

Clash of the Titans: part 2



Rick Lawler
*presents the
Red Army's
Big Cat Killer.*

Introduction

The IS (Josef Stalin) 2 tank first saw combat in the spring of 1944. They were assigned to separate heavy tank regiments, normally of 21 tanks each. These regiments were used to reinforce the most important attack sectors during major offensive operations. Tactically, they were employed as breakthrough tanks. Their role was to support infantry in the assault, using their large guns to destroy bunkers, buildings, dug-in crew-served weapons, and other 'soft' targets. They were also capable of taking on any German AFV if the need arose. Once a breakthrough was achieved, lighter, more mobile T-34s would take over the exploitation. The IS-2 weighed about the same as a German Panther, and was lighter than the German heavy tanks, the Tiger series. It was slightly lower than both. A major weakness was the two-part ammunition, which slowed the rate of fire considerably. A second weakness was the very limited ammunition supply of only 28



rounds. This was the price paid by the small size of the design. One of the IS-2's most notable engagements took place during the fighting in August 1944 to establish a bridgehead over the river Vistula around the town of Sandomierz. This was the first time the IS-2 had come up against the fearsome King Tiger. During the engagement on 13 August, the 71st Independent Heavy Tank Regiment's eleven IS-2s blocked an attack by fourteen King Tigers of the s.Pz.Abt. 505.

Tamiya Perfection

It would be an understatement to say that the Tamiya IS-2 is a nice kit directly out of the box; as a matter of fact it is an excellent kit as built from the box. So what, you might ask, would possess me to add just about every conceivable aftermarket item available to this project? Partially the answer is to be found in how I conceived of the final presentation. I knew that I wished to portray a battle weary vehicle as seen during the final months of the war; torn fenders, dented auxiliary fuel tanks

definite and deep line I was able to wiggle the fenders back and forth until they snapped off. A little light sanding along the hull removed any remnants and I was ready to proceed.

Next, I turned my attention to the photoetch. Because of their larger size and related stresses I chose to solder all of the photoetch connections. The same is true for the auxiliary fuel tanks as their shape will pull apart seams held only with CA glues. And although somewhat delicate in nature, neither the Aber fenders nor the Voyager fuel cells posed any difficulties during construction or soldering (**photo1**). Once I had the fenders constructed it was time for a little test fit, and it



1

I decided the best (and easiest?)

approach was to take advantage of the rough cast texture and simply add a little more bulk and width to the edges of the hull where it meets the fenders. Small bits of Milliput were applied to the hull in order to slowly 're-cast' the

shape so that the support ribs and fenders would

make contact.

After the Milliput had dried a liberal coating of Mr. Surfacer 500 was applied to the area to blend it with the surrounding area. Finally, a light coating of Mr. Surfacer 500 was brushed,

and then stippled with a stiff brush to recreate the cast texture (**photo 2**). The turret also received a little extra detailing by adding thin strips of Evergreen rod along the welds. The strips were washed with liquid cement

to soften the plastic, and then new weld details were imprinted using the back of my Xacto blade. Once again a light brushing of Mr. Surfacer served to blend the new welds with the surrounding areas (**photo 3**).

The remainder of the construction was for

and torn brackets would be necessary to convey the image. Therefore, a good helping of brass would be just what was needed to achieve the effects. In addition, a nice set of Friulmodel tracks would help to achieve

realistic weight and sag so often seen on Soviet vehicles.

Aftermarket Attack!

It's no secret that using aftermarket sets can help to achieve realistic scale and finish, but they can also present a lot of extra work for the modeler. In the case of the IS-2,

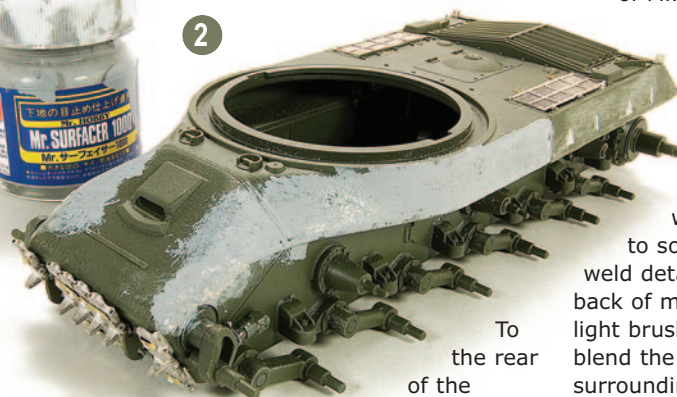
Tamiya has manufactured the fenders attached to the hull, so it is necessary to remove these in order to install the replacement photoetch fenders.

To begin the removal process I scribed the fenders along the hull line using the tip of a new scalpel. Once I had a

was during the affixing of the Aber fenders to the hull that I ran into some difficulties.

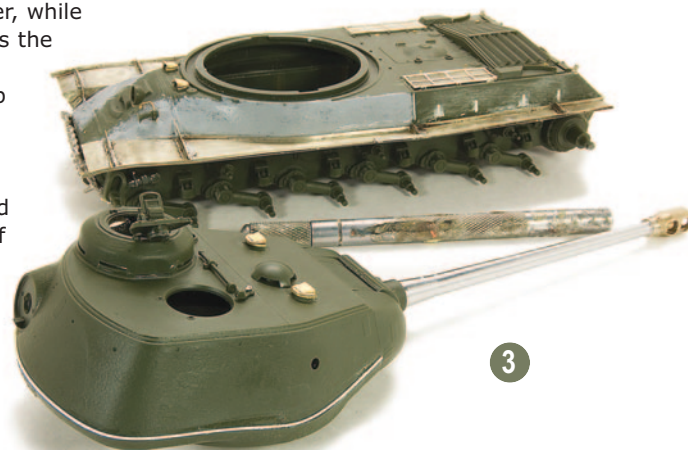


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To of the rear of the vehicle the

fenders fix as intended; snug against the hull. Toward the front, however, while the hull of the vehicle contours the fenders maintain a perfectly straight line. The resulting gap becomes quite apparent at about the second support rib and only increases toward the front. I checked and rechecked the alignment and soldering of the fenders looking for any mistakes, but found none. The fact that this issue occurred on either side only affirmed to me that the problem was in the fender's design. Ok, what to do?



3

Tamiya IS-2 Model 1944 ChKZ

It seems a shame to cover up all this work in paint!



4 the painting process with an overall primer coat of Mr. Surfacer 1000. The primer is particularly important when working with multi-media projects such as this.

the most part straightforward. My biggest challenge was simply keeping track and sorting through the numerous instruction sheets that I had laid upon my work desk. By now the beast was really taking shape, and the new brass bits were really making for an impressive show; I'm quite the sucker for shiny things. During this time I also constructed the excellent Friulmodel tracks. Included in the Friulmodel package is thin wire to be used to pin the links together, however, I find this wire to be too flexible and prefer to use .18 gauge brass wire instead (Photos 4 & 5).

Painting the Beast

I had been looking forward to painting this beast from the outset. Over the past months I have been exploring some of the principles of light, shadow, and colour tone as expressed through the Colour Modulation theory. I began



The initial base colour is an intentionally bright mix created from Tamiya XF-13 J.A. Green, XF- 67 Nato Green, and XF-4 Yellow Green (photo 6). In this case, the Yellow Green is my lightening colour that I will be using though out the process to add highlights



5 The impressive Aber barrel and Friul tracks make a big difference to the finished model.

and interest to the details. I used a small card mask for quick, crisp edges between panels and features. I feel that adding these sharp demarcation lines between panels and features is an important element in the process which promotes a more visually interesting finish. The thing to keep in mind is that this is not a linear process, and quite a bit of back-n-forth occurs as I return to add highlights to certain features, or deepen shadows in other areas. As a final touch I added just a hint of XF-2 Flat White to my colour mix and



lightly misted the upper areas. This helps unify the colours a bit, but the white also begins the process of creating fading paint in the weathering steps (photo 7).

The turret received some extra, additional attention as I prepared to paint the larger air recognition stripes. The stripes were painted with a two step process: first, I airbrushed a light, uneven base white colour between the taped areas. Secondly, I removed the tape and returned with the brush to 'repaint' the stripes, once again intentionally uneven to simulate the hasty, hand painted stripes so often seen in period photographs (photo 8).



With the painting completed I gave the entire model a light mist of Johnson's Klear acrylic floor polish to seal the paint. The limited decals were applied, and then another light mist of Klear insured that everything was sealed up and ready for weathering. I began the weathering by applying MIG Productions Abteilung 502 Shadow Brown directly into all of the nooks and crannies of the vehicle. Then with a soft brush I feathered the paint and removed any heavy, unnatural accumulations. Although a somewhat subtle effect, I feel that this is an important step in creating a certain weight and depth to the final presentation (**photo 9**).

I followed this with more oils, this time in the form of dot fading using MIG Productions German Ochre, Olive Green, and Faded Green. These dots are applied to a surface that has been pre-moistened with thinner, and then the dots of oil are worked into the surface using a larger, soft brush. The idea is to create subtle, tonal variation to the base colour which helps to add to the visual

interest of the vehicle. Once this has dried I returned once more with the oils, but this time concentrating only on the smaller lines and details using the Shadow Brown colour as a pin wash. Once again, this is not a linear process so I often will return to adding more dots, then more pin washes until I have achieved an appearance that I am satisfied with (**photo 10**).

There always reaches a certain time during the painting process when I realize that the paints and oils have reached their functional limits; the look I am after just cannot be achieved by doing more of the same. It's at this point that I incorporate the pigments into my weathering mix. I think of the pigments more as an extension of painting, rather than a separate material. With that thought in mind, I always dissolve my pigments in thinner and apply them wet by using a small brush. I generally begin the applications



in the corners and vehicle recesses, similar to how I applied my initial Shadow Brown colour, then with each application I slowly work my way to the panel centers. I find that I have great control using this technique as the pigments only go where I place them. From time to time I will use a soft, dry

IS-2: In Detail

As with Gary Kwan's King Tiger, it's the attention to detail and multi-layered approach to weathering that makes this model stand out. Small details like the ditching beam and the stained engine deck make all the difference.



Tamiya IS-2 Model 1944 ChKZ



Tamiya 1/35 Russian Heavy Tank JS-2 Model 1944 ChKZ (kit ref. 35289)

retails at £38.99 and is available from all good model shops.

Availability and References

Aber 35-219 Basic Set Vol. 1, 35-220 Fender Vol.2, 35L-69 Russian 122mm Barrel, R-18 Shackle for Russian Tanks, Friulmodel – ATL-14. All available from Historex Agents (www.historex-agents.co.uk). Voyager Model – PE 35221 WWII Russian IS-2 Tank Basic set. Eureka XXL – ER-3509 Towing Cable



Steven J Zaloga, **IS-2 Heavy Tank 1944-73** (Osprey New Vanguard 7) ISBN: 978-1-85532-396-4



brush to soften and edge or remove extra accumulations from an area (photo 11). Of course, to be natural in appearance the modeller must capture the messy, random nature of mud and dirt. As a final step I used a brush and my finger

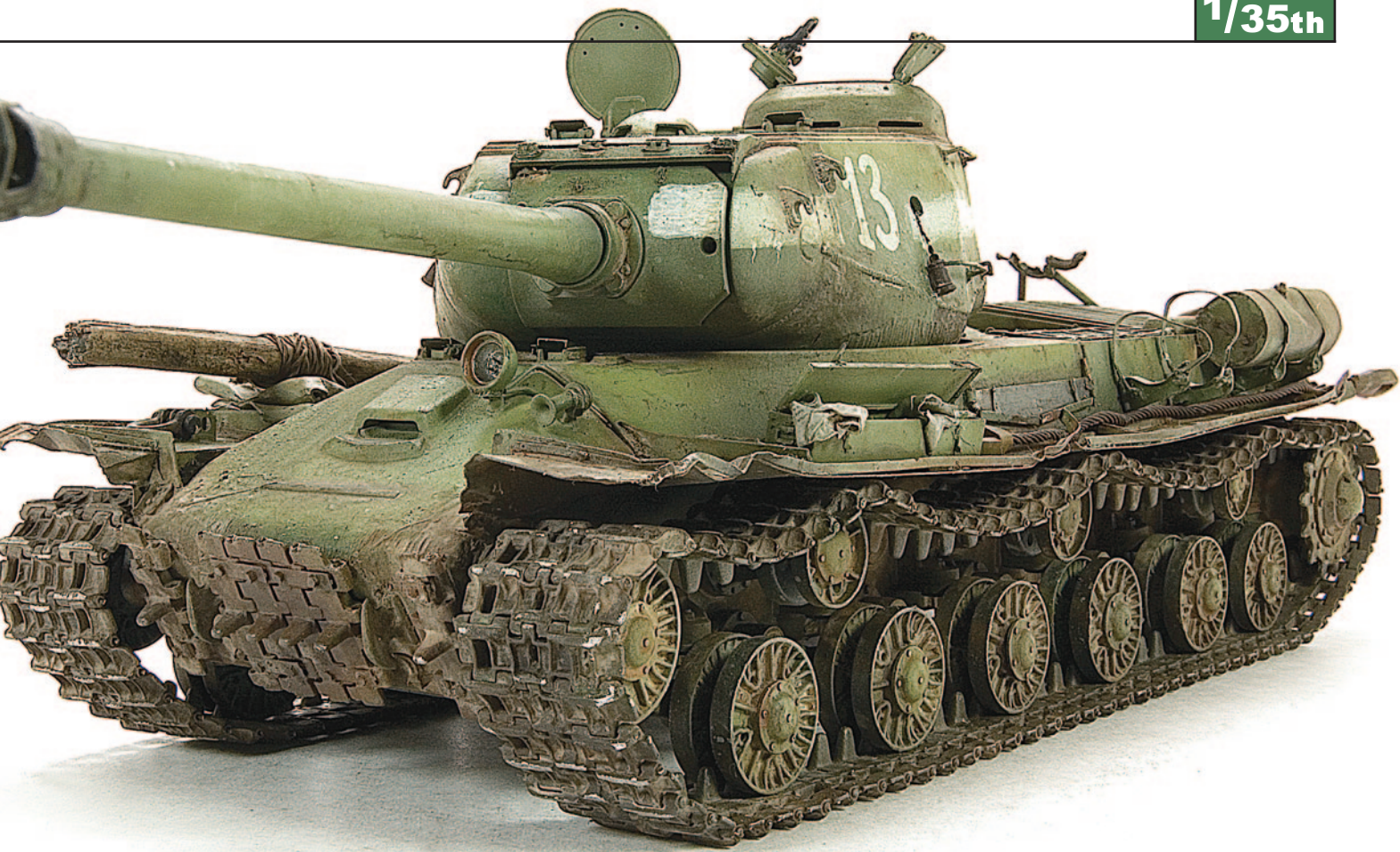


to flick small droplets and splashes to the appropriate areas of the vehicle where such accumulations would naturally occur (photo 12). The small un-ditching log on the fender was made from a small section of wooden doweling painted quickly washed with brown and grey artists oils. The small rag hanging from the tool box is made from Milliput.

Final Thoughts

I find myself at the end of this article wondering what conclusions or advice might be drawn from my experience. Obviously, the amount of Aftermarket materials that I used brings its own unique challenges and it is difficult to relate all the trials and tribulations that occurred in this short article. So with this in mind I guess that I have two thoughts that I would like to share: first, using all sorts of photoetch and every Aftermarket item available is not necessary to achieve a wonderful result. Secondly, it's nice to know that there is all of this wonderful stuff available to use whenever you decide to use it!





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