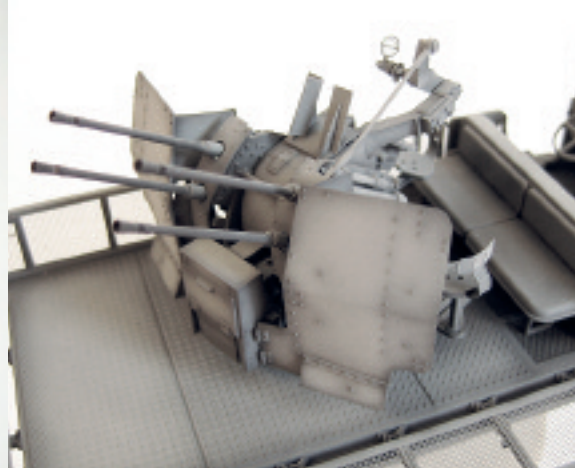
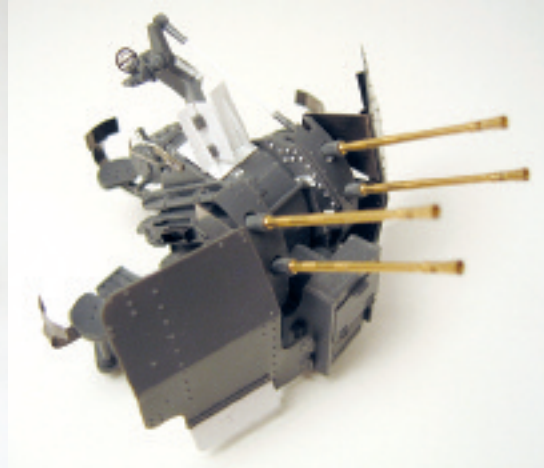
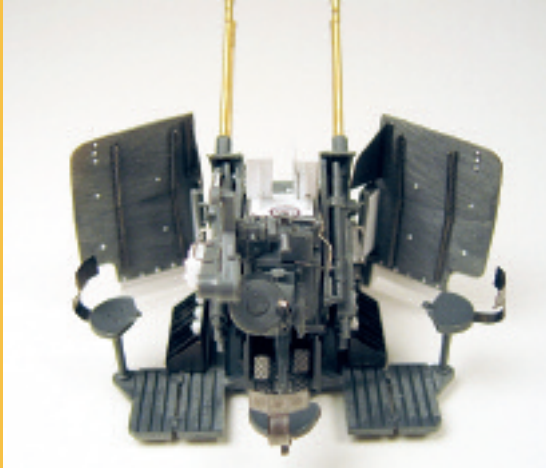
My job as an Art Director for a company that develops computer games makes it inevitable that I am especially attracted to the more stylistic approach to scale modelling. I will never aim for hyper-realism or extremely historically correct builds. The models of Douglas Lee are an absolute source of inspiration to me. Combining the destructive with a somewhat light hearted or cheerful approach, to me is an exciting challenge that one can find in his work: The heavy theme of war coated in sweets. This is also the reason why I am a fan of the work of the Japanese movie director Hayao Miyazaki.

Marcel "Model Monkey" du Long.



Sd. Kfz 7/1





Those good old Tamiya kits

In the summer of 2007 I started the construction of this old Tamiya offering, the German 8t Semi Track 20mm Flakvierling 7/1.

I frankly admit that the very sexy box art was the main reason to start this kit, really. I guess that almost every box of a Tamiya kit is a feast for the eyes. Even the box art of a 30 years old Tamiya kit still stands proud alongside all of the kits that are being released nowadays. Tamiya's box art to me is so inspiring that I have a large collection of their older kits in stock: Sd.Kfz 222 & 223, Marder II, Quad Gun Tractor, Panzer II, Panzer IV Wirbelwind, Panzer IV, M3 Stuart, M8 etc. So, pretty old stuff but with the sexiest and most inspiring box art ever!

Back to the Sd.Kfz 7/1 and before you open the box, you actually know what you will find: Sprues from the stone age, vinyl tracks folded so sharp that they will be unusable, decals on a thick carrier film and cartoony happy Germans on the instruction sheets. Yes, you're in for months, perhaps years, of modelling fun.

The first thing I did, was to look for some research material, preferably books and especially the latter turned out to be not so easy. Recently, since the release of the much better renditions of this vehicle by Dragon and Trumpeter, reference material is being released like clock work. Here and there I did find plenty of images of the 7/1, but for the real details I bought the Kagero publication "Flak Auf Sd.Kfz 7", and from Waffenarsenal "Leichte Flak in der Wehrmacht" & "German FLAK in WWII" (by Werner Müller). I also studied many photos from Vince Abbott's website (<http://vincesgallery.smugmug.com/History>). A website I cannot recommend enough.

Building the gun

I started the build with the Flakvierling. Tamiya was the only brand offering such a FLAK. It was quite clear that it needed some work to get it up to current standards. The gun shields and the ammunition racks were much too thick, the four gun barrels lacked detail, and on the inside of the FLAK suspension all nuts and bolts were missing. Time to call in the cavalry. Evergreen sheets, the indispensable Punch & Die set, an Eduard PE set, and four Jordi Rubio barrels were a necessity to pimp the Flakvierling. Only several weeks after I had finished my build, two companies, Lion Roar and Adlers Nest, both released superior 20mm Flak barrels. To cut a long story short, I decided to build another Flakvierling using the Adlers Nest barrels. I must admit that after finishing it, I had seen enough Flakvierling, but I learned a lot from both builds and watching the completed gun take shape with top notch barrels is worthwhile.

The upper structure

I started with the connection between the chassis and the wooden cargo area. Tamiya conveniently neglected this area in their kit, and simply limited the details to a few cylinders. I had to scratch the entire area using Evergreen styrene and Royal model nuts and bolts.

The side panels received Eduard PE mesh and the tools on them are from Plus Models. The cabin received more Eduard PE and some scratched elements here and there. The backside of the windscreen was replaced with Evergreen strips and I added lead wire cables and scratched wind screen wipers. I also added home made handles to adjust the position of the windscreen. The hood received handles made of stretched sprue and a new radiator cap was fashioned from a Tiger shell.

Down under.....the running gear

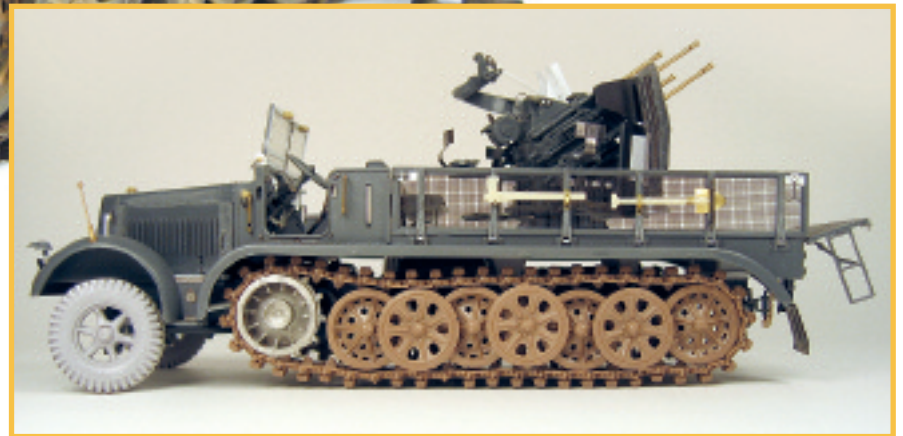
I normally consider the construction of link to link tracks one of the most boring jobs in our hobby. However, the Modelkasten track links went together in no time, due to a genius click system. So all went perfect until I discovered during the weathering process, that Modelkasten styrene combined with white spirit causes World War III. The painted tracks broke down into 87682736487 pieces the moment they were treated with a wash that I made of pigments and white spirit. Realizing that I was up for another two evenings of track construction made me sigh deep before continuing with words not suitable for publication. On the positive side however, I was glad to find that white metal tracks of Friulmodellismo were much better detailed than the ones from Modelkasten. Thus ended my relationship with the latter brand indefinitely. The front wheels were replaced with resin renditions from Signifier. The front wheel suspension was entirely scratched, except for the leaf spring suspension part. The Tamiya parts simply lacked all detail.

Paint it black

For some inexplicable reason I managed to delay painting this kit. I was rather happy with the build and for a long time I just did not feel like painting it. It took some six months between priming the model and finally finishing it.

I started the painting job by spraying the whole model with Games Workshop Chaos Black from the spray can. All subsequent layers of grey were done with Tamiya acrylics from my Iwata airbrush. First was German Grey (mid tone), followed by a mix of German Grey with blue and black for the shadows. Corrections were made with straight German Grey. The highlights use a mixture of German Grey and Buff.

My intention was to apply moderate weathering only. Not to display some beaten up, mud covered, rusty beyond recognition Eastern front vehicle, but a subtly dusted, early war 8t halftrack.



After the airbrush session the model disappeared back into a cabinet for weeks. Once more, I completely lacked the inspiration to finish this project. After regaining ideas and inspiration I started with the next step of the weathering process, skipping the usual step of applying a protective layer of varnish to seal off the previous steps. I applied various light washes and filters using mainly brown toned oil paints. Next were the dark pin washes to accentuate the details and recesses. Dust was applied in the same way, only this time using light toned oil paints. During this step I went over many of the same spots that had already received dark pin washes. During both steps I applied some chips here and there, as well.

When I was applying local (pin) washes to the hood, a rather large crack suddenly appeared, I assume that the glue used to construct the hood reacted with the white spirit used for the washes, in some way. Again a deep sigh-moment, but in hind sight I believe it was a sort of a positive turning point. Since restoring the hood was not a viable option, I was forced to add some paraphernalia onto the hood. Hence the machine gun, map case, helmet and piece of cloth. Nice details on an otherwise plain, large hood.

After all the oil paints had thoroughly dried I added several light and translucent layers of dust with heavily thinned Tamiya acrylics through the airbrush. I applied these layers going from the bottom upwards

and from back to front. The final steps were adding dust with pigments and pastels, using a graphite pencil to add a metallic shine to selected details and adding oil, grease and wet stains with Tamiya Smoke.

The white metal tracks were primed black, after which they received washes of pigments mixed with white spirit, without any problems this time. I removed the pigments that accumulated on the black rubber track pad surfaces that were in contact with the ground in real life, with a cloth moistened with white spirit.

Figures

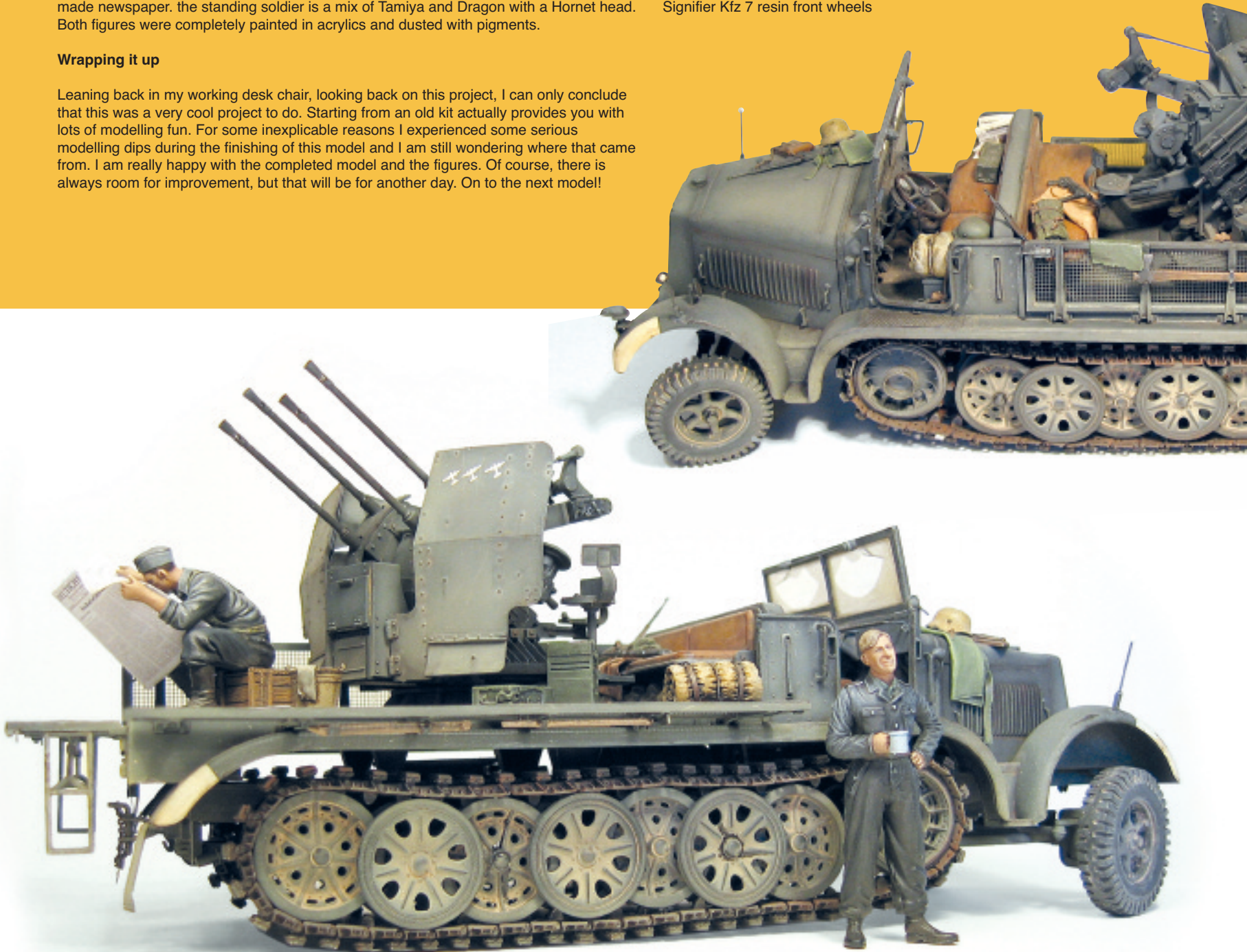
I consider figures to be extremely important to my models. Every model I build receives at least one figure. Since figures and vehicles go hand in hand, it is of utmost importance that they enhance one another. Figures provide your model with a great eye catcher and the relatively fragile human figures really give substantial weight and proportion to the steel monsters that AFV's actually are. I did spend a lot of time in search for the right figures to fit this project and I finally managed to find what I was looking for. The guy reading the newspaper is a Legend figure that received a Dragon head and a custom made newspaper. the standing soldier is a mix of Tamiya and Dragon with a Hornet head. Both figures were completely painted in acrylics and dusted with pigments.

Wrapping it up

Leaning back in my working desk chair, looking back on this project, I can only conclude that this was a very cool project to do. Starting from an old kit actually provides you with lots of modelling fun. For some inexplicable reasons I experienced some serious modelling dips during the finishing of this model and I am still wondering where that came from. I am really happy with the completed model and the figures. Of course, there is always room for improvement, but that will be for another day. On to the next model!

Kits Used - 1:35 Scale

Tamiya GERMAN 8t SEMI TRACK 20mm FLAKVIERLING 7/1.
Friul tracks ATL 24
Modelkasten tracks
Adlers Nest 20mm FLAK38 barrels
Eduard PE set
Voyager width pole indicators
Plus Model German tools
Signifier Kfz 7 resin front wheels



Marcel du Long



Marcel von Hobe

Just like many modellers I started modelling at a young age. I was influenced by my father.

He once built an Apollo rocket that stood in the living room, on a bookshelf, for many years. Just like the original, the model could be disassembled into all rocket stages. More than that, on top, in the nose, was a small lunar-lander. I found it fascinating that you can make small parts into a lifelike model. As my father started a model of a big, red, US Mack truck I asked if I could do this as well, this modelling thing. He took me to the store and I got my first kit. It was the Panzer 1 Befehlswagen from Italeri. I still have it.

After my next birthday I saved all the money I got and bought the first kit on my own. It was a Heller/Humbrol kit from the 'Army of the World' series. It included a AMX 13 APC, a AMX 13 155mm SPGun and many figures.

A few years later I discovered the TWENOT. Here I slowly learned a whole new way of modelling. For instance: one olive drab is not another olive drab. This discussion still goes on.

I found that I had a preference for modelling the Vietnam war. Verlinden's range of items on this theme helped me to achieve my goals. After a while, I had build all the plastic kits that were available of this era. I had to make some stuff myself. I started my scratch building with a 2.5 ton, 6x6 REO, followed by a M51 Recovery Vehicle. Modelling these vehicles took a lot of time. I wanted to build something faster, from the box. If only to show something at the club meetings.

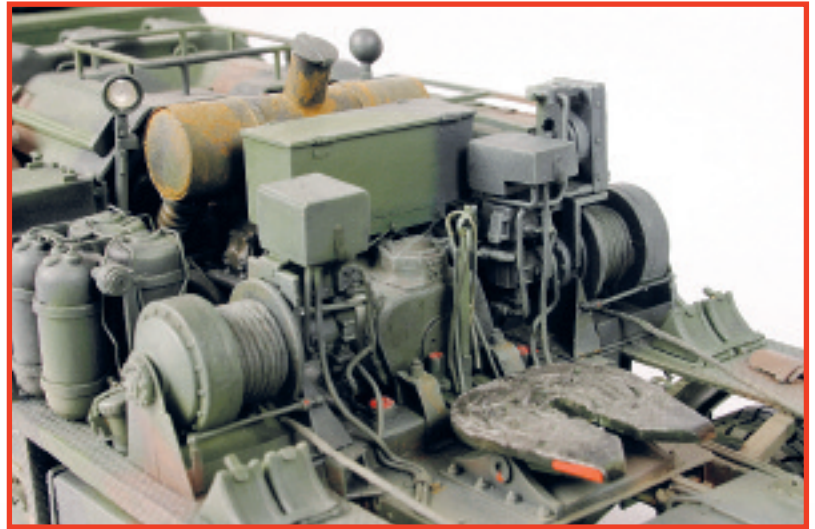
I extended my modelling to all US vehicles after Vietnam. Lack of finances was also a main reason. You cannot buy everything! Even more so now! Anyway, I think I then built one of the older kits of an Abrams.

Many more kits came out that I wanted to have. Not just US anymore. My finances got better, since I started work as a video-editor/graphics designer at a regional television station. However my main interest was still allied vehicles. Tamiya's Dragon Wagon lead me into a new era. Soft skins and tank transporters. I have now built many of these massive trucks. Today wheeled vehicles have more interest for me than tracked vehicles and when they do have tracks, they should at least have a crane on top of it!

About 6 years ago I went to the Czech Republic for a modelling show for the first time. In addition to the show, we also visited a museum near Rockycany. Here my interest in Russian and Czech vehicles started, especially the many versions of Tatra trucks used by the Czechs.

Well, what can I say? I'm 37 now and still building models and probably won't stop ever! In terms of interest I'm not like any regular modeller, I assume. I build what I like, when I like it. My recent list of models proves that: German SLT 8x8 Faun, Czech VT-34, Australian Centurion, English Foden wrecker, US Bradley and a German Tatra 111. When it comes to buying kits, I am like most others, though: I buy more kits than I build. Nowadays it takes a lot more time to build one model. Etchings, barrels, decals, paint, weathering etc. However, I'm not complaining. I can live to be a hundred and still have plans and kits left. A happy prospect.

Marcel



Australian Centurion

RAAC Mk5/1

A short history

In 1943 the British War Office called for a new tank with high durability, reliability, a weight of 40 tons and the ability to withstand a direct hit from the German 88mm gun.

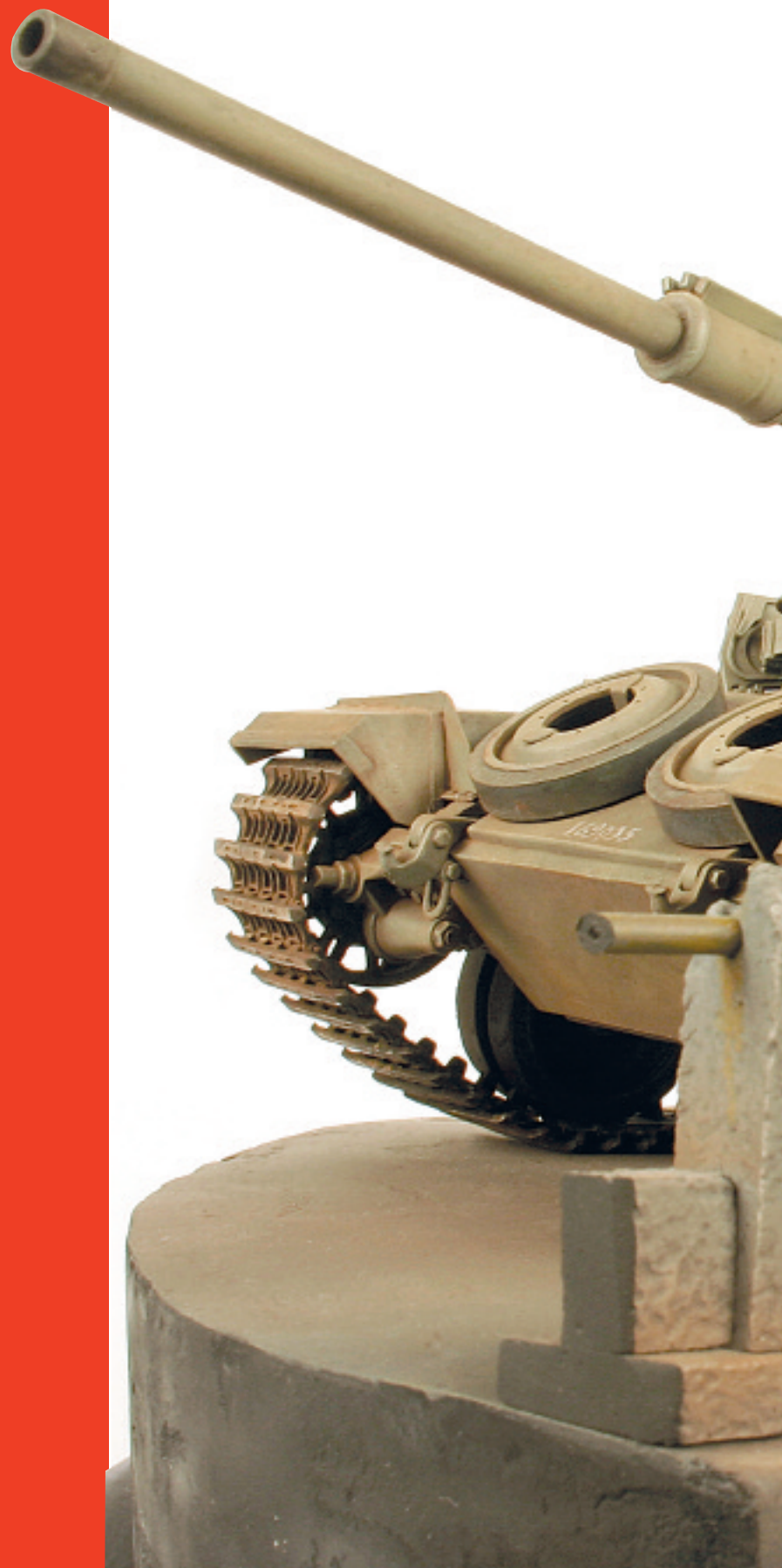
Six prototypes were built before the end of the War, but arrived too late to take part. These first Centurion Mk1's had a 17pdr (77mm) gun and a coaxial 20mm Polsten gun. The Mk2 had it's Polsten replaced with a Besa machine gun.

Design work finished on a new 20pdr (84mm) gun and it was decided to include it in the Centurion design. This resulted in the Mk3 which had a completely new, all cast turret. In this form, the Centurion first saw action in Korea in 1951 and soon proved itself to be the best performing tank in this theatre of operations. Particularly notable was its excellent cross country performance.

This is remarkable considering that the original design specification of a 40ton tank was never met. The prototype was already 42tons and the subsequent versions were 47 for the Mk1, 49 for the Mk3 and later versions were 51tons. This resulted in a poor action radius. All Mk3's and early Mk5's were equipped with external fuel tanks.

In 1952 the Centurion Mk5 appeared. This was a slightly changed Mk3. Most notable change was the replacement of the Besa machine gun with a .30 cal Browning to meet NATO ammunition standardisation and the removal of the rear turret escape hatch.

This Mk5 version was also used by the Royal Australian Armoured Corps (RAAC). These Centurions were modified in 1967 to Australian Mk5/1 standard, before shipping to Vietnam. This included mounting infra-red fighting equipment, additional glacis plate armour, .50 cal ranging gun and a searchlight.





The kit

A few years ago AFV Club announced their Centurion kit. Before that there was only the ageing Tamiya Centurion. It was not very encouraging because it simply needed too much work to make an accurate model. AFV-Club made a very good kit and has since made some different versions. My long standing love for Armour used in the Vietnam war was fulfilled with their first version of an Australian Mk5/1.

I loved working on the kit, but however accurate though, there are some small issues. Firstly I found the sectioned turret complicated. It takes a lot of work to connect the sections without noticing them later. The missing mantlet cover for the gun is also frustrating. This means a lot of work. I do not know why AFV did not include this in the kit. A last small thing is the workable suspension. For us as modellers very unnecessary and overcomplicated. A few months after the AFV-kit, Voyager Models announced an etch-set for this Centurion. Besides armour side-skirts, turret-basket mesh and many small details, it includes a resin mantlet cover. This was great because the one from AFV-Club was not available yet. I find that many aftermarket etch sets have too many details. Voyager is one of those brands that tends to let you replace many parts of the original kit with etched parts, that are not necessary. Etched parts are not always an upgrade to kit parts. For instance on this Centurion set, Voyager wants you to replace the clamps on the fender and turret stowage boxes.

These clamps are made up of 4 etch parts and there are 20 clamps! But look at the ones on the kit. They look perfect.

However, the rest of the set has many good replacement parts. Including tool clamps, smoke grenade launcher, exhaust shields, rear fenders and others. I did not use the armour side-skirts though. These were often removed by the crews in Vietnam because mud would build up between the track and skirt.

The latest addition to the kit was a track set from Friul Model. They are much better detailed and replace the floppy rubber tracks included in the kit. These tracks strain around the running gear and tend to bend around the idler and sprocket wheel. Although the Friul set is originally for the Tamiya kit, it is well suited for the AFV-Club. The set includes new drive sprocket wheels that, unfortunately, only fit the Tamiya kit.

Tank-additions

On the vehicle are three crew members relaxing, whilst the tank is on the move. There is a driver and two men in the turret. The three figures are built from parts from various manufacturers, I don't remember which parts are which now.

I researched many photos on the internet before starting to fill the vehicle up with the crew's personal possessions. A few items were taken from different accessory sets and some bedrolls I made myself from Magic Sculp.





Paint

I paint my models using Vallejo Colours. My experience with these paints however, is that they do not stick to the basic model that well. For this reason I always paint the first layer with an enamel paint, especially when there are a lot of resin and etch parts involved. In this case I used a dark green from Revell. The second layer was Vallejo Model Air number 43 (olive drab), letting the darker green base shine through in inlaying corners and around panels. This step was repeated twice, lightening the olive with Vallejo No.75 (sand).

After this pre-shade process a coat of satin gloss was applied. I applied a wash of white spirit with a mix of green/burnt umber/black oil paint to the model. I painted the black parts (wheels and tracks) with Revell matt black. The mantlet cover was painted with a thinned down mix of olive drab and brown to give the cover a different shade of the vehicles colour. I then dry brushed the entire vehicle with a light green (almost white) oil paint. The tracks were made rusty with a thinned down Revell leather brown.

I used sandpaper to reveal the contact surface of the tracks. This was made less shiny with a thinned black. The last step here is to give the tank a dusty appearance with a mix of red brown/burned umber pastel powder.

The last thing to do is to paint the personnel equipment of the crew. I tried to give everything a different shade of the same green or brown. Washed and dry brushed the same way as the tank. This gives good distinction between the different parts.



Base

I usually don't make a base for my models. I always wanted to make a rice paddy and thought that this was the time to do so. I found a oval picture frame in a second hand shop that was the right size for the Centurion. The basic idea was to make a road that lay beside some rice paddies. I made the base a little more interesting to look at, by making the road go uphill. The idea for the transition from road to bridge came later.

The basic shape was cut from Styrofoam. I applied plaster to the whole base. The road surface was smoothed out with water and a spatula before the plaster had hardened. After drying I gave the road an extra rub down with some sandpaper. A few dents were left to simulate road damage. Birdcage sand and grass was applied with white glue. The area of the rice paddy was smoothed with sandpaper. The bridge guardrail is a piece of plaster which I cast in an old blister package. I cut the pieces to size with a saw and shaped them with a file before I used a motor tool to make the dents in the plaster surface.

Painting the base

The road received a dark grey, the sand got burnt umber and the grass dark green. I sprayed the water lighter at the edges and darker on the inside to create some depth after a gloss finish. I used four coats of Revell high gloss to simulate water. A dry brush with lighter colours finished the whole base. The road damage from the tracks is made by painting the contact surface of the track (the rubber ones from the kit) white. I then pressed the track on the road leaving the 'stripes'. The last thing was to over-spray the whole base with a brownish colour (to simulate dust).

Last addition

The last thing to build was a really demanding. How to make a rice plant? Rice plants look like a kind of wheat. I took a big paintbrush and cut the bristles from it. I drilled some small holes in the water surface. One by one the brush bristles were dipped in glue and pushed in the holes. The plants received a bright green colour.

The last step was to include some 'uninvited' friends to the base. The two rats are from a set of small animals from Busch. This brand is mainly for railroad modelling, but this set is very usable for 1:35 scale.

All in all I am very happy with the end result. It took some more time than I expected, but I can not remember when a model took less time than I expected. I enjoyed building this kit and the base very much. On to the next one.

Kits Used:

AFV-Club - Centurion Mk5/1 (35100)
Voyager Models – Centurion detail set (PE35110)
Friul Model tracks (Centurion - ATL-65)
Busch small animal set (nr.1153)



Gallery







Marcel Zwarts

In 1967, when I was born, there were no signs that I would ever get my current fascination for military history. My parents didn't have any interest in this subject, but by the time I was seven years old, all kids magazines were packed with advertisements of Matchbox, Revell and Airfix kits.

Commercials on the television even showed railroad modelling from Märklin and Fleischmann. All of that triggered my enthusiasm for scale modelling. The year after I got my first kit, an airplane of course, a Novo 1/72 Dewoitine D520C.

The tobacco store around the corner displayed several scale models in the shop window. One of them was a 1/48 Centurion by Aurora. There was always a reason to walk by the tobacco store and by the time I had finally saved the contemporary equivalent to €3,50, I felt like the happiest person in the world. My preference for armour models was born.

Back home, my father had a copy of Cornelius Ryan's book, A Bridge Too Far, about the battle of Arnhem on the book shelves. Reading this book aroused my interest for the liberation of the Netherlands. I remember well that vehicles like the Sturmgeschütz made absolutely no sense to me. They seemed like weird and ugly to me, and only because of the Tamiya and Italeri catalogues I learned what was hidden behind those Schürzen and camouflage branches.

The library became the next source of information and thanks to my daily paper round I was able to even buy books of my own. By the age of fifteen I joined the Dutch Armour Hobbyists club, TWENOT. A new world opened before me and I became devoted to armoured vehicles.

A build stop of roughly ten years preceded maturity in the hobby, and with my diorama "Utrechtseweg" my new style of scale modelling began. My new style consists of thorough historical research before I start building anything. I also consider it to be normal that the construction of the diorama takes more time than the construction of my vehicles.

I spend a lot of time in detailing the whole diorama and finish off by preserving it for the future by giving each diorama its own acrylic cover.

I have written a book on the battle of Arnhem, which was published by Concord in 2000. In the meantime my research after the German forces during the occupation of the Netherlands continues and I gradually proceed to work on my three dimensional paintings we refer to as dioramas.

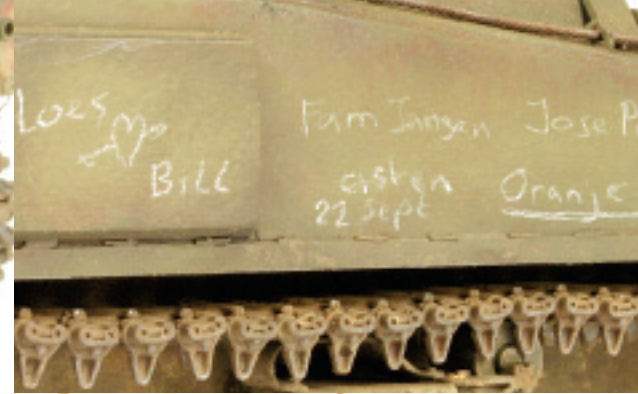
I am living a happy life with my Thai love, Nut, whom I married in 2004. Besides modelling I spend my free time as chairman of rifle shooting club APS and I exercise on Salsa music. I am employed as an AutoCAD engineer by TEB Engineering. My knowledge of AutoCAD comes in handy for designing scratch parts and photo etch sets, and it also helps me when making the layouts of my dioramas.

For the future I hope to be able to publish more books and to share my research and dioramas with all that share this wonderful hobby.





OOSTERBEEK 25-9-1944
Weverstraat No. 145



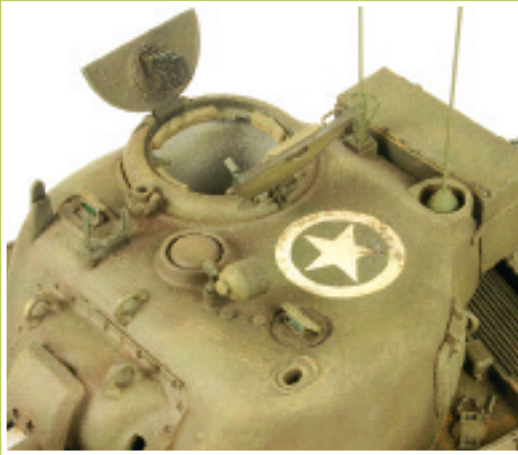
Sherman

Building Shermans of the British 11th Armoured Division

When my military modelling friends heard that I was building a couple of British Shermans they acted surprised. "Your building Allied stuff and we thought you only did Arnhem German things?". Many times I answered that I'm interested in the whole campaign of the liberation of the Netherlands. So all related nations have my interest. To set their minds at ease I added that the Shermans would be placed on a diorama with a German Sd.Kfz.251/21 as well.

This diorama will be depicting a story I heard for the first time some 25 years ago and involved the vehicles belonging to the Regimental Headquarter of the 3rd Royal Tank Regiment. This Reg. HQ possessed four Sherman tanks: a command tank, two forward observation tanks and a standard fourth tank. Because they were the second Regiment the white 52 in a red Square was the Squadron sign. The Yellow diamond stood for their Regimental HQ task.





The Hybrid, options for the build and choices.

In the land of modellers, the one wanting to build a British Sherman Firefly is the absolute winner. We live in a golden age, because almost everything with a military background will be made by the main kit manufacturers and Dragon's M4 Hybrid Firefly is no exception. For most modellers this is a wonderful kit but for some it isn't enough. Those builders want more detail, better dimensions and so on. It doesn't need further explanation that I'm one of them! For me one of the main reasons for not using the upper hull was that the cast structure was too rough and there were no casting numbers.

When the research was made before the project was started, there were several discussions on internet forums about the Hybrid hull. Verlinden had made a hull in the past but it had some major problems. Somewhere in the discussion someone mentioned the Chesapeake hull. Google was used to find a photo of this part and this hull was what I needed. Also thanks to the internet I quickly found a great source for plenty of beautiful Sherman detail parts, namely Formations. For the bogies there was no question, the Tasca set was the absolute winner and my favourite Japanese modelling shop Rainbow Ten could deliver the set fast.



The M4A4, options for the build and choices.

The choice for the M4A4 was much easier. At this time we have the great kit from Tasca and the five versions made by Dragon. I have them all, but it wasn't until I came across the Resicast resin M4A4 kit. It was not cheap and I had to think twice, but it was worth every Euro. At home the kit was studied very close and the conclusion was made that the bogies would be changed by the already mentioned Tasca versions.

Building the tanks.

The building process was started with the M4A4 and it was an easy kit to build. When building tanks I always start making the main parts like the hull and turret. If there are problems with these it has absolutely no sense to concentrate on the details. In some places the hull did not fit 100%, but with some light filling the job was done. Also the turret was an easy build. Wonderful details were standard on the Resicast kit. After this the bogies from Tasca were produced and glued to the hull. Compound glue was used for binding them to the hull. In most cases I combine superglue with compound glue. The super glue takes care for the quick fit and the compound glue makes sure the fit is strong. Then the focus went to the details. All fit well and there were no problems. When the tank was almost complete I found a small Japanese firm called Adlers Nest who produced some wonderful US .30 MG Barrels. A separated barrel and cooling jacket have a very realistic appearance and are, in my opinion, worth every penny.

When working on the Shermans I looked on the internet for information frequently, and in this way I learned that the inner side of the road wheels needed small rivets. When looking close at the Tasca sprues I noticed the little things and tried to put them on the wheels. This was an absolute failure and I looked for an other way. Luckily I found that Resicast made separate wheels with the small rivets already in place. Two sets were purchased and the old Tasca wheels were replaced.

The Hybrid is a totally different story.

The start was made with the underside of the hull. Dragon parts were used. The Chesapeake upper hull and Formations transmission were made to fit but it took me a long time. The Formations turret was used together with a Resicast gun shield, Aber gun barrel and Tamiya interior parts. The already mentioned Tasca bogies and Resicast wheels were used and many small details were used from an Aber etching set. The Horn and headlight came from Formations and slowly the model was finished.

The problems with T54E2 tracks and the solution.

When starting building these tanks I did not have a lot of knowledge of Sherman tanks. My main interest is German stuff and until then the only Allied vehicle I had built was a Para Jeep. To make up for this lack of knowledge, books were bought and lots of time was spent on the internet. Listening to and reading more by experienced Sherman builders taught me a lot. In this period it came to my attention that there were different types of tracks and that the British Shermans in photographs almost always had the same type. To my horror I discovered that this type (T54E2) was not for sale.

All options were considered and all in all I could not find a solution until a modelling friend, Henry Klomp, called. As always with Henry, we talked a long time about investigating military history, modelling and designing etched parts. During this conversation I mentioned my problem with the tracks and told him that I had to learn duplicating parts in resin. At this point he told me that he had a contact that was willing to do the job with professional machinery. The contact was made and all I had to do was make one master track pad. A Model Kasten track set was used as a base. The master was sent by post and a couple of months later I had a couple of hundred small parts that would create the much wanted T54E2 tracks.





Painting process

Painting models in one colour is always a challenge. I started by spraying white, red and yellow paints on the locations where the stars, divisional symbols and Squadron numbers had to come. When finished and dry, all the symbols were hidden behind some temporary decals made by Eduard and a base coat of semi gloss black Tamiya acrylic paint was sprayed on as base colour. The Olive Drab was mixed with Yellow and sprayed over lightly, which resulted in a nice one coloured model. Temporary decals were removed and after a week the tanks were sealed in a mixture of Tamiya Clear and Flat Base. Then the Shermans were placed aside to let the paint harden.

It was after two weeks that I started the weathering process. First, four oil paint colours: black, white, yellow and brown were washed over the model followed by dry brushing with Humbrol dark green mixed with subsequently more desert yellow.

The T number

When one chooses to build a model from a photograph several problems will occur. In case of the M4A4 there were only small problems. Only the headquarters symbol, the yellow diamond had to be made. A small drawing and Tamiya tape gave the solution.

On the other hand the Hybrid had a problem I did not expect. The photo that was used showed the Sherman from the left side. The only marking that could be seen was the T number. This number was used by the British to mark their tanks. I had hoped that Archer dry decals could be used, but when the set arrived at home I noticed that the Archer numbers were far too small. Many options were considered but the only solution was to make an airbrush stencil myself. This took a very long time because cutting these small parts isn't an easy task. It took four attempts before a good stencil was made and the numbers were painted.



Marcel Zwarts



Dirt, dust and oil and chalk writing.

Only new factory-fresh tanks are relatively clean. In real life they are dirty, they've collected dust, mud, oil, and everything the climate will throw at them. In peace time there is a lot of time for maintenance, but in times of war only the necessary maintenance was done. When building German vehicles there is the ever lasting discussion about worn off paint and other wear and tear, and a lot of modellers like to paint their vehicles with a large amount of damage to the paint.

The Shermans I was building were in action for around three months and this would surely damage the paint, so I thought. Again it was thanks to a discussion on one of the forums that I learned that the US made tanks were baked in their paint and that therefore there was almost no wear and tear on the paint layers, so that chapter could be closed. I learned from the Japanese modelling magazine *Armor Modelling* to use pastels for replicating the dust. Seven different dust colours were used to create the effect. Oil and rain marks were made with Humbrol and oils thinned with lots of white spirit. Glossy enamel paint was used to create an oily look.

When the Allies liberated Europe it's inhabitants wrote many words of thanks on military material to express their gratitude. To duplicate this, a white pencil was used. Obviously this can only be done after all paint is fully hardened. The pencil is sharpened and the text could be written on the model. I learned that after writing one letter the sharpening process had to be done again. It's also important to make a small study in different type of handwriting and the contemporary spirit.

Conclusion.

I really enjoyed this multiple project. Of course the Sherman is not at the top of my favourites list, but when finished it gave great satisfaction. The Resicast M4A4 is wonderful kit with some minor issues. Building a good as possible Hybrid was a real challenge. Finding information on the technical part of these tanks proved to be a hard task, but in this age, the internet was a welcome help. The hardest part was finding information on the Sherman in British hands. The biggest surprise was that the main type track used by British Shermans is not available on the market yet, but who knows what the future will bring.

The Grandparent's Bike Project

Cheese, tulips, windmills and more recently, Amsterdam's red light district and an alleged liberal policy on drugs, are topics related to Holland, but bicycles also certainly fit onto that list.

After China, the Netherlands has relatively the highest density of bicycles in the world. For obvious reasons bikes are a popular means of transportation: they're inexpensive and the Dutch landscape is very flat. Besides, nowadays it stands for environment friendly and provides plenty of exercise.

Why Dutchies ride bicycles.

Looking back on WWII, we see that there was a shortage of everything really, but fuel was certainly high on the list. Besides, a bike provided the average citizen with means of transportation, where only the rich could afford a car in the 30's and 40's.

Since my three dimensional paintings are always situated in Holland in 1944, it was inevitable to come across the idea to build a bicycle at one point. Lucky for me, there was little variation in style, models and colour, as the Dutch society was rather conservative in those days.

The contemporary model of the 30-40's is called a grandmothers' or grandfathers' bicycle nowadays. A black, rigid frame with large wheels to take you from A to B comfortably.

The bicycle in scale 1/35.

Coming back to 1/35 scale modelling you can quickly draw the conclusion that there isn't much available on the market. Sure, Tamiya, Italeri and Hornet have bikes in their catalogue, but these are German military bikes and certainly not a standard Dutch 30-40's bicycle. This German bike is smaller and differs in shape. Most modellers wouldn't mind, but I do, as I'm a modeller that counts each and every brick, nut and bolt. With all of this in mind, my long term wish to build a Dutch bike is easily understood. However, it is simpler said than done. Scaling a bike down to 1/35 means a model of 5cm long.



How to, Step by Step.

Step 1 The basic drawings

Seven years ago I decided to pick up the challenge. My own bicycle, which resembled a grandmothers bike was put in the hobby room and with the help of the AutoCAD program I made 1/1 scale drawings. When these were finished I resized them back to 1/35 scale and I finally got an impression of what this was going to lead to.

Step 2 The PE etchings

During this period I was experimenting home made etchings, together with my friend Jos Visser. My task was to make the drawing, designs, and film prints and Jos was doing the actual etching. Everything went fairly well and one of the first designs I made was of the spoke wheels. The Aber sets were used as an example, as I didn't intend to invent the wheel, literally. The trick is to get the sizing done 100% correct, which is not the easiest task. Still, I had some wheels to turn into real bicycle wheels by adding tires made of electrical wiring insulation tubing. Although these wheels were not going to be the final versions, at least I had learned a lot from these first steps.

Step 3 Soldering

At the same time I soldered my first bike frame. Since I hadn't been soldering since my schooldays a lot went wrong. After grasping the principles I managed to finish the frame eventually. This too wasn't exactly the result I was hoping for, but still, I had a granny bike-ish thing on my desk.

Most important lesson learned was that I had to learn how to make the wheels correct, with straight spokes before I could advance with this project altogether. In the following years designing and drawing etch sets became easier and better. The German company Seamann was very helpful with improving my designs and results got better and better.

Step 4 The soft skin online contest

An online "soft skin" contest triggered the re-start of this project and I aimed for two bikes, a ladies and a mens version. Initially the wheels didn't work out the way I wanted, but when Dragon released their 8.8cm Flak, they showed that wheels can be made by joining two discs. This seemed a perfect method for my bicycle wheels, so new designs were made and when I finally got the actual etchings back from Seamann the result turned out to be perfect and I was motivated to finally finish this long pending project.

Step 5 Soldering and drilling

My soldering skills had improved by then and I had purchased a good soldering station by Weller. I also invested in high quality drills from a Swiss company called Sphinx. To round off this tool lecture, I obtained callipers by Mitutoyo. These tools proved to be indispensable for this project and in hindsight I cannot imagine ever having modelled without them. The old drawings were the base for the new frames. After several attempts I had two small bicycle frames on my work bench and I was ready for the next challenge.

Step 6 Making the mudguards

The mud guards are thin metal plates bent in two directions. Initially I planned making a press mould to form the mudguards. This took a lot of time and in the end, it didn't work out satisfactory. After a lot of brain storming, I came up with the idea of using a circle cutter.

A circle was cut out of sheet of thin metal and attached to a motor drill with a nut and bolt in the middle of the circle. With the motor drill turning I could easily round off the outer rims and shape the contours of the mudguards. With this job done I only had to cut out the middle. An additional ornamental strip was glued over the outer rims and the circle was cut in half. Some additional filing did the rest.

Next steps

With the hardest parts done, at least that's what I thought, I commenced with the other details. The chains, saddles, pedals, front frames and many small parts were made with relative ease. The process of thinking of ways to make those parts was the most time consuming part. Most parts were made of brass tube and rod, but others were made of styrene..

The choice for styrene was made because it was easier to work with. The hardest part to manufacture was the baggage rack at the back of the bike. The frame for it was fashioned from 0.5mm copper coil wire. In this frame I needed to drill 8 holes of 0.3mm. Definitely a tedious and nerve wrecking job that has cost me several drills and even more patience.

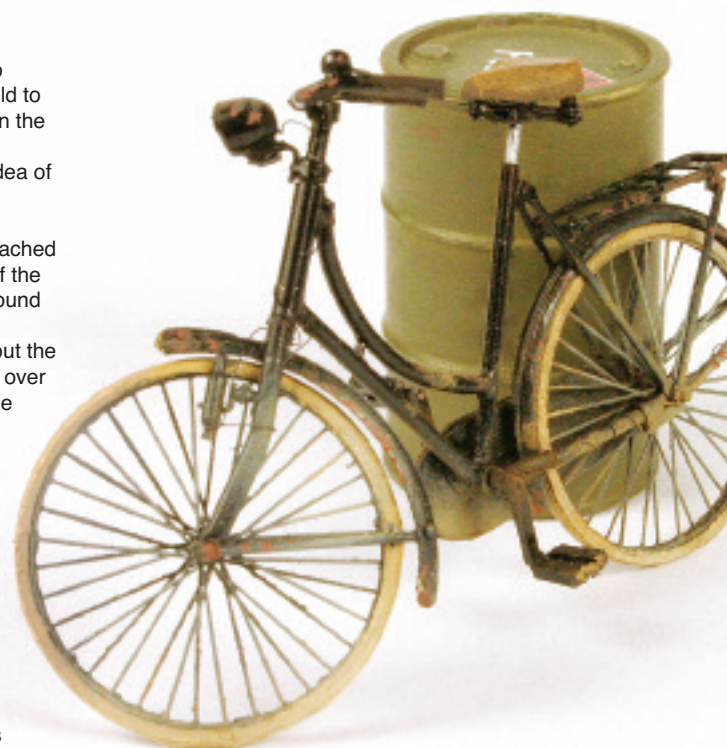
On your bike!

These sort of projects are quite demanding. You learn as you go, and it is inevitable that parts are not correct the first time around. Of all the parts I made, there were very few that could stand my critical eye from the beginning.

I am planning to build more bicycles anyway, so the experience gained is certainly not lost. My next bikes will take less time and effort, I think. Nevertheless, it'll always remain to be a delicate build. The rack is especially hard to make properly and I haven't thought of an easier way to do it.

The bicycles came out exactly the way I had hoped, and although I believe that AFV's are much nicer subjects, subjects like these lift the level of my three dimensional paintings and provide the viewer with even more to look at.

I still have visions of other daring projects that may never come to life, or maybe they will. As long as we have something to dream about, the fun in the hobby will definitely remain.



No Entry











Weverstraat







Robert Crombeecke

I was born on 6 August 1962 in Utrecht, the Netherlands and live happily ever after in Eindhoven, together with my wife Margot, with whom I also share another passion: scuba diving.

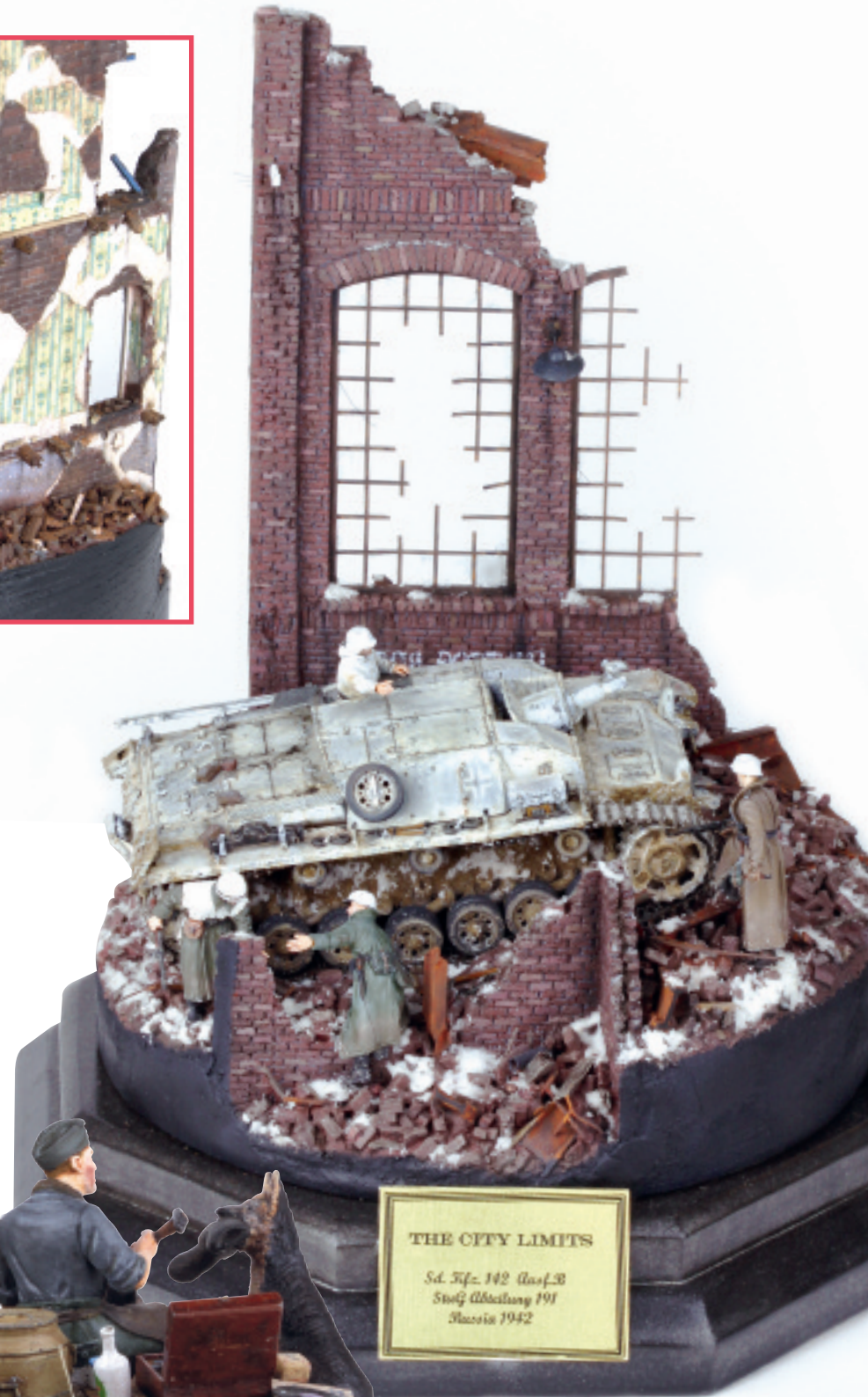
I also teach diving (part time) and have taught diving professionally whilst living in Egypt some years ago. Professionally I have been working as a purchasing manager, for as long as I can remember. Having two hobbies, forces me to make choices sometimes, so my modelling output is not as prolific as the ideas I have for new projects. My main interest goes out to building dioramas, with an occasional side step to figure painting. I have tried building stand alone vehicles, and I have even tried building them out of the box. Both seem impossible for me to do. Although I shamelessly admire those who can make breathtaking single vehicles on a plain base, in my opinion, a well executed diorama always gives a model something extra.

When I got back into the modeling hobby, about 12 years ago, my interest merely went to the models I bought. Soon thereafter however, I discovered that some historical research was necessary, to at least depict the correct vehicle with the correct unit, in a liable time and place, in order to give my work some credibility. And although I am all for artistic license when it comes to modeling dioramas, I try to get those aspects right, with each new project. From this initial historical research came another personal interest, namely the political and social history leading to, and throughout, World War II.

I tend to add a lot of details and colours to my work. Details, because diorama's lend themselves perfectly for that, and the more details, the longer one can look at a diorama. I also like to give things a humorous or interesting twist, especially for the observing viewer. Colours break the monotony that AFV dioramas show more than often, and can act as an eye catcher or better, as an instrument to guide the viewers eye through the scene. I often tend to take a step back from a project that I'm working on, in order to avoid getting dragged into something resembling tunnel vision. I guess that is also why I make dioramas. If I get stuck along the way with the vehicle, I can continue with the figures, or the groundwork, and eventually return to the vehicle with a clear mind. Silly maybe, but it works for me.

A good diorama tells a story, that is obvious to the viewer. And this sounds a lot easier than it actually is, certainly in case you want to break out of the ordinary. The story, the title, the base, the elements and their layout play an equally important role in the complete picture and that makes it also very complex and hard to make a good diorama.

I hope that my contributions to this publication please the viewer as much as they pleased me while I created them.



THE CITY LIMITS
Sd. Kfz. 142 Ausf. B
Stoß Abteilung 191
Marsch 1942



THE CITY LIMITS

When planning this diorama, the starting point was that I wanted to do an urban action scene on a small base. Reason for this being the fact that I've done several larger dioramas in the years before which depicted neither action nor an urban atmosphere. So in short, this had to be something that was the opposite of previous projects.

Knowing that urban fighting is not exactly ideal for any kind of vehicle, also brought on the title eventually. Narrow passages and lots of rubble make it hard for AFV's to manoeuvre and fight effectively. In other words: the city limits the effective use of them.

The Stug III B was produced in vast quantities and has been used quite elaborately during the first years of the war. Although I like to detail my vehicles as much as possible, I am not what you would call a rivet counter. Having said that, I always thoroughly research the area and period of the war, which the specific unit, or vehicle of that unit that I am depicting, fought in.

So this diorama does not depict Stalingrad. I have marked my Stug as one belonging to Stug Abteilung 503, who have used the III B on the Eastern front.





The Stug

Work began on the vehicle, the old Dragon/Italeri kit that I won in a raffle. It's a basically correct kit, but it is definitely showing its age and can benefit from some extra detailing. What more does a modeller want? For some of the necessary corrections a lot of information was taken from French publication by MK35. A major correction was made at the back of the hull, for which a new plate was made from Evergreen sheet. More styrene was used to scratch other details, like nuts and bolts.

I also made extensive use of two Aber PE sets, one for extra details and a second one, merely for the fenders. A Jordi Rubio turned aluminium barrel and Model Kasten tracks completed the after market upgrades.

This vehicle was also my first attempt to deploy a white wash. The final outcome is the result of a mish mash of techniques, of which using Maskoll was only one, and not the most successful, I have to add. I found tiny pieces of Maskoll even at the end of the finishing stage. But hey, modelling is fun!



La Gazza Ladra

(The Thieving Magpie)





The idea for this diorama has been lingering for quite a while and executing the idea turned out to be one of my rather smoother running projects, although it did take some pre-production planning, searching on the internet and a comprehensive study of magpies. More about that later.

On a small scene like this, the top of the base measures some 13cm in diameter only, it is only too important to provide the viewer with plenty of details to look at. Stand alone AFV's require many painting details to keep the interest going for a while, but on this vignette there aren't any large objects, so I resolved to using plenty of additional subjects, scattered around the surface.

The title was actually the starting point, some time ago. It is the title of an opera by Rossini and what triggered the idea was the fact that British band Marillion used the title and part of opera's theme as an opener for their live concerts back in the eighties. That's 1980's! The story depicted here was worked out from that title, and not the other way around, which would have made more sense. The idea of showing the magpie's alleged habit to be attracted and take shiny objects was the first part of the story that was planned. However, I like double layers in a story, so I thought I'd give the viewer something to chew on and use the scene of the dog offering a helping hand to the cobbler as a sort of initial diversion from the actual story behind the title.

Building the scene

Construction started with the limber of the vintage Tamiya field kitchen. I replaced some of the parts with Evergreen, brass rod, and other metal parts from the scrap box. When construction was done, I painted it using Tamiya paints for the base colours and oils for washes and weathering. The latter was kept to a minimum. I also used different pigments from Sandstorm Pigments. Faded grey gave a very nice effect to the Panzer grey colour. Dust was simulated using various earth colours from the same brand. At the bottom and lower edges of the limber the pigments were fixed with Sandstorms' Pigment Fixer. The metal rims of the wheels were metalized using rubbed with VBM graphite powder and metal highlights were added with a silver pencil. The rusted effect, was created with various rust colour pastels.

The figures were carefully selected for this purpose. The cobbler is a resin Wolf offering and comes with the dog and spare boots. I replaced the cobbler's head with a Hornet one, that suited the scene much better. Other than that it was a pretty straightforward figure paint job. Flesh tones receive a Vallejo Mud Brown undercoat and I paint the rest with heavily thinned oils paints. For uniforms I use whatever comes to hand, but basically the base coat is always done with Vallejo acrylics and highlights and shadows with oil paints, although I painted this guy's shirt and leather apron completely with acrylics.

The dog's fur was too smooth so I added some Magic Sculp and scribed the hairs when the MS was hardened. To add the boot I had to cut off the dog's mouth. The resin boot I selected needed to be bent a little by applying some heat with my soldering iron. After the boot was put in place I sculpted the bottom of the mouth with Magic Sculp, and painted it completely with acrylics using tones varying from light sand to straight black and added a bit of red brown to the appropriate areas.

The standing guy is a very nice figure from Resination. I replaced his head with a Hornet one. Again, not because of quality but because of a more appropriate expression. The only catch here, was to get rid of the seams between the upper and lower neck and between upper and lower arms, as the latter came as separate parts.

I decided to use Vallejo Sunny Skin Tone as a base coat for the flesh parts, and finished them with my usual oil painting method. The trousers received an Italian camouflage pattern, painted with Vallejo acrylics. Highlights and shadows however were done with selected oil paints. I usually paint boots starting with Humbrol Brown Bess (out of production) or Vallejo chocolate brown. Next is a wash of diluted black oil paint, and highlights and wear are done with Schmincke Warm Grey. For this fellow's boots though, I opted to do them completely in Vallejo acrylics.

The magpie was sculpted after months of studying magpies in the park behind my house. My first attempt was the size of a condor, and it took several attempts to get both the size and the posing to my liking. His legs, with toes were made from very thin wire. Painting the correct colour pattern in was easy, in the end. As long as the basics have the correct balance between white and black, anything goes, as I haven't found two magpies alike. Some even miss the black stripes on the sides altogether. The tail feathers are bluish, starting on the back, so I painted that accordingly.

Paraphernalia

A few words about the accessories that I used. Because the scene is small, some 13cm in diameter, I figured I had to scatter the scene with accessories to increase the interest. It also meant that I had to take the detailing a step further than I usually do. For one, it meant to go the extra mile on painting, but I also spent more time to see if I could improve some details. For example, the large food containers received Bronco wing nuts. The food canisters were not only painted in two opposite colours, but also received properly shaped handles, fashioned from thin wire. The food tins and the bottles received labels that I downloaded from the internet, a very time consuming job, downsized in high resolution and finally printed on Micro Scale decal paper on my inkjet printer.

Since the title and inspiration for his whole project have a musical source, I found it necessary to lay the link to music. Plus Models has a great set with radios and phonographs (record players). Carrying a large phonograph with a big horn around in a war seemed a bit over the top, so I decided to use the more moderate style provided in the set. Plus Models also provides photo etched records as well as decals for the record labels, but no record sleeves. So, back to the internet. I managed to find some contemporary record sleeves that I downsized and printed on plain paper. One record sleeve however, I had to design myself: the one showing a portrait of Rossini. I obviously positioned that one so it would be most visible.

The boxes with nails for the cobbler, also received some home made decals, but the text turned out illegible at the end, so I could have saved myself the trouble. Oh well, I know it's there. The nails themselves were cut from steel wire.

The Groundwork

Contrary to common practice, I based the size of the scene to the size of the base I had lying about for years already. The wall was made from a remaining piece of an old plaster casting and added details to create some sense of boundaries. The scene is staged along the side of a country road. It also serves as a back drop. The stones were scribed with a Squadron Scribing Tool. Since the plaster is flat, I added some volume and created rounded surfaces by adding acrylic gel to the scribed stones, more or less at random.

The surface of the wooden base was scored with a hobby knife and after the plaster wall was glued on with two component epoxy glue, I applied wall filler, small pebbles and sand. Before I pressed some of the main and heavy objects, like the limber, buckets, wooden boxes, figures etc. into the still soft wall filler, I covered it with cling film to prevent the wall filler from sticking to my carefully weathered and painted stuff. Obviously pressing the heavy and main elements into the groundwork is necessary to ensure proper sit, and to prevent them from floating over the surface. I also pre-colour wall plaster with pure pigments (not weathering pigments) or liquid pigments (used to colour wall paint) to make sure that no white spots remain.

The grass I used comes in different shapes, lengths and colours and are a Grey Funnel Line product called Mini Nature. One of the best solutions for landscaping in scale I have encountered in the past years. The patches of grass come on a carrier film which should be glued on with a drop of super glue. Mixing colours and lengths gives a natural and controllable result. Icing on the cake was the rat that I added underneath the limber, enjoying the remains from a disposed food tin. Since I had a magpie and dog already, I figured that adding one more animal wouldn't hurt.



Robert Crombeecke



Conclusion

The scene came out almost exactly as I had planned it in my mind for a long time. It must be said however, that the plethora of after market products and accessories partly made the job less difficult than it would have been 10-15 years ago, and certainly less time consuming as you can save yourself the trouble of building everything from scratch. Something that is fortunately not readily available, is the way that these products are being used and applied. So creativity is still not buried underneath all of the commercial offerings. On the contrary, to avoid that all dioramas look alike because of the use of these products, an original idea is still as important as before, perhaps more so.

Leben in Trümmern

(Life in Ruins)

Without going in too deep, it seems that the human suffering and the enormous impact war has on the average civilian, is more than often ignored in most dioramas that I have seen through the years. And if human sacrifice was depicted, the final result was arguably horrendous, and subject of discussion between the pros and cons of realism.

What I intended to depict in this project was the sense of despair and apathy of war weary Berlin civilians in the last days of WWII, face to face with their grim victors, the Russian army. An image in a book dealing with the fall of Berlin, was the starting point of this diorama, which received the initial title: "In a world gone mad".

The base was custom made by a Dutch company called JADE BASES. The diameter of the base is 39 cm and it looked like a big black cake when I got it.





I started off with building the T34/85, an old Dragon offering that I spiced up with an elaborate selection of after market details and scratched parts. I also had a set of resin damaged road wheels by Warriors, and for variety I swapped some wheels with a buddy who had another T34-version in his stash. So at least I was assured that the undercarriage had plenty of interesting detail already. While posting my in progress work on the Planet Armor forum, I was suggested to even add a Panther wheel to my T34. This was backed up with contemporary images and a Russian field unit manual. Given the flimsy look of a Panther wheel compared to their massive T-34 counterparts, I suspect it wasn't a successful and long lived experiment, but for modeling purposes it would be top notch.

I wanted to depict the T34 as a raw, battle weary war veteran, using PE fenders, as these were much easier to damage convincingly and there must have been a reason why the crew added a Panther wheel to their tank. The blast that hit the original wheel also

damaged the fender. The PE fender was thinned in selected places using a motor tool, before piercing it. The construction of the T34 went rather quickly, certainly to my standards, but the painting was a different story all together. I tried to add life to my models by layering various painting and weathering techniques which took a lot of TLC.

The figures were a different story, and especially the Klepcesz family took me some time to get right. The tank commander standing on top of the turret is a slightly converted Alpine figure. The conversion was done to make him fit the tank and to give him a more arrogant pose. He received a Hornet head and a Magic Sculpt cap. The Alpine heads are actually fine, but the Hornet one had a facial expression that was perfect for the scene. Both other Russians are a mix of Miniart, Hornet and TANK.

Opposite of the Russians was the German family that has lost almost all their possessions, and the only valuable thing they have left is each other, although the parents have lost their oldest son. Their hotel is

destroyed, and they have gathered some belongings that they could save from the rubble. They have grouped together in fear and anticipation of what the Russian conquerors are up to. The youngest boy is indifferent to the nasty looks from the Russian crew and only has eyes for the food he just got.

The male figure is from MK35 with, you guessed it, a Hornet head. His wife, the standing boy and the girl with the blonde hair are old Verlinden offerings and had poor facial expression, which made them difficult to paint. The girl in the red coat and the eating boy are from SOL and are excellent sculpts. I have toned down their clothing deliberately as they should play the part of the victims. I mixed the colours that I used with black and grey to achieve that.

When a four year old child looks at your diorama and asks you if these mean men on the tank are going to hurt the children and their parents, I think that the story is clear and that part of the project has succeeded.



Getting the family grouped and posed properly was a challenge, but all worked out pretty well.



The picture in the wooden crate shows the eldest son of the family, a Luftwaffe pilot, who has died in action. Another tragic loss.

The image of the son, killed in action, was made using Photoshop, and in fact it shows my step son Marco who passed away in 2008. He was actually the one who dragged me back into the modeling hobby. When I first met him, he was building a Harley Davidson model and had a Tamiya catalogue lying on the table. The rest is history. I remember his enthusiasm and astonishment over the models on display, when he visited the first Scale Model Challenge, organized by our club, in 2007. So this diorama about loss, is also a specific tribute to him.

Because big demolished buildings would show the material loss suffered by civilians in an overwhelming way, I wanted to make a diorama with ruins standing tall over the figures. This would also enhance the feeling of despair and would add a sense of the mass destruction that took place. I could have made a much smaller scene, but in this case, I believe that size does matter.

Using the aforementioned picture as a guide line, I made a mock up of the buildings and groundwork in order to establish the right scene and the dimensions of the base. A thin layer of HD polystyrene foam (the blue stuff) was glued on and for the street section I added measuring paper. Reason being, is that the street was made out of bricks fashioned out of cork, glued on one by one. Without the measuring paper it is impossible to keep the pattern straight, at least for me.

The large structures were made using foam board, covered with thin Styrofoam sheets, and balsa foam. The latter being fantastic, versatile stuff to work with, as it does not melt by glues and paints like the polystyrene does, as I found out in an attempt to prime my first set of buildings for this project with Vallejo spray can primer. On the other hand, it is very messy stuff to work with, as it leaves an extremely fine dust when being cut, sanded or carved. So be prepared.



The family name Klepcesz has a humorous undertone. The phonetic Dutch equivalent of Klepcesz, at least in my regional dialect, actually refers to people with anti social behaviour. I gave the written name a sort of Czech touch, making the joke a bit less obvious. Family names from Czech and Polish origin were, and still are, common in Germany.

To save on my modelling paint, I raided my wife's stash of artists paints and primers and came up with a product called Gesso, which painting artists use to prime their linen frames. Gesso can also act as a filler, and I also used it to fill the seams between the bricks of the street section.

For the base colours of the buildings and groundwork I also used artists acrylic paints.

Finishing was done with different types of paint and media, depending on the required colour and effect. Tamiya and Vallejo acrylics, Humbrol, oil paints, pastel chalks and the ever present MIG pigments.

According to some, I am a freak when it comes to bricks and details. Decide for yourself after reading this: The piles of bricks were built up using Styrofoam blocks covered with plaster bandage.

For fashioning the bricks, I chopped up strips of cork, obtained from a model train shop, with my Amati cutter. Repetitive and boring work, but the final result makes it all worthwhile.

I pre-coloured the bricks in a mixture of acrylic paint, and after drying, I glued them into place avoiding monotony in the rather prominent presence of the bricks and walls, I started painting the bricks, one by one, using an endless variety of colours and tones. After everything was painted, the majority of the bricks received blotches of mortar. The mortar was given some volume by mixing various sand-grey colours with Brussels Earth, a powdery filler for making oils paints. With that all done, I gave the bricks several washes with various thinned oil paints like Raw Umber and Van Dyke Brown to unify the colours of the bricks. When all elements in the diorama were in place, except for the T34 and the figures, I started dusting the lot with a mixture of various ground pastels, pigments, bird sand and some genuine really fine red brick powder. The latter is a product used as bedding in desert terrariums!



I have painted the front of the left building in a yellow tone on purpose, to provide contrast with the adjacent building.



More colour elements in this diorama that serve a purpose: the two Russian crew members on top of the T34, especially the commander. He received blue-grey coveralls to make him stand out clearly over the green of the T34 and from the diorama in general.

The red/white sun shades draw the attraction from the T34 in the foreground towards the building and upwards in the diorama. The name sign of the hotel: the red matches with the sun shade and will draw the view towards the Klepcesz family.



I could have saved a lot of time, because many of the tones and colours of the bricks varied too slightly to notice the difference after applying the washes, sand and dust. But it did keep me from mischief for several weeks.

Grouting the bricks in the walls was done by carefully painting these with a grey oil paint mixture. Any excess was wiped off, leaving the "cement" in the recesses. So yes, call me freaky if you will.

I have worked on this project during a period of nearly 13 months, with an estimated bench time of around 5 months.

The one advantage of this long period is that I had plenty of time to come up with a catching title, which strangely enough proved to be the hardest part of the whole project. I finally came up with "Leben in Trümmern" a few weeks before I finished the diorama.

A big thank you goes to fellow club member, diorama builder extraordinaire and übercreative modeller, Roy Schurgers, who stimulated me to improve my own work with his awesome projects and he suggested to use a German title this time. Also thanks to Volker Bembennek who made sure I used proper German for the title. Another big thank you goes out to Canadian modeller and Russian Armor guru Scott Fraser, who was kind enough to suggest the Panther wheel idea and let me browse through his immense Russian armor photo archive.

More colours were provided by several great accessories from Reality In Scale, which were used throughout this diorama. The real enamel street name signs and house numbers. The also real enamel commercial signs, the carpet on the collapsed stairs, made from real cloth and the green striped wall paper. The fuel drums are also from the same manufacturer.



A humorous, but at the same time grim touch, are the three rats, scrounging the remains of the once flourishing hotel.





Roger Hurkmans

When I started building models as an 8-year old, after market was still science fiction and wishful thinking. I believe that was a good thing for sure, otherwise I might have given up on this hobby a long time ago, perhaps even before I started..

The first vehicle I ever built was Tamiya's Krupp Protze. My father had painted it for me, that is to say, some of the details like the tools, because the main parts already were Panzer Grey, of course. The only other painting added was mud.

Now, 30 years later, the modelling landscape looks completely different. Scratch building is slowly becoming an ancient handicraft, because almost everything can be readily bought.

In terms of painting quite a lot has changed. In the 70's and 80's one could get away with a simple wash and dry brushing session.

Nowadays filters, pin washes, modulation, chips and what have you, are required to make your model stand out. Do I mind these changes? Not at all. I must admit that they have made this hobby even more fun, maybe even a lot more than before.

Making an original and exciting model has been made much easier to achieve than with the old school methods. Some food for thought: Do you think that in, say twenty years from now, we will look back on the current period in the same way?

Roger Hurkmans



Hit by a Stovepipe

The first idea is not always the one we follow, that was the case with this vignette.

Initially I planned to position three seated German soldiers on the back of the T-34. After thorough experimenting with various figures I was not completely satisfied with the overall effect. Looking on the internet for some ideas and alternatives, I found a nice MIG Productions offering, called "Helping Comrade" which I ordered immediately. The plan was to let this figure dismount from the tank. Unfortunately, this setting too was unsatisfactory, so I had to change plans again.

By this time, I had already finished the T-34, including the battle damage, so this limited the possibilities somehow. In the end I decided to select a Panzerschreck team, that had knocked out this tank. The Germans also referred to the Panzerschreck as an "Ofenrohr" or a stovepipe, in English. I guess the reason for that does not need any additional explanation.

The idea was to put the team next to the T-34 with one of the soldiers proudly pointing at the damage done.

The T-34/85 is a Dragon kit that was enhanced using PE fenders and an update set from Aber, as well as metal tracks from Friul Modellismo.

I airbrushed the tank in various green tones and after applying the basic coat, I finished this off with a layer of clear varnish. After this layer of varnish had thoroughly dried, I added even more tones of green by using a variety of green oil paints. The method I use is rather simple. I add small patches of oil paint and start carefully blending it with a clean brush, slightly moistened with turpentine. After all the patches were to my liking, the model was set aside to dry. After ample drying time I sprayed another layer of varnish to protect the work so far.

Filters, washes and pin washes were next, before proceeding to the following step of the weathering process. This next step was to create many tiny spots over the surface to simulate more wear and tear. This was done using a mix of Humbrol and oil paint. The combination of these two mediums ensure that you have ample time to make corrections if required. The method of applying these spots is by loading a brush with stiff bristles and flick them back with your finger. The effect of this method is great, but not fully controllable, so a slow curing paint is important in this case.

The same method was used to apply mud splashes like the ones I applied to the wheels and to the back of the vehicle.







To convincingly depict the metallic surface of the wheels, I used Humbrol polished steel. This paint can be applied with a brush. After half an hour drying time you can polish the paint with a soft cloth or a Q-tip to achieve a nicely polished metal effect. The Panzerschreck team is from Warriors. That is to say, the bodies and legs. The arms were taken from Dragon figures and the heads are from Hornet.

The base was fashioned from plastic card with a wooden frame around it. The surface was covered with Porion. With white glue I added several tones of static grass. The base was first sprayed completely and for the grass I used various tones of brown, green and ochre. The grass was subsequently dry brushed with various lighter shades of green and yellow. As a cherry on the cake I finished off the groundwork with Plus Model tree leaves in order to picture the scene in early fall.

The lesson I learned, once more, from this project is that you should always plan your scene ahead and find out exactly what you are trying to achieve before you start. Let us say that it saves time, headaches and also money if you do. I now have several figure sets lying about that I have wanted to use for this project. But who knows, may be one day they will come in handy for one of my future dioramas.



Norway 1940





Panzer IV Ausf.J

5th Panzer Division "Wiking" Poland Autumn 1944

In the Concord publication "Panzers in the East" I came across an image of a Panzerkampfwagen IV, Ausführung J, which had wooden planks attached to its fenders. This field adaptation was the perfect base for making my Panzer IV with a twist. I planned to paint the tank completely in Panzer Gelb (Pz yellow), and the green planks would allow a nice colour variation.

The model of my Panzer IV is a Tamiya kit which is not a recent kit and it could use a little bit of "edge". Especially the side skirts, the so called "Schurtzen" are way too thick in the styrene version as they come with the kit. I decided to replace them with some home made skirts, fashioned from thin copper sheet, which have a much more realistic appearance. For the same reason I decided to use the copper sheet to make new fenders.

The kits tracks were replaced with white metal tracks from Friulmodellismo. The tracks picture the so called "Ostketten", a variant on the winter tracks actually. There is a significant difference between Winterketten and the specially designed Ostketten. Although both are extended, or widened to provide better grip on the snow, the main difference between the two is that the links of the Ostketten are actually made out of one piece. Winterketten are regular tracks of which the links have been extended with separate grousers. Ostketten were used from 1944 onwards, mainly at the Eastern Front.



After the tank had received its basic colour, several filters were applied to give the yellow colour more depth and to make it more interesting. I always finish the barrel in a darker tone of the basic colour. During combat or when firing a round these barrels were subject to an increased temperature which affected the colour of the paint considerably. The underside of the barrel received even darker washes after which several colours of pigment were used for more variation.

The bottom hull of the tank received mud splashes, created using flicked oil paint, done by pulling back the brush bristles with my fingers before releasing them.





The spare tracks were first painted flat brown, after which they received a treatment with rust and sand coloured pigments. Final touches were made by drybrushing the model with straight black. Metalizing effects were made with the help of a carbon pencil.

The tank commander is an Alpine figure. The rest of the figures are Dragon. In order to give their trousers a bulkier and overall better appearance, I used Magic Sculp. With the same material I made the shawls and bandages. The heads were replaced by Hornet heads which have much more expression and bring more life to the figures.

Since weathering has become a significant part of the finishing process of vehicles, I have to admit that I enjoy making these more than before, when I was only making dioramas. A well finished vehicle with many details in the painting process offers plenty to keep the viewer interested and needs nothing more than a nice, plain and simple base.









Retreat From Narwa

The inspiration for this project came while reading a book about Dutch SS war-reporters. In that book was an image of several Dutch SS-troops in a withdrawal from Narwa after heavy combat.

During the second World War there were, like in many other countries, volunteers who joined the German forces. These Dutch volunteers were gathered in the 4. SS-Freiwilligen Division Nederland. This unit was deployed at the Eastern front, again like so many other foreign volunteer units.

Over time I have become more interested in doing smaller dioramas, or vignettes if you will, as it forces you to work more into detail as compared to larger scenes. The figures that I have used are Warriors and Jaguar offerings. I have tried to unify the figures into a coherent group by using arms and heads from the spares box, as well as Magic Sculp.

The cart is a Historex item, and the horse is taken from Tamiya's Field kitchen. The horse needed some modifications to adapt it to the scene, so out came the Magic Sculp again from which I fashioned the manes, a new tail and the blanket on it's back.

I like to paint my figures with oils. Reason is that the slow drying time enables me to blend the colours used for weathering, Raw Umber and Van Dyke Brown, much better than other kinds of paint. For this scene I wanted to give the figures an extremely tired and combat beaten look, so I needed to give the uniforms an intense weathering.

The cart was painted using the airbrush and several tones of green. Once I was happy with the basic colour, I treated it with several filters of oil paint. This increases the hue and brings even more variation to the different tones of green. Next step was to paint the wood chippings with a fine brush and the final step was to bring on the pigment powders.

I always use plain tap water to apply the pigments, which I prefer to thinners like turpentine, which are normally used for this task.

The base was made with Porion, a wall filler, which I painted with an airbrush in various earth tones. I used leaves from Plus Model and finally applied the snow. The "icy" snow is a Scale Line product, the "white", fresh snow is potato starch.





Sd.Kfz 251





TIGER I

Ausf. E Ukraine February 1943



When I started the build of a diorama with this Tiger I, the idea was to make it ride through fresh snow. A challenge to make convincingly, but it would also mean that the groundwork would be relatively modest and would point all focus to the vehicle.

My Tiger depicts a vehicle of the 8th company, 2nd SS Panzer division "Das Reich". In 1943, this unit found itself in the freezing Ukrainian cold.

One of the first things I did, after selecting the figures, was to make a satisfying layout as I wanted to use them to create some extra height to the finished picture.

The figures are all Warriors offerings, except the commander, which is an Alpine figure. All Warriors figures received Hornet heads, I swapped some arms here and there. In case they were visible I also changed the boots for Dragon's Generation 2 figure boots. Main reason for this was that the steel studs are very clearly present on the Dragon parts and it would give the figures an extra touch.

The Tiger is from Tamiya that I spiced up using an Aber PE-update set and PE fenders from the same maker. I further enhanced the look of this beast by using Friul Modellismo tracks, Karaya tow cables and a turned aluminium barrel, again from Aber.





When going through a book on the Wehrmacht's Groß Deutschland Division, I found a picture of a white washed Tiger and I noticed that the horizontal surfaces were almost Panzer Grey again, due to the weather influences and of course by crew members walking over it frequently. I used the "hair spray method" to apply the first weathering. This method is very well suited for vehicles that have a white wash camouflage.

I first applied Tamiya Panzer Grey with an airbrush. After this layer had thoroughly dried, I sealed it with a protective layer of satin varnish. After the varnish had dried, I then applied some thin layers of hairspray over the model. The cheapest one available will do fine. The next step was to spray on Tamiya White with the airbrush, and after leaving that to dry for 20-30 minutes, I started to rub it back off on selected spots with an old flat brush and some luke warm water. During the process I made sure to rub off the paint in a distinctive direction and not at random. After all, the white lime or paint wears off in distinctive ways, also depending on the position of the surface. Paint layers on vertical surfaces, for example, mostly suffer from weathering due to rain, and will naturally show vertical streaks. Horizontal surfaces will also be subjected to wear and tear because of the traffic from crew members. Following this process came various filters and washes. Last in line was chipping, in a variety of colours. For deeper scratches I used brown, for example, to simulate rust. White was used on some chips to create a 3D effect. I also finished one of the road wheels in primer red, to show that it was a replacement wheel.

I painted the figures with oil paints. For me this medium is a lot easier to achieve the desired effects, especially on white uniforms. Shadows and weathering of the trousers is therefore less complicated, for me anyway, as the slow drying paint makes blending easier and more subtle.

The groundwork was made with Porion, a ready-for-use wall filler, which was painted white with an airbrush after applying it to base. After that I applied Scale Line snow, which gives a nice icy effect, even when thinned a little with water. The snow on the wheels was fashioned using potato starch and water.

During the process of building this vignette, I became increasingly convinced that "less is more", although I have to admit that I followed the advice of Roy Schurgers to add the tree branch to add depth to the vignette and to enhance the effect of the snow.







Tragedy of the Faithful

Retreat from Leningrad to Narwa

On January 26 and 27, 1944 the Soviet forces fight their way to Klopizi and Wolossowo. The next day they reached Gurlowa. By this time it was clear that the Dutch SS volunteers would be forced to withdraw from the front if they were to avoid being encircled south of the former Oranienbaum Kessel. It meant the first major retreat for the Dutch volunteers.

The Soviet 2nd and 42nd Army are celebrating the great success: Leningrad is finally back in Soviet hands. The first major retreat of the Dutch volunteer comes to an end after five days of hard defensive fighting between the rivers Luga and Narwa.

The Diorama

in this diorama: "Tragedy of the Faithful", I wanted to show a weary expression of the Dutch volunteers, after heavy fighting against the Russians who are on their way to Narwa with an Opel Maultier... The Unterscharführer alongside the Opel gives the driver leads in which direction he should continue to minimize any possible resistance.

I wanted to show the stance of the figures to be as natural as possible. After I had built the base of the Opel Cabin, I started selecting the figures I wanted to use. Most of them are from Dragon. It was a matter of fitting, cutting off arms and legs, placing the figure back on or in the cabin, and refitting and gluing legs and arms back again. When the glue has dried, I fill the gaps with Magic Sculp. I also look for suitable heads and hands. I use mainly Hornet heads for this purpose as they are the best around, in my opinion and the range of available heads is endless.

I have added scarves to most of the figures, and some received winter trousers. In some cases I dropped the legs of the trousers over the boots to give the figures a more worn appearance. All of this was done with Magic Sculp.

The inside of the Dragon Gen2 helmets are thinned at the edges with a sharp scalpel blade. The thickness of the plastic is too much out of proportion. Straps for helmets and for the guns are made of thin lead sheet and Aber buckles.

The Opel Maultier

I have taken Tamiya's Opel Blitz as the basis for my Opel Maultier. The Tamiya kit is excellent where as the Italeri Maultier suspension is useable but showing it's age.

I replaced the wheels with those of Royal model. This is a special set to update the Italeri Maultier, which also includes some photo etch parts, which I also used. The tracks are from Friulmodellismo, actually produced for the Panzer I, but the Maultier was equipped with the same tracks.

The radiator cover was made of Magic Sculp again. This cover was meant as a protection against the cold. The tarp is a Mig Productions item; I only gave it a new back flap as the one in the Mig kit was very straight and sort of unnatural to me. You probably already guessed that I used Magic Sculp for this job. As you can see I use Magic Sculp a lot, but it is a great material and ideal to create tarps like the one on top of the Maultier cabin or the fender.

The Zündapp

Lion Roar makes a very good kit of the Zündapp. I've just added some details, such as the brake and ignition wires. The beauty of this kit is that it comes with beautiful wheels with metal spokes. I substituted the regular leather bag with a jerry can, held in place with a rack made of lead foil.

Roger Hurkmans

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Painting the figures

Now the painting begins! I always start with the figures. I have used artist's oils for both the uniforms and faces. If you paint with oils, you have to first add a base coat with acrylic or enamel paints. For me it works best to use a base coat in the colour near to the final result, so skin tone for faces, white for winter clothing etc.

I let the base coat dry for at least one day before I continue with oils. Let's take the Unterscharführer with the dark beige parka, for example. I first painted the parka with a medium beige colour followed by a layer of artist's oils in a resembling beige tone. As there's always too much oil paint at first, that I wipe the excess off again with a dry, flat brush. I repeat this until the primer is almost visible. Then I apply the shades, in this case with Van Dyke brown. The undersides of the arms are always painted darker than the upper parts that receive more natural light. Next I apply the highlights by mixing the initial oil colour with some white. The next step is to carefully blend the oils from light to dark.

One of the nice qualities of artists oils is that you can make nice dirty uniforms, e.g. at the knee and lower parts of the trousers. I use Van Dyck brown or Raw Umber blending it carefully into the base colour. The advantage of artist's oil is that the extended drying time allows long manipulation, giving you ample time to achieve the required effect.

The extended drying time has a slight disadvantage. You must wait a few days before the straps, buttons etc. can be painted. After the entire figure is painted, I let it dry for a few weeks, and then I put a layer of matte varnish, sometimes because artists oils tend to leave a glossy appearance.

The SS-patches I used are Verlinden Productions decals. (I do not know if they are still in the collection!). I wrapped up the figure painting process by adding some mud splashes with Mig pigments on the lower parts of the trousers. The helmets also received some pigments,

Painting the Opel Maultier

Before I start spray painting the vehicle it is important that you remove any dust residue. I always do this by rinsing it in clean water and then again with an airbrush, only using air. Just to check everything one more time.

I prime my vehicles black. I feel comfortable with black as primer colour and has the advantage of being less annoying if you cannot reach the deepest nook or cranny with your paint. I spray on a second layer with dark sand and spray this at an angle from above and thus a first shadow effect is shown. Then I spray a lighter sand colour which may further emphasize the lighting.

The tarp received several shades of field grey in the same manner. Finally I give the whole vehicle a layer of gloss varnish and let it dry for a few days.

Next step is the weathering. I start with pin wash using a mix of Indigo, Van Dyke brown and Alizarin Crimson, which gives a beautiful deep colour of the lines. Seams and lines are done with Van Dyke brown only.

For chipping I always use acrylic paint heavily diluted with water. This enables me to paint very thin lines. I think chipping of a vehicle is essential, but you should never exaggerate: I just add lighter shades of the base colour here and there on the parts that receive more light. I use a mixture of artist's oils for this.

The tires and road wheels are painted with a mix of black and flesh tone, and are then treated with pigments.

The tracks are first painted Panzer Grey, and are also treated with pigments. Dry brushing with some black finishes this part of the process. The last bit of weathering is done by adding some mud splashes of with diluted artists oils, Raw Umber and Van Dyke brown.





The base

To bring more depth into this diorama I added some height by putting a couple of trees onto it. First I have made a stem out of round balsa wood. With sandpaper I shaped the stem to a point. After that I made the stem rougher with Tamiya putty mixed with some sand. Next, I used a needle to make holes in the stem in places where the branches were supposed to be placed.

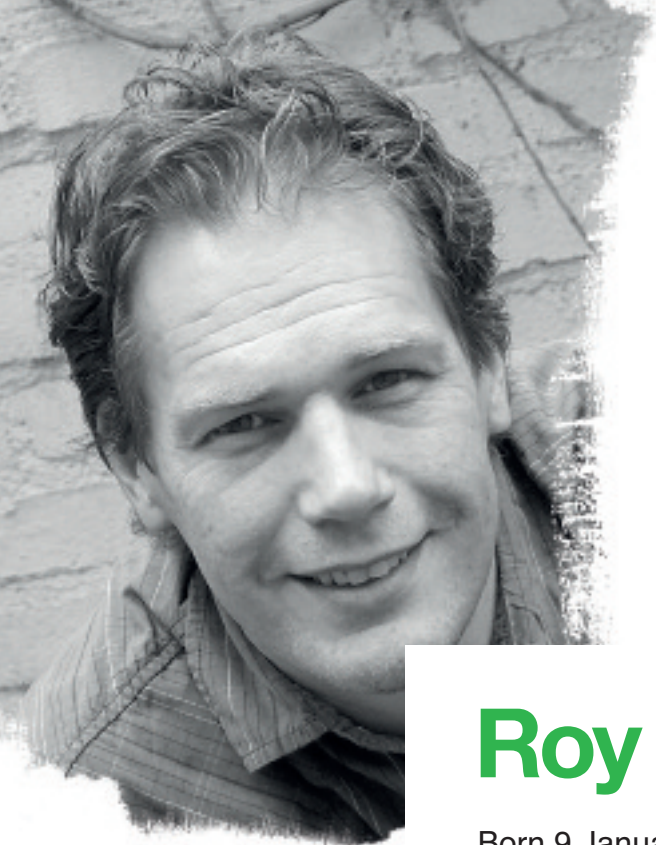
The branches were made from branches of asparagus fern. I glued them into the holes with white glue. Final step for the trees was airbrushing the branches with several tones of green. The snow is made of potato starch and the icy snow is from the Scale-Line. Before sprinkling the snow I added some grass tufts by MiniNature, a German company that makes outstanding foliage, grass and other stuff to spice up your diorama.

For this diorama I wanted a simple straight base and I ordered mine from Jade Bases. The base is custom made for me and is actual oak wood. I wrapped everything up by adding a name tag to the base. This name tag is the finishing touch every time and I always get mine from Name-it in the UK.

Conclusion

I have worked at this diorama with lots of pleasure. I have looked particularly at the expression on the faces to create the right atmosphere. It should look like a tragedy of the faithful...

Roger Hurkmans



Roy Schurgers

Born 9 January, 1968
Horn, The Netherlands.

The past...

As with so many, my first modelling experience was with the Matchbox series. Those small 1/76 tanks with 'diorama' potential really got things started. When I was 12 I got my first Tamiya Horch in 1/35. From that 'historic' moment on I was really hooked! I remember going to the city on my bicycle every week to visit the local modelling shop. They had a huge inventory stacked to the ceiling. I could stare at it for hours before I could make a decision on which tank to spend my Sunday allowance. I'd worked my fingers to the bone with models until girls and mopeds became more important. Unfortunately, most models ended up in a box in the attic, never to be found again, or became the victim of fireworks 'experiments'.

The present...

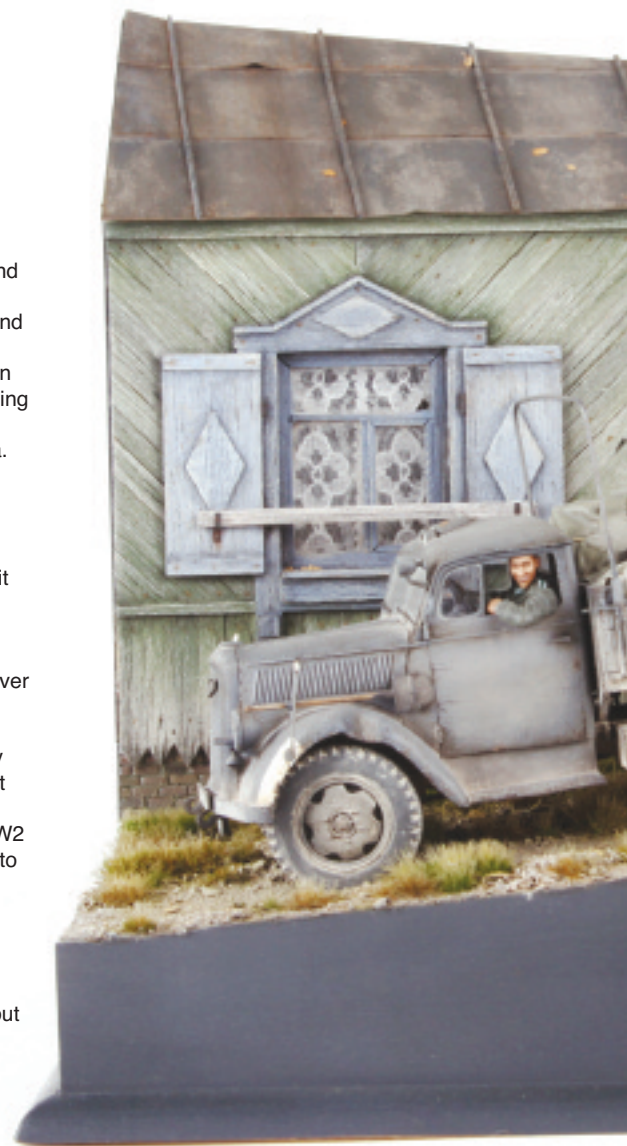
Modelling went into a long hibernation till about 10 years ago. Not knowing better I basically continued where I left off, using my Revell paint and reindeer moss.

That was until the internet and modelling shows opened my eyes and took the game to a whole new level. Initially I worked on my techniques and later on I tried to push the limit in concept. My work as an art director in advertising sure comes in handy, giving models and dioramas a different approach in terms of layout and idea.

The future...

In my opinion the internet has saved our fine hobby. Despite the fact that it was also killing our conventional modelling stores, the amount of information and possibilities are overwhelming. A true modeller however has to keep his eye on modelling instead of on an overkill of research. Modelling will always be a part of my life as it has always been. Maybe not necessarily in AFV or diorama but since I have an infinite interest in WW2 since childhood, I will probably stick to this theme for quite a while.

Regardless of the subject my main focus is trying to be original and keeping it simple. To me it is more about the idea than about the size, but mostly it is about the fun and being able to share it!









A Labour of Love

Ukraine 1968

The inspiration for this little vignette came from the information that the Kettenkrad sometimes was used as farming equipment after the war. The story behind the scene is that the Ukrainian farmer upgraded a left behind Kettenkrad into a handy tool. The idea was basic so now it was time to fill in the details and try to add some more depth to the story.

Surfing the net I came across two inspiring pictures. First there was one of a Kettenkrad painted red which was in use after the war by fire-fighters. Then there was this funny picture of a relaxed man walking up hill smoking a cigarette followed by his wife carrying a large pile of brush wood on her back. Combining the two led to 'A Labour of Love'.

The Sd.Kfz.2 Kleines Kettenkrad is from Dragon. I first assembled the old Tamiya kit but the tracks and road wheels were moulded as one piece. Well... at least I had a good test model.

The Dragon kit was pretty much the only decent alternative. The only upgrades were some minor modifications and the panel instrument faces by Archer.

Painting a vehicle red was pretty new to me. When highlighting red to simulate a worn effect one must be careful not to get a pink colour. I found a solution by using a lot of dusty pigments. The plough was scratch built using balsa wood, evergreen and some photo-etch leftovers.

The farmer driving the Kettenkrad is built from spare parts with a sculpted jacket and a Hornet head. It was important to make him lean to the left as a counter-weight for the Kettenkrad which is leaning to the right. His wife is a well done figure from Mig Productions. I gave her a new pair of arms and an extra apron made from a piece of latex surgeon gloves. The apron on the original figure was stuck to her skirt. Because she is leaning forward pushing the plough the apron needed to hang vertical due to gravity.





Initially my idea was to make a bigger diorama with a destroyed AFV rusting in the field. This was based on a picture of a destroyed Ferdinand with farmers working the field in the background. Later on, I came to the conclusion that the idea would be stronger if I would just stick to the main scene.

I finished this little vignette in autumn. I had a lot of inspiration from the freshly ploughed fields in my surroundings. The cornfield is made from roadside weeds. The ground work consists of different types of sand and small roots.



End Station

Most dioramas have a classic '3-step' build up. There is a base (foreground), an AFV (centre) and a building or tree (background). In this case however I added a fourth level by making the underground staircase, thus creating (literally) even more depth.

To further emphasize this depth I choose a small base and a high building for the background. The diorama would have been fine without the building because the idea would still stand. Only this time I was thinking of creating multiple levels and more height for a change.

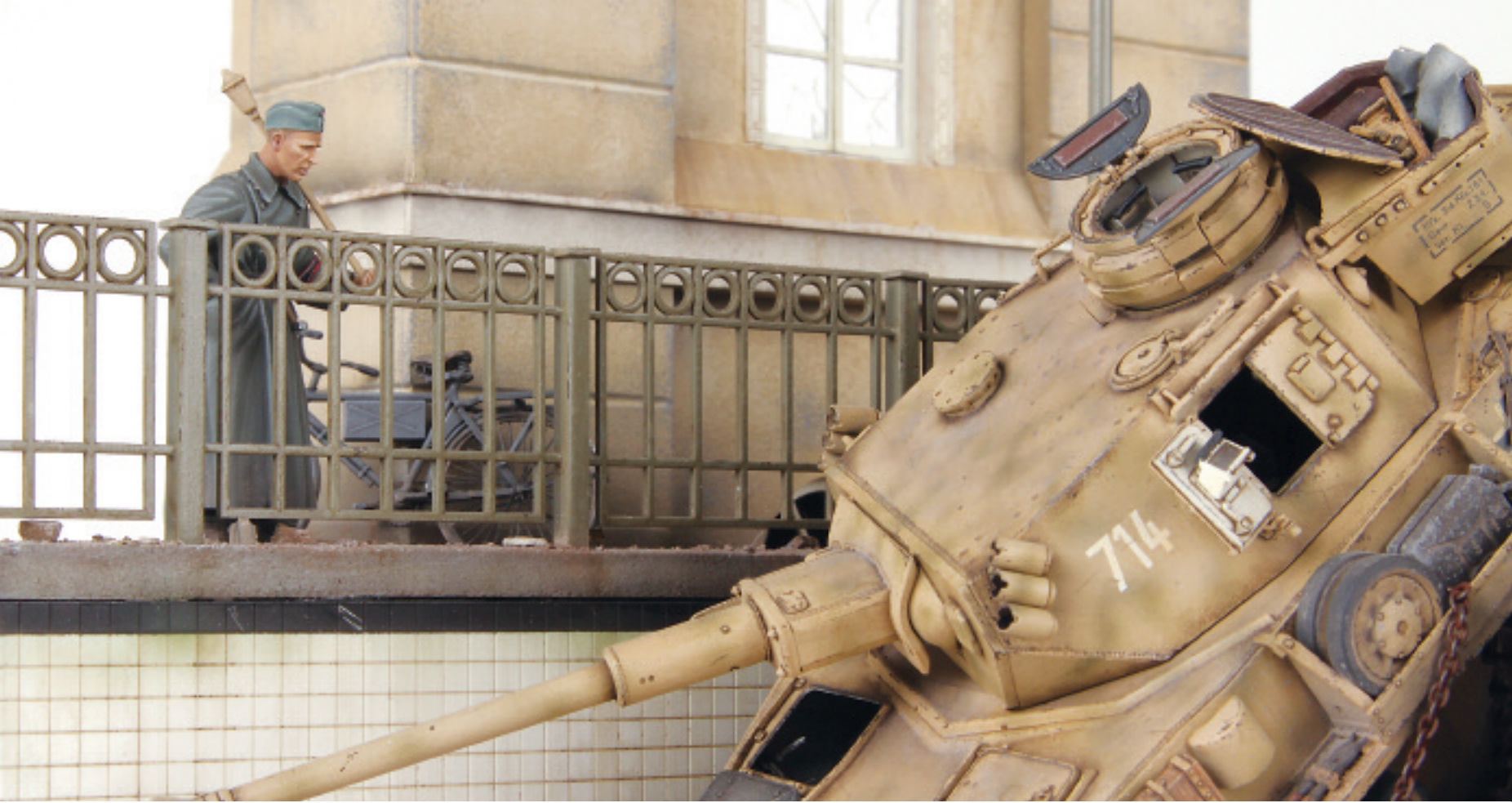
I did a lot of testing for how I would position the panzer in the hole. The end result was my second attempt after getting stuck with the first layout which was as good as finished, but because the small base and multiple levels were so important to me, all elements just had to be in the right place.

The building, pavement and U-Bahn entrance were made from scratch. The basic material I used here is blue high density Styrofoam which can be purchased in many thicknesses. It is extremely easy to use as a lightweight building material. Just make sure that when you get to the painting process, you seal it off with a non aggressive coat before further painting. I only did some 'minor' damage to the building. Just a chunk from the side seemed original. You don't always have to use a destroyed building to display a battle zone.

The tile wall is a simple pre-engraved sheet of Evergreen. The angel ornaments and street sign details were added to the scene and are from Reality in Scale. The fences and U-Bahn sign post are from MiniArt.







The centre of the viewers attention is on the Panzer IV. The sad looking German Volkssturmer (Jaguar with a Hornet head) staring down on the wreck emphasizes the centre point. It was more logical to me, to let the tank go down the steps instead of up. It also symbolises downfall and creates even more depth.

The trick in this diorama (and basically in any diorama) is to make the separate elements like base, figure, AFV and building connect with each other. Of course, a building is connected to the street and the tank rests on the stairs, but what I really mean is that there should be a natural flow between the separate elements. Loose tracks connect the stairs with the panzer, the bicycle connects the building to the pavement etc.







'Goodbye Lenin'

Mariupol, October 1941

This one took a while to finish. Not that it was extremely hard but the idea changed two times along the way. I started out with the Lenin Statue from Verlinden Productions. I filled up some holes with Magic Sculp since I did not like the over excessive damage that was inflicted to the original statue.

For the paint job a lot of visual research to the oxidation of bronze statues was needed. Basically I concluded that the bronze turns to a matt black with greenish oxidation on top. For that matter I used the 'hairspray technique' partly revealing the black underneath the green oxidation. Of course painting bird poop was a detail not to be missed.

The initial idea was to let the original pedestal work as a figure base, carrying the statue and some German soldiers posing as victors. Because I had a hard time finding the right figures I started thinking in other directions. I wanted to pull the statue from its pedestal by a German halftrack. These events occurred frequently during the Blitzkrieg as an act of humiliation towards the Russian defenders and bronze of course was always a valuable resource for the German war industry.

After almost completing the whole scene except from the figures I changed my mind (again). It would take me a lot of figures to turn it into a spectacular scene since pulling down a statue is not a one man job. But I was looking for something more simple.

Finally I got new inspiration by the title 'Goodbye Lenin', a German drama/comedy about the fall of the DDR. At that time I just bought the Tamiya Opel Blitz so one thing led to another. The Blitz was a clean build in Tamiya tradition. I added some scratch work like the support beams for the tarp. The 'Opel Bliz' logo on the grill was sadly enough missing in the Tamiya kit so I had to cut it off an old Italeri Blitz.

In my opinion an unexpected cargo is always fun to look at. Still I needed some usual cargo stuff around the statue to fill the gaps and preventing the statue from sliding during the ride.

The driver was a conversion of spare parts and a Hornet head. I had to 'scalp' his head to fit the figure under the roof.

The building was made from scratch. The main material used was 1mm thick balsa wood. With balsa you don't have to simulate wood... because it is wood and it is also easy to work with.

The groundwork consists of different types of sand, roots and leaves. The grass is an excellent 'ready to go' product from Grey Funnel Line. Available in many colours and lengths. In groundwork it is essential to have a great variety in materials, shapes and colours. This makes it less flat and more natural.





Rocket Man

I have always been fascinated by the Sturmtiger. Not only it's massive body and brute power, but even more, its mystique is very intriguing. Allied troops that came across (often abandoned) Sturmtigers were astounded by it's impressive mortar.

There's a picture with a GI posing inside the 38 cm barrel. This was the immediate inspiration for this little vignette. I did not want to copy the picture because I did not like the camouflage scheme on the portrayed Sturmtiger. Copying a picture maybe fun but it also limits your creative freedom. On top of that it can be frustrating since most world war II reference photo material is limited and of poor quality.

Sawing a model in half is not just a decision based on doing something different or because it fits a specific layout. The reason I sawed the model in half is because I wanted to fully focus on the weird barrel and its 'passenger'. If I would have left the Sturmtiger in one piece the balance just would not be right. Because this was the first time I had to put a saw into a model I choose an inexpensive model from Revell, which was basically a good kit. In preparation to sawing I had to make sure all parts were glued firmly. I even put some reinforcements on the inside like a roll bar inside a rally car. This prevented the outer panels from too much movement during the 'surgery'.





The weathering of the vehicle was kept to a minimum regarding the fact that these monsters only saw action for a short time.

Both figures are basically from Verlinden Productions with some minor modifications.

In my opinion a diorama does not end with what is above ground level. The base, its colour, shape and material are just as important to contribute to a total concept. Just as a well thought of title presented on a decent sign and printed or engraved in a fitting typography.

Therefore I decided to give the front of the base the same angle as the sloping front armour of the Sturmtiger. The title 'Rocketman' was printed in a circus type to emphasise the title since these daredevils were a popular attraction in circus-like events.

Since the scene took place early 1945 the ground work is a mixture of fallen birch leaves and dark green Heki wildgrass.



ROCKET MAN

Roy Schurgers



Welcome to Africa

March 1941, Tripoli Libya

The more dioramas I build, the more compact they become. In my opinion it is very important to focus on a single point without too much distraction surrounding it. When you add a story to your diorama it always makes it more interesting. In an ideal situation all the elements, should in some way be part of the story.

After the usual research of North African street scenes, I came up with a main building, a small arch on the left and a piece of wall to the right, suggesting a packed street downtown facade. In most diorama's a building is used as a background. In this case the building plays an important role in the story. It not only reveals the location but also makes it possible for the woman to pour her pitcher on the panzer commander which is the basic idea. The big arch connects the foreground with the background thus creating a more coherent and compact situation. It also suggests that the street is in fact a narrow alley, typical for North African villages.

The basic material is blue high density Styrofoam. The various details are done with Evergreen, balsa wood, lead wire and ornaments on sticky paper. After the basic construction I plastered the walls with a spatula using a thin coat of plaster. It not only gives the desired real life structure but it also protects the Styrofoam from further treatments.

To add more dynamics to the scene and to suggest movement of the Panzer, I put a slightly downward slope to the alley. The paved stones are separate pieces of blue high density Styrofoam. Creating a small gutter in the middle gives it a bit more variety.

The Panzer II Ausf. F, is from Dragon/Cyber Hobby build straight from the box with some minor adjustments. The initial idea was to create an scene in North Africa, but I wanted to stay away from the obvious Desert Sand colour for the Panzer II since the fresh arrivals in Africa still had their 'European' colours.







The panzer commander is a slightly converted Alpine figure. For the Arab figures I used two sets of Verlinden Productions. The woman in the window has been partly scratched to get the desired pose. The initial idea was to actually pour 'water' from the women's pitcher, but I just couldn't get that right. And if you are not sure about the result you better come up with an alternative, especially when it is such a key element in the story.

The solution was basically simple. Instead of making it an 'action' scene the viewer now sees the moment prior to the action. This also has the advantage that the viewer can fill in the blanks. It is never wrong to tickle someone's imagination, although it has to remain understandable.



“**Made in Holland**” is an AFV production

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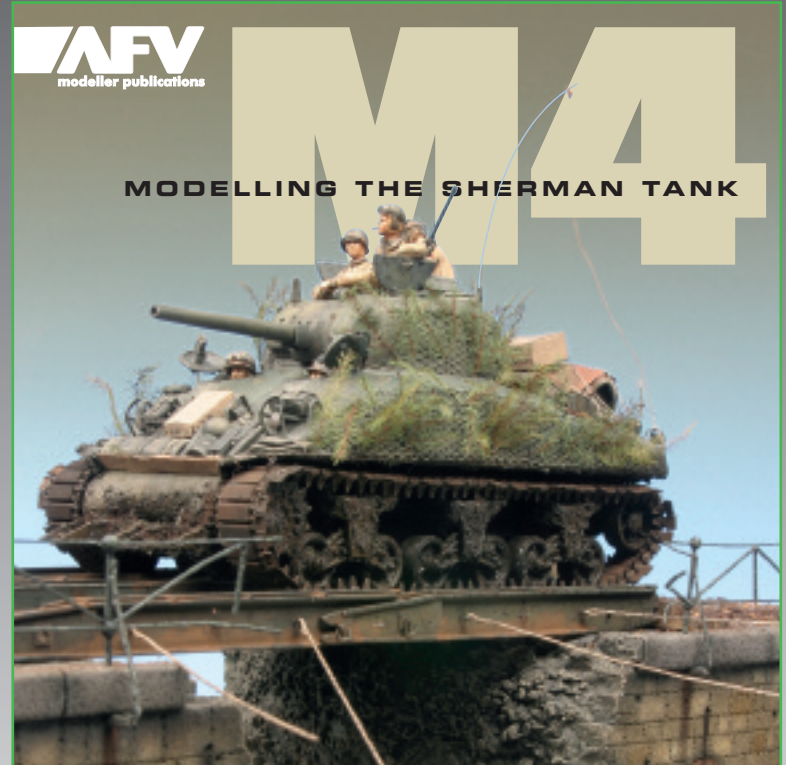
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