

Seattle Chapter News



Seattle Chapter IPMS/USA
June 2017

PREZNOTES



Accurate or Aesthetic?

[Andrew is taking a short break from writing PrezNotes, so I'll be filling in for him this month. -ED]

Every year at this time, my Facebook feed fills up with photos of the Normandy invasion, and this has always been one of my favorite photos from that period. It shows a Spitfire of No. 411 Squadron, RCAF, being painted with Invasion Stripes. [Photo source: PL-30827, DND (Canada) Archives via RCAF]. I've only ever built one aircraft with D-Day stripes, a US Navy Spitfire, and I used decals for the stripes on that one. They're perfectly straight and symmetrical. But as can be seen in the photo, reality wasn't always like that. The Allies painted stripes on thousands of aircraft in just a few days prior to the invasion. Not every painter was a budding Rembrandt. If you painted a model like this, it would be accurate, but it would also look sloppy and not as "nice" as one with precise stripes.

Sometimes making a model that represents a specific real example means that you have to do things that make the model look worse from a purely aesthetic point of view. Armor modelers take this to the extreme with weathering. It boggles my mind that there are paint sets which have various paint colors to represent the tonal variations of mud from different locations. But perhaps the mark of a great modeler is someone who can make something that wasn't that attractive in real life look beautiful?

continued on page 16

In This Issue

MiniArt T-54-1	3
Modelfy 2018	8
Dragon Sd.Kfz. 142	
Sturmgeschütz III Ausf. C/D	9
Hurricane Bookshelf:	
Malta Story	14

SEATTLE CHAPTER CONTACTS

President: Andrew Birkbeck P.O. Box 15983 Seattle, WA 98115 Ph: 206-522-3539 acbirkbeck@comcast.net	Vice President: Eric Christianson 18215 NE 95th Way #103 Redmond, WA 98052 Ph: 425-591-7385 ModelerEric@comcast.net	Treasurer: Twyla Birkbeck P.O. Box 15983 Seattle, WA 98115 Ph: 206-276-3855 birkbet@comcast.net	Show Chair: Andrew Birkbeck
---	---	---	---------------------------------------

IPMS Seattle Web Site (Web Co-Ordinator, John Kaylor): <http://www.ipms-seattle.org>

Public Disclaimers, Information, and Appeals for Help

This is the official publication of the Seattle Chapter, IPMS-USA. As such, it serves as the voice for our Chapter, and depends largely upon the generous contributions of our members for articles, comments, club news, and anything else involving plastic scale modeling and associated subjects. Our meetings are generally held on the second Saturday of each month, (see below for actual meeting dates), at the **North Bellevue Community/Senior Center, 4063-148th Ave NE**, in Bellevue. See the back page for a map. Our meetings begin at 10:00 AM, except as noted, and usually last for two to three hours. Our meetings are very informal, and are open to any interested modeler, regardless of interests. Modelers are encouraged to bring their models to the meetings. Subscriptions to the newsletter are included with the Chapter dues. Dues are \$15 per annum, and may be paid to Twyla Birkbeck, our Treasurer. (See address above). We also highly recommend our members join and support IPMS-USA, the national organization. See below for form. Any of the members listed above will gladly assist you with further information about the Chapter or Society.

The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual writers, and do not constitute the official position of the Chapter or IPMS-USA. You are encouraged to submit any material for this newsletter to the editor. He will gladly work with you and see that your material is put into print and included in the newsletter, no matter your level of writing experience or computer expertise. The newsletter is currently being edited using a PC, and PageMaker 6.5. Any Word, WordPerfect, or text document for the PC would be suitable for publication. Please do not embed photos or graphics in the text file. Photos and graphics should be submitted as single, separate files. Articles can also be submitted via e-mail, to the editor's address above. Deadline for submission of articles is generally twelve days prior to the next meeting - earlier would be appreciated! Please call me at 425-885-3671 if you have any questions.

If you use or reprint the material contained in the newsletter, we would appreciate attribution both to the author and the source document. Our newsletter is prepared with one thing in mind; this is information for our members, and all fellow modelers, and is prepared and printed in the newsletter in order to expand the skills and knowledge of those fellow modelers.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

The IPMS Seattle 2017 meeting schedule is as follows. All meetings are from **10 AM to 1 PM**, except as indicated. To avoid conflicts with other groups using our meeting facility, we must **NOT** be in the building before our scheduled start times, and **MUST** be finished and have the room restored to its proper layout by our scheduled finish time. We suggest that you keep this information in a readily accessible place.

June 10
August 12

July 8
September 9

IPMS/USA MEMBERSHIP FORM

IPMS No. _____ Name: _____
(if Renewing) First Middle Last
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Signature (required by PO): _____

Type of Membership: Adult, 1 Year: \$10 Adult, 2 Years: \$18 Adult, 3 Years: \$26
 Junior (Under 18 Years) \$17 Family, 1 Year: \$35 (Adult + \$1.00 for Juvenile) How Many Cards? _____
 Canada & Mexico: \$15 Other / Foreign: \$38 (airmail) Checks must be drawn on a US bank or international money order

Payment Method: Check Money Order Credit Card (MC/Visa/Amex)
 Credit Card No: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Chapter Affiliation, (if any): _____

If Recommended by an IPMS Member, Please List His / Her Name and Member Number:
 Name: _____ IPMS No.: _____

IPMS/USA P.O. Box 2475
 Join or Renew Online at: www.ipmsusa.org North Canton, OH 44720-0475

Newsletter Editor:
 Robert Allen
 7919 133rd Ave. NE
 Redmond, WA, 98052
 425-885-3671
 baclightning@yahoo.com

MiniArt 1/35th Scale T-54-1 Model 1947 Soviet Medium Tank

by Andrew Birkbeck

The T-54/55 series of Soviet tanks are the most important tanks to see operation in the Cold War era, if for no other reason than sheer numbers: some estimates put total production at over 100,000 units. This series of tanks have also been used in almost every conflict of the second half of the 20th century, large and small, beginning with the invasion of Hungary by Soviet forces in 1956, the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967, 1973, 1982, the Vietnam war from 1967-75, the Iran-Iraq wars of 1980-88, the conflicts in Afghanistan, the Yugoslav Civil wars, and conflicts across Africa. This new, super detailed kit from MiniArt represents the initial production variant of the T-54 which started rolling off production lines in 1947, but suffered from a great many teething troubles. For a superb blog on the T-54, please check here:

<https://thesovietarmourblog.blogspot.com/2017/01/t-54.html>



What's in the MiniArt Box

74 sprues large and small of gray plastic parts (I kid you not!)

1 sprue of clear plastic parts

2 frets of photo etched brass parts

1 sheet of water slide decals with 4 different marking options

1 black and white instruction booklet, 24 pages, with 89 assembly steps and incorporating a color markings and painting guide

Before you start construction of this kit, you will need to figure out a very important matter: how to create a sane system to keep track of where each sprue is on your workbench and the parts thereon. With 74 sprues, it is quite a task! I came up with the idea of getting a large document storage box, and a bunch of large file folders. These were then labelled "A", "Ba", "Cb", "Hk" etc and the appropriate sprue(s) slipped into each folder. Then as you need a part, you reach into the storage box and pull out the appropriate folder and the sprue(s) contained therein.

This kit by MiniArt is a tour de force of model engineering, consisting as it does of 950 plastic parts, together with 105 PE brass parts. State of the art slide molding technology is used throughout the production of the plastic parts, and the model has a near complete interior: engine and engine bay, working torsion bar suspension, driver's compartment and hull shell storage, extensive turret interior details etc. Interestingly, despite so much detail being incorporated elsewhere in the hull and turret, the transmission/radiator area is bare at the rear of the hull interior.

The plastic parts are festooned with crisp detail, and thanks one supposes to the use of CAD techniques in the design of the kit, the parts fit is extremely good. There were no sink marks anywhere on the parts in the review kit. However, here and there a little flash was present, though nothing that detracted significantly from the build experience. I noted no ejection pin marks on any parts visible once construction was concluded. One note however before construction begins: make sure you have a VERY fine razor saw blade, one such as this available from UMM USA, as seen here:

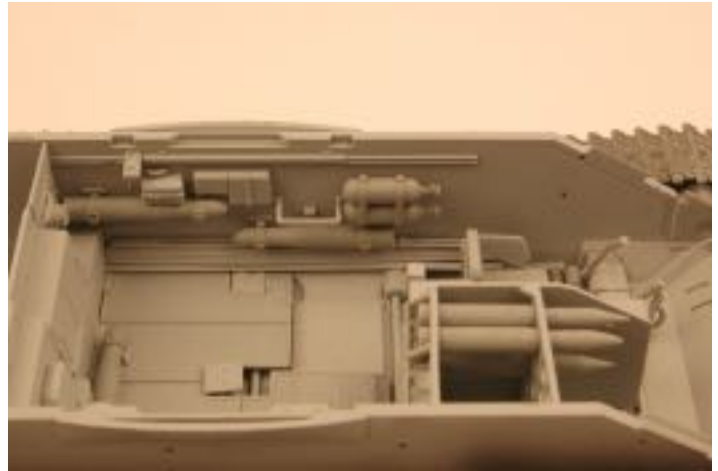
http://umm-usa.com/onlinestore/product_info.php?cPath=21_28&products_id=35

Why? Because if there is one "fault" to this kit, in terms of ease of assembly, it is that some very fine parts are attached to the sprues by masses of sprue attachment points. Even though the plastic used by MiniArt in this kit is fairly robust and flexible, there is a risk of damage if you try to remove these finer parts from the sprues with regular sprue cutters. Be warned!

Construction of the kit starts with the very detailed miniature V-12 diesel engine. This subassembly consists of no fewer than 40 parts, a little kit in its own right! About all that is missing is the wiring harness, which if desired can be created utilizing some very fine wire. The fit of parts for the engine components is superb, and at no time during construction did I have pause to change my mind on this initial observation.

Following the engine comes the lower hull torsion bar suspension assembly sequences, assembly sequences 9 through 16, and continuing in sections 16 through 20. Read the instructions carefully here, as there are a number of parts, such as HO1, HO3 and HO4 where glue should not be used nor be allowed to accidentally come into contact with the parts, otherwise you will have issues with later assembly sequences. Also, be very careful in section 13, as there are a number of parts that look the same, but in fact are ever so slightly different. Mix them up and you will be in a world of hurt.

Assembly sequences 16 through 30 cover the assembly of the hull interior. There is a detailed driver area, including multi part seat, gear leavers and foot pedals etc. The interior sidewalls of the model are festooned with various boxes, compressed gas bottles and various controls, together with shells for the main gun. There is also a large shell storage rack and the 20 shells that go with it mounted on the hull floor. If you plan on displaying the hull "opened up" to take full visual advantage of all this detail, you will of course have to paint all these parts, and I would advise the modeler to do this in a series of subassemblies which can then be glued in place fully painted. Despite the crowded confines with all these parts, everything fits together remarkably well.



When it comes to the assembly of the ten pairs of main road wheels, MiniArt utilizes a pin, part HK4, which is mounted in a channel in the center of the main wheel assemblies (parts HK5 and HK6). The tip of this pin is glued into a slot on the hull suspension units. The pin end, and the slot it mounts into are half circle shapes. It would have been a more secure mount, in my opinion, had MiniArt designed the pin (and its mounting hole) twice the size, i.e. a full circle rather than a half circle. When you see the parts, you will understand what I mean. Once the main wheels are glued in place, and presuming you have assembled the torsion bar assemblies without getting glue where you shouldn't, you will need to set the wheels up in a simple jig such that everything sets up firmly in a correctly aligned fashion.

The next stages involve the assembly of the upper hull components, sections 33 through 44. Everything as mentioned earlier fits together nicely, and the instructions are well laid out so there shouldn't be any difficult questions as to exactly where any particular part goes, or how things line up one part to another. HOWEVER, there are some parts which are particularly fiddly, and fraught with the danger of having them destroyed during their removal from the main sprues. In Section 33, part E4 is a lengthy, spindly part, and it has no fewer than ELEVEN sprue attachment points. You will need to carefully use the micro razor saw applying as little pressure in the sawing motion as possible to avoid breaking the part while removing it. Then you must carefully clean up the eleven attachment points utilizing a hobby knife and a sanding stick followed by sand paper. In Section 42, part E44 has TWENTY-THREE sprue attachment points! Same delicate process will need to be followed, first to remove the part from the sprue, and then to clean up the attachment points. The rear engine deck area has some lovely photo etched mesh screens for the air intake areas.

Section 45 has the modeler attaching the rear hull auxiliary oil/fuel tanks, which themselves were assembled back in Section 34 without incident. The attachment process involves lengths of photo etched brass, parts PEa35 x 2. These are mounting straps for the fuel tanks. At each end of these brass parts the modeler needs to form a loop, and the loops fit onto mounting brackets. In order to have the mounting straps taut so that the fuel tanks stay firmly in place, one needs to know how long the lengths need to be, including the loop part. No guidance is provided by MiniArt in their instructions. I would advise getting some printer paper, cutting lengths the size of the PE parts, and then guesstimating using the paper parts. Once you are satisfied with the length using the paper test parts, transfer the measurements over to the PE brass parts, and bend and fold accordingly.

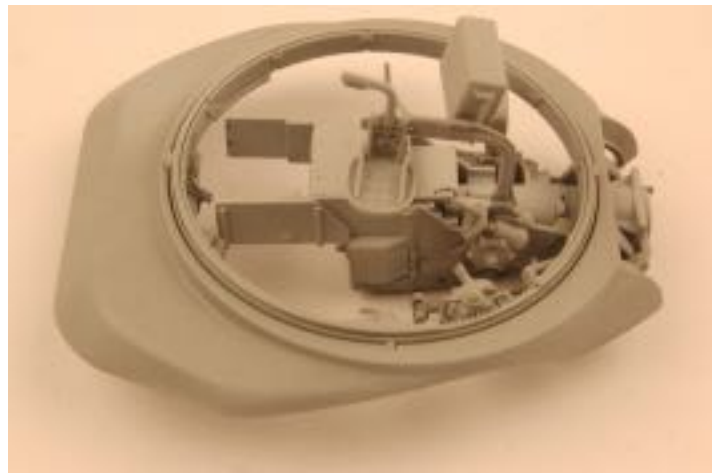
Next in line for assembly are the vehicle's fenders and the auxiliary fuel tanks attached to them, Section 46 through 49. As with the rear hull tanks, holding the fuel tanks to the fender supports are PE parts, this time two parts. It will take planning, patience and perseverance to get these straps attached in good order, but the effort will be worth it. Also, attached to the fenders are machine gun "pods", one on either fender facing forward, Section 51 - 53. On the real vehicle from a practical point of view these machine guns seem rather pointless, as they do not swivel side to side nor move up and down. In order to "aim" them in a general direction, the whole tank would need to be turned. They disappeared on the next iteration of the T-54, the T-54-2 Model 1949. Then Section 54 through 58 have additional fuel tanks and fender locker boxes installed.

Before attaching the fenders, the modeler needs to prepare and attach the link by link tracks. The molded detail on these tracks is outstanding, but a ton of grunt work is required to prep the links, as each link (180 links total) has either four or five sprue attachment points that need cleaning up. If you are a fan of baseball or American football and watch games on television, this is perfect for cleaning up such track parts, as there is lots of "dead time" between plays! Once you have completed all this work, however, you end up with great looking tracks installed on your model!

With the tracks installed, carefully glue the completed fender subassemblies to the hull sides. The fenders have pegs that slot into holes on the hull side walls, making for a solid structure.

Glued on at this time is the engine exhaust outlet on the left rear side of the hull, parts Ba12/16/17. Once the fenders are firmly attached, it is time to sort out the one-piece tow cables, of which there are two. Here we have another example of the massive number of sprue attachment points for spindly parts: ten per tow cable. The cabling is very well defined, and trying to remove ten separate sprue attachment points was more work than I was willing to do, so I cut off the two shackles from the cable sections, drilled out the shackles, and utilized appropriately sized lengths of Eureka braided copper wire cables: <http://www.eurekaxxl.com/sets/towing-cables-35>

Now that the hull is completed, it is time to move on to the assembly of the turret interior, Section 62 through 72. As with the hull, the turret interior contains excellent detail, including but not limited to main gun shell storage racks and their shells, extensive main gun breach detail, gunner's optics, turret crew seats etc. Missing is the cabling that links the various turret wall components together, but the online reference I mentioned at the beginning of this article has extensive photographic and technical manual detail of this cabling should the modeler wish to go to the effort of reproducing this. From an ease of painting point of view, much of this detail should be assembled into various small sub-assemblies, painted, and then carefully glued into place. All this detail makes for a very cramped interior, so be careful to position everything "just so" or you will find one component incorrectly bumping up and interfering with another.



Sections 73 through 80 cover the two turret hatches and surrounding detail, along with some exterior turret detail. Some very small photo etched parts are involved here, so make sure you have a good set of tweezers to grip them with. If they fly off the tweezers, I guarantee the carpet monster will grab them and you will never get them back. And there are a few more of those difficult-to-remove-from-their-sprues spindly parts requiring careful cleanup post-removal: the turret grab rails. Both hatches can be positioned in either the opened or closed position, and both have excellent detail on the interior as well as exterior surfaces.

Into the assembly home stretch now, and MiniArt provides the modeler with a superb DShK machinegun for mounting on the turret roof. The gun is a little model on its own, consisting of nearly 30 parts both plastic and photo etched. Extreme care is required to get the most out of this little gem, but when completed it certainly looks sweet sitting atop the turret rear. Also to be assembled at this time is the coaxial machinegun for the turret interior, which again is well detailed at eight parts. Next comes an optional all weather cover for the driver's hatch, which includes a photo etched wiper blade! Then the upper half of the turret shell is carefully mounted onto the lower section, and you find out if all those interior parts you installed are in the right spot! The fit of the upper and lower turret sections was excellent, and all that was required once the glue was firmly set was to take a sanding stick and carefully remove the seam, checking reference photos if you can as being cast, there were casting imperfections in the exterior (that is, it wasn't completely smooth). Finally comes the mounting of the one piece main gun (100mm D-10T), a lovely piece of injection molding, and its gun shield. Yes, the large main gun barrel has a seam that needs removing, but this was easily accomplished using a sanding stick and some sand paper after that.

Color and Markings

MiniArt provides a small decal sheet with markings for four vehicles. Markings Option 1 is listed as "Tank No. 6 initial batch, Factory No. 183, Nizhny Tagil, Summer 1947" with a simple "6" on the glacis plate and painted overall green. Option 2 is vehicle "224", unit unknown, in overall green. Option 3 is vehicle "222", unit unknown, again in overall green with a faded winter whitewash coating. Finally, Option 4 is a three-tone green, tan yellow and brown scheme listed as an "optional summer camouflage designed for use... in the first half of the 1950's".

It has no vehicle number, only two very small red stars on either side of the turret. Paint colors are called out in the instructions for the following brands: Ammo by Mig, Humbrol, Mr. Color, Testors and Vallejo. For my model, I chose vehicle "224" which was overall green.

For my green color, I decided to utilize a new range of acrylic paint produced by "Mission Models" of Salt Lake City, Utah which can be found here: <https://modelpaintsol.com/model-painting/mission-models-paint>

This paint doesn't perform like other acrylic paints I have used, so for a tutorial on how to utilize it, please read this: <https://modelpaintsol.com/guides/mission-models-acrylic-paints>

I first primed the model using Tamiya rattle can "Fine Surface Primer Light Gray". This is an acrylic lacquer product and one of the best primers on the market IMHO. I first get a bucket of hot water from the tap and immerse the rattle can in the water for five minutes. I remove and dry the can, and then shake the living daylights out of it, to insure a thoroughly mixed can of paint. The hot water heats the paint, thus allowing it to flow better, and by heating the can, I also increase the pressure within the can, thus providing a higher PSI as the paint exits the spray nozzle. This is particularly helpful when the can is less than a quarter full. The Tamiya primer leaves the model with a very smooth surface once fully cured, and doesn't obscure the fine detail on the kit parts.

For the Russian Tank Green, I used Mission Models "MMP-031 Russian Dark Green 4BO FS34079", thinning it per the advice in the article I listed above. I airbrushed the entire model with this color, and then created a post shading color using one part MMP-031 Green and one part "MMP-011 Dunkelgelb RAL 7028". The Mission Models paint flows nicely out of my Iwata gravity feed airbrush at 15 psi, does not clog the tip, and cures to a tough finish. I then airbrushed a couple of light coats of Tamiya X-22 Clear Gloss thinned with their own band of acrylic thinner, over the entire kit prior to applying the decals. The kit decals are very thin, and adhered well to the smooth surfaces they were applied to, and being rather few in number caused no problems. Once dry, the decals were sealed in a couple of additional light coats of Tamiya X-22.

After the final clear coat was given a couple of days to cure, I mixed up some dark brown oil paint "wash", and applied it liberally to the areas of raised detail and in the various recesses.

This was allowed to dry for 24 hours before some Q-tips dipped in odorless mineral spirits were used to remove any excess "wash". The model was then left alone for 72 hours to allow the oil paint wash to set up, before a few light coats of acrylic matt clear were applied. My favorite is AK Interactive's "Ultra Matt Varnish AK 183", the "matt-est" matt on the market. I airbrush this without thinning it, straight from the bottle.

I then hand brushed the rubber rims of the main road wheels with a suitable "Tire Black" from Vallejo, before painting the tracks by hand utilizing Vallejo 304 Track Primer. I then did a little "Expressionist" painting utilizing dots of oil paint: yellow, two different greens, white, and buff. These were blended into the surface of the model using a wide brush and some odorless mineral thinner. The technique creates subtle tonal variations to the model's surface. "Accurate"? I am not sure, but it does give the model a very nice visual appeal in my opinion. I also added paint chips utilizing a piece of sponge and some Vallejo gray and dark rust paint. I then finished off the initial weathering using two different hues of "rust" oil paint, thinned with odorless mineral spirits. In particular, the engine exhaust outlet was given a thorough treatment of "rust" as were the tow cables.

Finally, the anti-aircraft gun barrel on the turret was painted a suitably dark gray color, together with the two fender machine gun barrels and the turret coaxial machinegun barrel. One final coat of airbrushed over the entire model to seal everything nicely. A little highlighting was applied to the machine gun barrels with an artist's graphite pencil to finish things off.

In conclusion, this is the most detailed injection plastic model I have ever had the pleasure to build. For your money, you get a ton of extremely well detailed parts for the turret interior and much of the hull interior. The exterior hull and turret detail is superb as well. The fit of these parts is excellent, and the instructions make it easy to figure out where each of the parts goes. I would recommend this model to more experienced armor modelers simply because of the massive number of parts, and the extensive use of photo etched parts during construction.

Patience is the virtue needed with this kit, but if such is exercised, a superbly detailed model of a very important post WW2 Soviet tank will be the result to grace the modeler's display case shelves. My sincere thanks to MiniArt for generously providing IPMS USA with this review kit.



Modelfy 2018 : Anchors Aweigh ‘Me Boys!

by John DeRosia

I thought about it. I conferred about it. I thought about it...and concluded about it.

Somehow, I ended up being the winner of this year’s (2017) Modelfy category. To stay in good standing in the club and not be asked to ‘walk the plank’ (ha ha ha), I have to come up with the next 2018 Modelfy category.

What fun model kit subject could I come up with as a basis for next year’s Seattle IPMS Model Show and Modelfy category?

I sought out Heads of State, made meeting appointments at the U.N., some of the world’s top leaders, Sooth Sayers, Future Visionists, model participant profilers, toy and hobby specialists, and lastly, good old can’t go wrong with him : the one and only Ronald McDonald. Yup- they all refused to meet with me. Shows you my standing in the “being important league.” Well oinkey-doinkey-pointkey to them!

Having to use my own feeble brain, it then came to me. Naval! No – not ‘oranges’- even though the rumor has it one guy in the club lives by the orange rule.

Naval, as in ships, ships ahoy, anchors away me boys!

For 2018 – you may use ANY kit of a ship with a hull, any scale, any model, and color...any base kit you want to use. Of course you could even make your own hull. Take that hull and make it a ‘what-if?’. Modelfy it to be something other than the kit itself. Of course have loads of fun and use as many parts or other stuff to make it into your ‘crazy’ new design.

See the Figure 1 example of kits you could use. A lot you already have, some you never wanted to build, and others are not that expensive should you buy a ship kit just for the contest.

Remember golden rule #1: Make sure it ‘floats’, then have fun, have fun, and then have more fun! See you in 2018 at the Modelfy table!



Dragon 1/35th Scale Sd.Kfz. 142 Sturmgeschütz III Ausf. C/D

by Eric Christianson

(Editor's note – this abridged version has been edited for use in our newsletter – mostly by removing the specific build notes. You can see the full article posted in the 'Reviews' section of the IPMS USA website or on our own IPMS Seattle website.)

Dragon Models offers a complete lineup of the Sd.Kfz.142 Sturmgeschütz family tree in 1/35th scale. The subject of this review is the Sd.Kfz. 142 III Ausf. C/D, an upgraded offering from their 'Smart Kit' series.

The 'Sd.Kfz.' in the name, short for 'Sonderkraftfahrzeug', identifies the vehicle as a 'special purpose vehicle', and the Sturmgeschütz (StuG) was Germany's most-produced armored fighting vehicle during World War II.

The StuG was built on the chassis of the proven Panzer III tank, replacing the turret with a fixed superstructure mounting a more powerful gun. Initially intended as a mobile, armored light gun for direct-fire support for infantry, the StuG III was continually modified, and widely employed as an assault gun as well as a tank destroyer.

The Sturmgeschütz originated from German experiences in World War I when it was discovered that, during the offensives on the Western Front, the infantry lacked the means to effectively engage fortifications. The artillery of the time was heavy and not mobile enough to keep up with the advancing infantry to destroy bunkers, pillboxes, and other minor fortifications with direct fire. Although the problem was well known in the German army, it was General Erich von Manstein who proposed Sturmartillerie units be created and used in a direct-fire support role for infantry divisions.

Overall, the Sturmgeschütz III series proved very successful and served on all fronts of the war. Because of their low silhouette, the StuG III was easy to camouflage and made for a difficult target. As of 10 April 1945, there were still 1,053 StuG IIIs and 277 StuH 42s in service.

Opening the box: All of Dragon's StuGs come with enough parts to completely fill a sturdy box and then some. There are extra parts on nearly every sprue for your spares box, including pioneer tools, antenna, bolted armor, fire extinguishers, tow ropes, road lights, etc...

The contents of the box include:

Lower hull, packaged separately.

17 sprues in soft, light grey plastic, packaged separately.

1 clear plastic sprue

1 photo-etch sheet, including engine exhaust mesh

2 runs of yellow-tan DS track

1 small sprue of DS Crew Clothing (Boots, blouse, jacket)

1 8-page blue and white instruction sheet with 19 steps

The kit comes with three color schemes represented (all German Grey), using blue-and-white ink three-view drawings; and a small (but perfectly registered) sheet of decals from Cartograph of Italy. All three schemes represent the following unit: StuG.Abt. 177, Russia 1941.

The Instructions: This is a 'fortified re-box', containing sprues from several different Dragon kits, which sometimes leads to inaccuracies in the instructions. The issues are minor, however, and have been noted below. Dragon has thoughtfully provided nice overhead views of several of the assemblies in addition to the standard angled images to assist the modeler with parts placement. Assembly sequence varies by modeler but the general flow of things go pretty much as Dragon intended. The exceptions I made are identified in the text below.



Things to consider before starting: The StuG is a pretty straightforward build. Chassis, fenders, main deck, gun, hatches – nothing unusual. The absence of a turret simplifies things somewhat, but there is enough detail in the fighting compartment to provide a challenge regardless. Dragon provides more interior than I had expected, so if you plan to leave hatches open, you will need to finish what's inside to boot.

Some up-front time should be spent wading through a number of build options offered by Dragon to smooth the assembly and painting process. The area beneath the fenders is un-obstructed so the DS track can be attached at the end of the build without any problems. You can build the entire vehicle before painting, with the only exceptions being the interior visible under open hatches.

One annoyance – in various places in the instructions you are told to remove plastic from areas that (apparently) were not accurate for the version. Later on, however, as you attach parts, you will be looking for just the kind of plastic 'male' stumps that you had previously removed. I suggest that you leave the protrusions on until you're sure you won't need them.

If you choose to leave the hatches open, you will find that Dragon has provided a wealth of visible detail inside. Against the rear of the upper fighting compartment, you hang two submachine guns, one on each side of a double set of radios. To the side of that, the StuG has a pannier on the side of the hull that holds an additional radio set in a neat little bracket that snugles into place.

Up front, the commander's periscope can be installed in a lowered 'stowed' or protruding 'combat' position.

Like all Dragon Mk. IIIs, the rear deck is littered with hatches and engine access panels that can be modeled either open or closed, although no detail is provided underneath.

The Track: The two runs of DS track in this kit are very, very thin and beautifully detailed. Tamiya 'green top' thin cement works well for attaching the ends, and after waiting a few hours I easily attached them over the wheels and sprockets. I really like DS track - they look great and accept any and all type of paint, although it might be prudent to first put on a coat of primer. Unfortunately, Dragon did not leave enough slack in the DS track to adequately reproduce the sag common to the Mk. III, so it looks pretty tight once installed. (With a little slack, I have found on other builds using DS track that I could use glue to attach it to certain parts of the wheels and return rollers, thereby forcing a very realistic track-sag.)

The early-war Sturmgeschütz comes in two colors; Early war German Grey and German Yellow over German Grey (as a desert scheme). With several other Stugs in my collection, I decided to stick with one of the overall grey schemes. My challenge was to break up the monotone finish so that the model would still be interesting to look at.

I painted the antenna, track and a small storage box separately, and attached them after painting the rest of the vehicle, but before weathering. Otherwise, the kit can be completely assembled before painting.

I decided to paint the little Stug using a new line of acrylic paint called Mission Models Paint (MMP). This new paint is pretty amazing – I have yet to experience any clogging whatsoever when I use the following mixing ratio: Six parts MMP paint + four parts MMP thinner, with the thinner made up of ten parts thinner to one



part retarder (that goes by the catchy name of MMP Polyurethane Mix Additive). I sprayed this paint at about 12lbs for detail work and up to 20lbs for coverage.

Primer, Pre-Shade and Hairspray: I started by applying a primer coat using Krylon Color Master with Durable ColorMax Technology rattlecan (Flat Black) enamel paint. This is the third rattlecan primer I've tried, and I'm glad I kept going because this stuff is a superior product, drying super thin and very tough - not to mention cheap and quick.

Once the enamel had a chance to de-gas overnight, I toned down the 'very black' wheels with (MMP035) NATO Black. I waited 20 minutes and then shot the lower chassis with hairspray to make it easier to clean up any overspray later.

The primer/pre-shade coat gives the plastic and PE some grip for the following coats, and fills in the recesses, creating a shadow effect near the flat surface edges. This will add depth for the subsequent coats to come.

I let that dry and then laid down a base coat of (MMP014) Panzergrau RAL 7021, working from the center of each panel outwards, leaving some of the darker shades to show through around the edges. This paint was very dark out of the bottle, with a deep bluish-purple tone to it.

The MMP paint is opaque but can be sprayed in such a way to let the color underneath affect the final tone and depth. Keep the pressure around 12lbs and you'll have the control you need.

I then mixed up a batch of post-shade color using (MMP045) British Slate Grey and sprayed that for about 20 minutes. I thinned this much more, using 15 drops of the Thinner Mix and just four drops of paint. This thinner concoction works more like traditional acrylics, absorbing into the background paint until the color builds up slowly, with one major difference – it just doesn't clog or dry at the tip. Did I mention these are acrylics?

I waited about ten minutes and laid down my final post-shade coat of RLM-76 using just two drops (!) of paint and eight drops of Thinner Mix since I didn't need very much to do the job.

Decals: I waited about two hours and then applied the decals. These are the plain white, early-war, Balkenkreuz outline-crosses without fill – a perfect test to see if these paints do indeed allow you to skip the 'gloss coat' prior to decaling. My results were mixed – some of the decals showed no signs of silvering, but both crosses 'silvered up', unfortunately. Until I figure what I did wrong, I will continue to lay down a gloss coat under and over decals.

Painting and Finishing the Track: I painted the bright yellow/tan DS tracks with rattle-can Rustoleum Flat Black Primer (enamel). Rattlecan paint is just about the only paint that will cover DS track initially, in my opinion. I could have used model paint and my airbrush but that just takes too much paint and too much time. I really wish these DS tracks came in a different, darker color.

Once the primer was dry and did not exhibit any more 'tack', I applied AK Interactive Track Wash with a brush to give the track an overall look of wear. I then applied Gamblin Silver Artist Oil Color to the tread plates and outer edges using my finger. Once satisfied, I added various earth-tone Vallejo Thick Mud products (European Mud, Brown Mud, Crushed Grass) to both sides of the track and lower chasses of the AFV, and dusted Mig pigments here and there to break up things up a little more. I waited until after I sprayed a Glosscoat before attaching the track to the tank.

On-Board Tools: Before sealing the decals with a gloss coat, I painted the wooden portions of some of the pioneer tools with Vallejo Model Color (70.955) Flat Flesh, others with Panzer Aces New Wood (311). I painted all the steel parts Vallejo Model Color (70.865) Oily Steel. For hand-brushing Vallejo paints I mix a tiny bit of Vallejo Slow Dry and water with each color until it flows smoothly off a red sable brush.

Filters: With the flat coat still on the model, I applied several filters to enhance the monotone areas of the vehicle. I heavily thin all of my washes and filters with Mona Lisa Paint Thinner. This odorless white spirit is very mild and will not react with the paint underneath.

I applied an overall filter of AK Interactive Brown Blue for German Grey Vehicles to the fenders, and a filter of Mig Black over the jack and air intakes.

Now that painting was complete, and the surface had received filters, I gave the model a good coat of Future to set everything up for washes and streaking.

Washes and Streaking: Once the Future was dry, I returned to the pioneer tools and other deck mounted hardware. To give the wooden parts of the tools more depth, I brushed on a little Mig Wash Brown oil paint straight from the tube and let that set overnight. Don't let this paint leach out its oil beforehand like you would when you are using oils for dry-brushing - the oil helps it stay workable. In the morning I carefully removed most of the oil paint using a brush dampened with Mona Lisa Paint Thinner, leaving the areas near the latches and metal parts darker than the center of the wooden shafts. The brown oil paint stays workable due to the linseed oil and the fact that it was brushed on a glossy, acrylic surface. I then let a little black wash puddle up on the horizontal surfaces of the metal axe and shovel heads. When dry, I think this gives them a convincing look of used steel.

I then mixed up an overall pin-wash using a 10:2 ratio of Mona Lisa thinner to AK Interactive Brown Blue for German Grey Vehicles. I focused on the wheels and panel lines, as well as the busy back end. I find this mixture perfect when applied to a glossy surface – the detail pops and the wash leaves no smudges.

Next, I used full-strength AK Interactive Streaking Grime for Panzer Grey to break up some of the panels. The secret to using this product is to apply it in spots, let it dry completely, and then work it off with a soft brush ever-so-slightly dampened with thinner.

Road Dust and Final Assembly: Finally, I applied a 'road-dusting' coat of Vallejo Model Air Light Brown (71.027) 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. After touching up the rear exhaust manifold with Mig Dark Rust pigment, I attached the utility box and antenna and this little guy was done!

The Sturmgeschütz III is one of the iconic tanks of World War II, and it is no wonder that Dragon has taken on this family of AFVs to produce some of the very best models on the market. Like most of their other recent kits, the parts fit and are beautifully detailed; together making them a lot of fun to build. The design of some of the parts such as the main weapon, running gear and opening hatch hardware is simply brilliant, and in my opinion, the very best available; Dragon sets the bar here.

The thin DS track has evolved into an excellent alternative to the Magic Track, which itself was a solid product (and still is).

The slide molding, included in all Dragon kits now, has really improved the detail and build-ability of their kits. This is nowhere more apparent than with their tank barrels which are, in my opinion, a vast improvement over the ill-fitting and hard-to-paint aluminum versions.

And last but not least, Dragon thoughtfully designs their models so that every hatch, door or access panel can be built in the open position, with more than enough interior detail to get you started.

I heartily recommend this kit to all modelers who are up to the small challenges that a kit with so many parts and options will offer. If you mark up the instructions beforehand as suggested, and go slow, you shouldn't have any problems.

I would like to thank Dragon Models for providing this kit for review, and to IPMS USA for giving me the opportunity to review it.





Hurricane Bookshelf Video Guide: Favorite Character Actor Saves the Day

by Scott Kruize

Malta Story. British, 1953, 98 min. Available on DVD.

Before Fagin snagged *Oliver Twist* into his London orphans pickpocket 'family'...

Before the *Kind Hearts* of older members of the D'Ascoyne family got snuffed out, one by one, by their youngest relative, so he could inherit *Coronets* and all the other goodies...

Before *Dr. Zhivago's* brother Yevgraf sowed dissent within the Czar's army in preparation for the Boshevik Revolution...

Before King Feisal sicced on the Turkish Empire young *Lawrence of Arabia*...

Before Col. Nicholson realized too late how useful to the Japanese was his *Bridge Over the River Kwai*...

Before industrial chemist Sidney became the *Man in the White Suit*...

Before the 'mole' had to be dug out from amongst *Smiley's People*—you know, *'Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy'*-types...

And long before—In A Galaxy Far Far Away—Obi-Wan Kenobi returned to help the Rebel side of the *Star Wars*...

There was Flight Lieutenant Peter Ross, mild-mannered scholar, who learned photography and flying primarily to explore the mysteries of Ancient Egyptology.

Movement by air being iffy over the Mediterranean in late 1940, Lieut. Ross lands on Malta but immediately has to duck for cover

as his transport plane blows up behind him. His loss, besieged Malta's gain: the Air Marshal immediately puts him to work, flying an unarmed photoreconnaissance Supermarine Spitfire. (Derived from that 'Other' British WW2 Fighter.)

He's not much of a military guy but his skilful flying, following hunches, does result in useful intelligence about the next Nazi German and Fascist Italian attacks brewing against the island.

The movie mixes realistic reenactments with archival wartime news footage, as the British and Maltese withstand a terrible siege. Everything—even food—runs out, till the climactic air-and-sea battle.

Lieut. Ross's role was to fly high out to sea to direct the few remaining British aircraft to defending the ships during a last desperate convoy run. He's finally spotted by sinister Axis fighters, and says to himself, in his restrained, stiff-upper-lip way, "Now comes the tricky part..."



In the end, a few badly-battered supply ships limp into the main harbor, and (SPOILER ALERT!) are finally followed in by the most horribly-mangled oil tanker in the history of the world—and the most precious, beyond human calculation in the beggar-thy-neighbor ‘game’ of war, namely the OHIO. Lieut. Ross’s efforts made this just barely possible; too bad he can’t share in the celebration...or returning to the one thing he warmed to during his stay: the lovely Maria. But that’s the *Malta Story*.

Hurricane fan though I am, I seem to have missed this movie when it first came out. I finally got it and watched it last month. The wait was worth it: I rate it among the very best war docudramas.



PrezNotes

from page 1

Hal Marshman Sr. passed away in April at the age of 80. Hal was a member of IPMS Bay Colony Historical Modelers, in Massachusetts, but had been regularly contributing articles to our newsletter for the past 15 years. Hal was a US Army Veteran, and was later an Air Freight Agent for Eastern Airlines and Air General for 44 years before retiring in 2007. Back in 2002, I reprinted one of his articles that had appeared in another IPMS publication, and sent him a copy of our newsletter after it was released. He liked our newsletter, and from that time on, would send articles directly to us several times a year. His great modeling love was WW2 German aircraft and figures, and he was very knowledgeable about the subject. He never attended one of IPMS Seattle's meetings, but I've always considered him a member of our club, and I'll miss him.

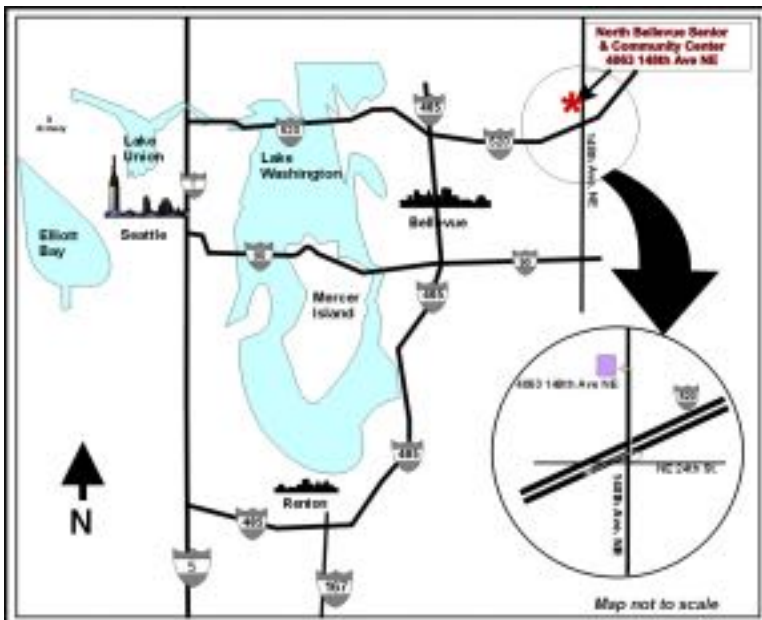


One of Hal's more unusual subjects, a 1/48th scale Huma Flettner Fl 282, from September 2007.

Robert

Meeting Reminder

Meeting: June 10



**North Bellevue Community/Senior Center
4063-148th Ave NE, Bellevue**

Directions to NBCSC: From Seattle or from I-405, take 520 East to the 148th Ave NE exit. Take the 148th Ave North exit (the second of the two 148th Ave. exits) and continue north on 148th until you reach the Senior Center. The Senior Center will be on your left. The Center itself is not easily visible from the road, but there is a signpost in the median.