

Trumpeter 1/35th Scale German 8.8cm Panzerjägerkanone PAK43

by Eric Christianson

Developed from Krupp's Gerät 42, this incarnation of the venerable 8.8 cm PAK43 gun used a new cruciform mount with the gun much closer to the ground, and a much stronger and more angled armor shield to provide better protection. The standard armament of the Tiger II, the KwK/PAK43 tank gun was able to penetrate about 200mm of armor at 1,000m, allowing it to defeat any contemporary tank on the battlefield.

photo-etch outer sleeve for the barrel comes in a separate bag.

The three sheets of photo-etch contain:

1. An optional gun shield (from the one provided in plastic) and various pieces that provide detail for the gun shield.
 2. A superb ammunition rack that is mounted on the inside of the gun shield (which should remain empty if the gun is mounted on its wheels).
 3. Flat, imprinted disks that go onto the ends of 16 plastic ammunition rounds provided in the kit (eight live rounds, eight empty casings). The empty casings are hollowed out at the end – very nice.
- The 12-page instruction booklet is well illustrated and easy to follow - for the most part. A separate glossy, two-sided color

There are many, many delicate parts in this kit that have other parts attached to them. In order to get everything lined up and installed right, I had to attach a few parts, wait overnight for the glue to dry rock-solid, and then attach a few more parts, etc., etc., which made for a relatively lengthy build. I could have used super-glue, but the fit of many of these parts suffered from what I call Trumpeter's 'wobble-fit' – meaning the parts fit, but not securely. There is no positive, tactile response when attaching parts and many of them must be nursed along as they dry in order for them to line up right. Under such conditions, I find super-glue too unforgiving.

Throughout the build, there are many sub-assemblies that should be built, painted and weathered separately. Some are as small as the operator's seat (four parts), some are much more complex – each of two wheeled limbers contain roughly 44 parts. In addition, all four wheels are different – be sure to keep track of each wheel separately until they are finally installed.

Based on more error than trial, I would recommend the following assembly and painting procedure:

1. Assemble the cruciform mount (Steps 1-3) and set aside.
2. Assemble the gun base (leave gun barrel off) (Steps 4-6) and set aside.
3. Assemble Gun Shields (Steps 7-10 – leave gun barrel off) and set aside.
4. Assemble four wheels and attach rubber tires (Steps 12 and 13) and set aside.
5. Assemble both limbers (Steps 14-16 – leave the wheels off) and set aside.
6. Attach both limbers to the cruciform mount.
7. Prime, paint, and weather the gun base, gun barrel, cruciform mount (with limbers attached), gun shields and the four wheels separately.
8. Attach the shields to the gun base.
9. Attach the gun base to the cruciform mount.
10. Attach the wheels to the limbers on the cruciform mount.
11. Attach the barrel to the gun base.



Trumpeter's PAK43 comes in a small, sturdy box containing seven separately bagged trees of yellow-tan plastic parts. The parts are crisp and flash-free, and effort has been made to restrict the few ejector pin marks to areas that are not visible on the finished model. The plastic is very soft and sands easily.

Also included are three sheets of photo-etch and an aluminum barrel. A delicate

Painting and Marking Guide is included and provides a late-war standard color scheme of a German Dark Yellow base. One side of the guide shows a five-view layout of the gun in its towed configuration, the other side provides the same as a fixed emplacement. These were invaluable in determining the placement of the very small parts included in the kit. The box art shows the weapon sporting a dark yellow, green, and red-brown late-war scheme.

The main gun shield restricts access to many of the (visible) main gun parts directly behind it, so it should be painted separately. Make sure that all the parts that connect the gun shield and the wheels to the main assembly are accounted for and not attached too soon as the instructions would have you do.* There are four posts, for example, that connect the gun shield to the gun. These posts have no positive connection point on the back of the gun shield, so they cannot be glued-fast until you attach the gun shield itself and know where the posts can go.

* 'Connecting' parts that I left out of the assembly sequence until later:

Step 3 – B46

Step 4 – E17, E18

Step 15 – B10, B11

Step 16 – C41 (two parts)

I assembled and painted the four wheels separately because I felt the process of stretching the rubber tires onto the wheels after assembly might cause many of the delicate parts to break off. As it turned out, this was a very good idea.

The rubber tires looked nice but proved to be a disappointment. Each wheel has two tires, and for some reason there was only one wheel out of four where both tires fit. I checked the wheel diameters and found that they were identical, as well as the outer wheel 'ring' areas where the tires are supposed to slip around. This means that there must have been some minute difference in the way the rubber tires were made. To keep the tires from rolling off the plastic wheels I used some 5-minute epoxy to make them stay. They did.

Each wheel attaches to the limber by fitting a U-shaped joint on the limber to two small holes in the wheel, and then gluing the end of the spring to another part of the wheel. The attachment points for all of this were very weak. Consequently, even though much effort is put into the design of the wheels and limbers, I had to glue each wheel fast to each end in order for them to be able to support the main gun assembly and mount.



The attachment of the main gun shield to the gun assembly went relatively smoothly. I had to open up some of the attachment points and proceed slowly, letting each part dry before starting on another. I attached the large ammunition case after the shield was in place since it sits directly adjacent to one of the delicate rods that hold the shield to the gun, and I needed complete access to that rod in order to fit the shield on and hold it. Once the shield was firmly attached to the gun, I attached the gun to the cruciform mount.

Trumpeter included three sheets of photo-etch with the kit. You get a beautifully-rendered alternative to the plastic gun shield which, if you choose to use it, must be augmented with many very small rivets, plates and other bits, front and back. I thought that the plastic shields were thin enough for use, and Trumpeter thoughtfully provided a back plate to the shield

that effectively covers the sink marks found there.

Another PE sheet provided contains 16 disks that attach to the ends of the 8.8cm ammunition rounds – beautiful. But since I wanted to build the gun with its transportation limbers attached, the ammunition rack would be empty, so the PE and accompanying rounds will be saved for another build. That left me with precious little of the wonderful PE to use on the build. But I'm not complaining too much!

Once you finish the sub-assemblies and have accounted for all the parts, the kit comes together quickly. With a little effort, I think the final result looks pretty good and crazy-complex – which is the look I was after.

I painted the two gun shields and wheels separately. With so much Testors glue on

the model I started with an even primer coat of Gunze Mr. Surfacer 1200. I followed this with a base coat of Tamiya NATO Black. Both of these layers are very thin and (I feel) did not detract from the look of all the delicate parts making up the gun.

Next I airbrushed everything with Tamiya Dark Yellow, followed by a dusting of a mixture of Tamiya Dark Yellow and Tamiya Deck Tan to lighten up the upper surfaces of the larger parts. I tried my best to leave a little NATO Black showing through. I then gave everything a coat of Future to prepare the surface for washes and filters.

Once the Future dried for two days, I applied (first) a very thin filter of Mig Dark Brown. I use Mona Lisa White Spirits to thin my oil paints. Mona Lisa is about as mellow as paint thinner can get while still actually thinning the paint. Once that was thoroughly dry, I applied a pin wash, mixing Winsor Newton Burnt Umber and Ivory Black oils with Mona Lisa. The last step was to (very carefully) touch up everything with Mig P231 Metallic Gun Metal pigment using my finger to give these parts a proper metallic 'glint'.

The build took me about 15 hours to complete, most of the time spent on the two transportation limbers and fit problems.

The number of small parts and complexity of the assembly made building this kit a challenge even for an experienced modeler. I don't blame Trumpeter for the complexity – the design of the gun and two transportation limbers appears to have risen more from crazy German over-engineering than anything else. The attachment points for many of the parts in the kit, however, could have been better-designed. Many such points were simply non-existent.

On the positive side, however, the completed kit conveys the sinister look of a high-caliber anti-tank weapon and I think it will look perfect behind a halftrack on a muddy road somewhere on the Eastern front.

I would recommend this kit to modelers experienced in solving problems. That said, however, the kit builds into a very nice and unique representation. I'd like to

thank Steven's International for providing the review sample, and *Internet Modeler* for giving me the opportunity to build the kit.

