

Eager Beaver 2.5 Ton Truck

by Eric Christianson

Scale: 1/35

Company: Revell / Monogram

Price: \$23.99

Product/Stock #: 85-6457

Website: Revell / Monogram

Product Web Page: View

Product provided by: Revell / Monogram

Revell/Monogram has rereleased their vintage 'Eager Beaver' M-34 6x6 2.5 ton truck, the first of a long-lived family of trucks initially deployed by the United States Army, and subsequently utilized by many nations around the world. The M-34 started out in 1949 as a design by the REO Motor Car Company as a 2 1/2 ton three axle all-wheel drive off-road truck that was later nicknamed the "Duce and a Half". The first vehicle in the family, the M-34, was quickly superseded in military usage by the M-35, the major difference being the M-35's 10-tire configuration versus the M-34's 6-tire configuration.

This old kit brings back memories of bicycle trips down to Rexall Drugs with my paper route money to buy yet another plastic model. I probably had a dozen of these trucks in and around the sandbox and dirt piles in my back yard, filled with mud-covered and dog-chewed army men. When I saw the opportunity to review this kit, I knew I had to get it!

Opening the box

The first thing you notice opening the box is the simplicity of its contents – all of 73 pieces shaking around like a bunch of loose bones in a barrel. The pencil-thick



The contents of this box include:

- 4 main plastic sprues plus a few more sprues with a single part or two attached.
- 1 plastic sprue containing six figures
- 1 black rubber sprue with seven truck tires, six for the vehicle and one for the spare.
- 2 rectangular sheets of clear plastic for use as windshield and cab (back) windows.
- 1 12-page instruction booklet in three languages (English, French and Spanish)
- 1 small decal sheet, perfectly registered.

sprues have massive attachment points and the hard, dark-green plastic is slick with mold-release agent and dotted with pour-stubs and flash. Still, I have to admit, what might be unacceptable in another kit from another manufacturer is a pleasant walk down memory lane with this kit. It appears that this kit is the exact same kit as released in the 70's with an updated set of decals and perhaps new tires.

The Build

Undercarriage, Cab, and Rear Deck

The instructions begin with cutting and attaching clear plastic sheet for the windshield in the cab and rear deck

look-though. I bypassed this step since doing this now would complicate painting and finishing later on. In the end, I left the windows open with no windshield – I felt the finished truck looked fine without them since attaching the super-thin sheeting from behind looked odd against the over-scale thickness of the plastic window frames.

The parts that make up the undercarriage are well-thought out and designed for easy assembly. You can leave the wheels and tires off until the end of the build to assist in painting, which is what I did.

The rudimentary cab comes together well and could use a lot of detail since the

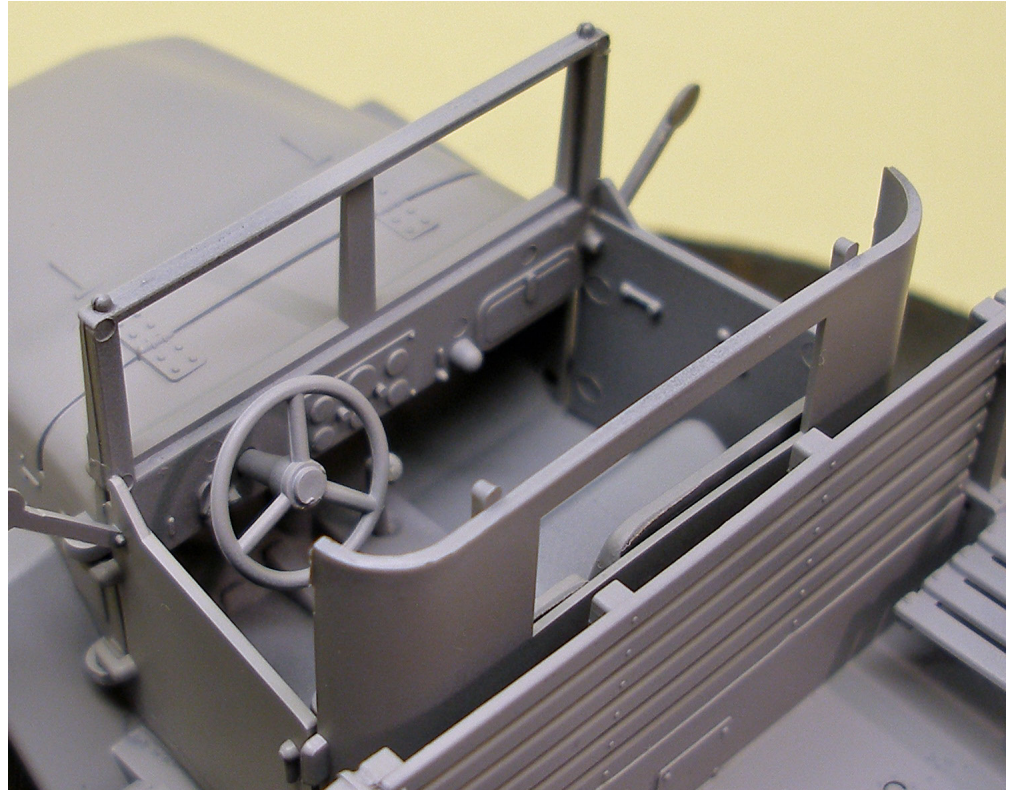
interior is clearly visible from the outside. That said, the entire truck could use a lot of added detail, so perhaps leaving the cab as sparse as it is fits with this build.

Tires

The seven black rubber tires included in the kit are well detailed but contain a significant bead of rubber along the center of each tread that is difficult to remove. The fit on the plastic wheels is tight and true, and they look right. The rubber tires took lacquer primer, acrylic-lacquer base coat, enamel camouflage paint and several applications of pigment dampened with paint thinner without any problems whatsoever. These must be new in the re-release.

Figures

There are six rudimentary figures included with the kit. The driver doesn't exactly fit on the front seat behind the steering wheel and will need some rearrangement in order for that to happen. The only other soldier that is made to go with the truck will also require some surgery in order to stand correctly with one foot on the doorstep. The other four figures are in 'action poses', including a bazooka team and a radio man. The detail is severely lacking,



and there are thick, solid hunks of plastic in areas that should be hollowed out (inside of elbows, etc.). Still – the figures give the kit a certain 'coolness' factor for nine-year olds (and 56 year-olds who think they're still nine years old).

Decals

The decals are surprisingly thin and well-registered, leading me to believe that they have been reworked for this

re-release. The only issue I had was that I thought the big star on the front hood was waaaaaaay too big – it just didn't look right. I had plenty of spare white stars in my decal stash but I felt the truck looked better without a star on the hood altogether, so that is what I did.

Painting and Finish

The Deuce and a Half can be painted just about any color as long as it is green, so I chose green. The only items I left off the completed model for painting were the wheels and the cab roof, attaching these before weathering. Painting and finishing followed these steps:

(Note: I thin Model Master Paints using their own airbrush thinner. I thin all filters, washes and wet pigments using odorless Mona Lisa Paint Thinner. I use a Pasche-H Single-Action airbrush, Number #3 tip, at 20 lbs. pressure for everything.)

1. I started by airbrushing a primer coat of Gunze Mr. Surfacer 1200 to give the





plastic some grip for the following coats and to cover the mold release agent.

2. I followed this with an overall pre-shade coat Tamiya NATO Black (XF-69) – this would fill in the dark recesses and provide the shadows near the flat surface edges, adding depth to the subsequent coats to come.

3. Next came the first camouflage coat using Model Master Olive Drab. I sprayed it carefully, allowing some of the black to show along the edges, wheel wells and underneath the truck.

4. Next I applied the second post-shading camouflage coat using Model Master Faded Olive Drab, lightening up all the panels moving from the center outwards, paying special attention to the canvas roof over the truck bed. I made sure to lighten up the areas exposed to sunlight and leave the areas in shadow darker.

5. Once the camouflage coats were dry, I hand-painted the areas that would receive decals with Future.

6. Once the Future was dry, I applied the decals using the Red and Blue Micro Sol/ Set system without any problems.

7. Next, while I still had a flat coat on the model, I applied several filters to enhance the colors. I first gave the whole vehicle a few filter coats of MIG Wash Brown. I then gave the wheels and bench seat a filter of MIG Dark Rust. I heavily thin all of my washes and filters with Mona Lisa White Spirit.

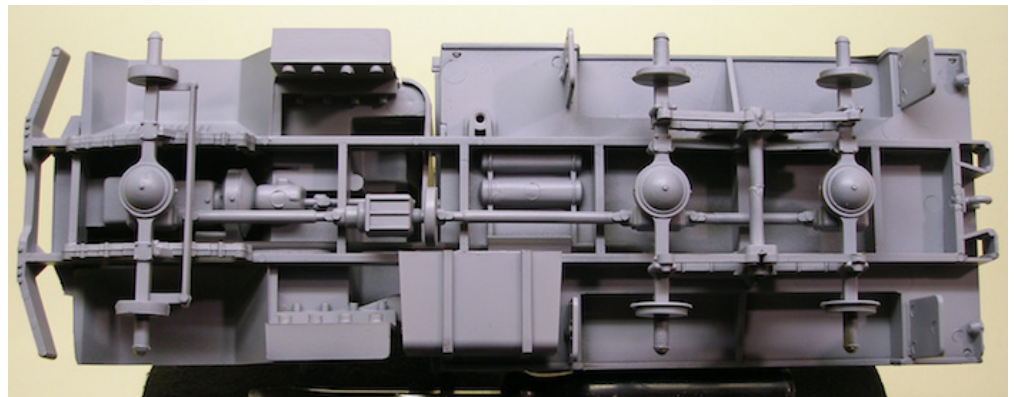
8. Once the filters were dry, I hand-brushed another coat of Future over the decals to seal them.

9. For years I used to give the surface of my model a glossy coat of Future acrylic at this point in the weathering process to prepare it for an oil-based pin wash and possibly some streaking. With experimentation, however, I found that the filters I applied gave the surfaces a slightly satin finish that assisted in

spreading a pin wash like it should, using capillary action. Furthermore, using the very mild Mona Lisa thinner with MIG Oils did not disturb the underlying paint and/or finishes, no matter how thick I slathered stuff on.

So - I gave the vehicle a pin wash using Mig Dark Wash (aka Raw Umber) straight from the bottle, paying special attention to the wheels, front grill, and various panel lines.

10. I followed this with a heavy road-dusting coat of Vallejo Model Air Light Brown and then shot the whole vehicle with Vallejo Flat Varnish to kill any shiny spots still remaining. I cut each of these 50/50 with Vallejo Airbrush Thinner to improve flow.





11. Finally, I applied a splattered mud effect into the wheel-wells and fenders using an old brush loaded with a sludge of Mig European Dust and Mona Lisa Thinner, blown on with my airbrush set at 20 lbs. pressure.

Conclusion

What can I say? This kit isn't for the purist. There are so many flaws and so much missing detail that to compare it to other Deuce and a Half kits on the

market would be a fool's errand. Instead, this kit should be built with the mindset of lost youth; a nine-year olds' big dreams and empty pockets.

This would be the kit to use for filling out a big convoy diorama, even if the model itself is of Korean War vintage. After cleaning all the pieces, I assembled the whole truck in just under two hours, and it only took that long because I had to wait for the glue to set up at least a little. This model was made for beginners - but

it also delivers for experienced modelers as well, providing a welcome diversion from all the super-serious builds we normally busy ourselves with.

I recommend this kit for all modelers, young and old. There are no fit problems and assembly is a breeze.

I would like to thank Revell / Monogram for providing this kit for review, and to IPMS USA for giving me the opportunity to build it.