

The 234/5 (?) Is this the missing link of German armored cars?

Model by Tom Kondziolka

Photos by Bill Tanguay & Tom Kondziolka



THE HISTORY

I have always been fascinated by unusual vehicles designed by the Germans during the end of World War II. One of these is these little known variants of the 234 series of armored car, featuring a mounted 2.0 cm Flak 38 anti-aircraft turret. The actual number of these vehicles produced by the end of the war is unknown. Very little reference information exists, except for a Tank Magazine article and a Museum Ordinance article with similar pictures.

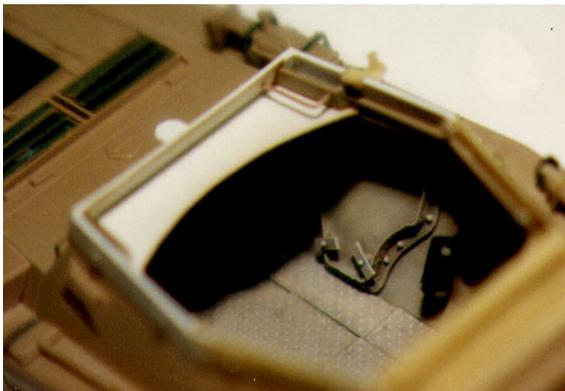
THE KIT

At one of many model shows, I found a conversion kit by DES that was designed to create this unique vehicle. Upon getting the kit home, I was quite disturbed by the lack of instructions and the quality of some of the parts. In order to build the vehicle one must use the "Gizmology Rule" in order to make a somewhat believable kit. An

excellent Museum Ordinance book on the 232 armored car with great internal photos was used for the interior reference.

THE INTERIOR

The base kit used was an old Testors/Italeri 234/3 (I had plans for the 75mm gun). There is a scarce interior, and with the parts from the DES kit, the detail improved but the interior needed more. I replaced the flooring with photo etch of a diamond pattern that would represent a non-skid floor. I removed the rear driver's compartment, since toward the end of the war, such a luxury would cost more in time and money. I converted the rear driver's into a commander's position utilizing the rear driver's seat. I scratch built an inside door mechanism for both side doors. Using casting material, I made two samples and mounted them to the inside door compartments. For the internal vision ports I made copies from the Tamiya 251D kit and used them on the inside. I added a radio from the same kit, built up two ammo racks, and mounted them to the front sides of the inside compartment. The DES kit ammo rack was modified, and then mounted in the rear of the compartment just to the left of the commander's seat. I placed some extra detail in the driver's compartment, pedals, operating levers, etc. One note is that even with all the detail added to the interior (although I know it's there) it cannot be seen on the completed model. You have to wonder if all the extra interior detail is worth it if you cannot see it, but of course, it is important to a serious modeler.



The internal door detail.

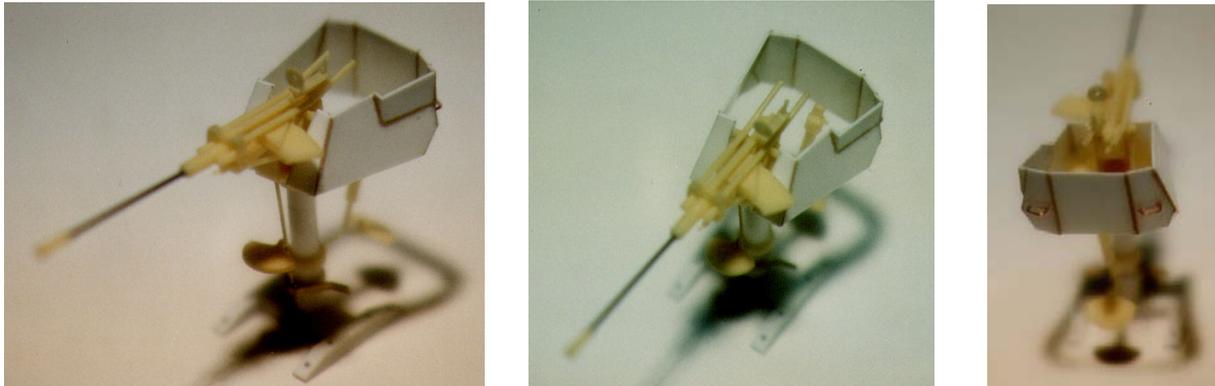


The side mounted ammo racks.

THE GUN

I really liked of the 2.0 cm gun, but hated both the shield and gun platform. The shield thickness in this scale would be about 2 inches thick. I know it's not DES's fault, due to the limitations of resin casting, so I used the kit part for the master and made a shield out of .020" plastic. I tried something different for the weld lines, I took stretch sprue, glued it in to position, and then used a hot knife to create the welds. I really liked the way it came out. I made a new mounting frame in an H pattern per the article in Museum Ordinance. I drilled holes on the base and added Grandt Line bolts to simulate

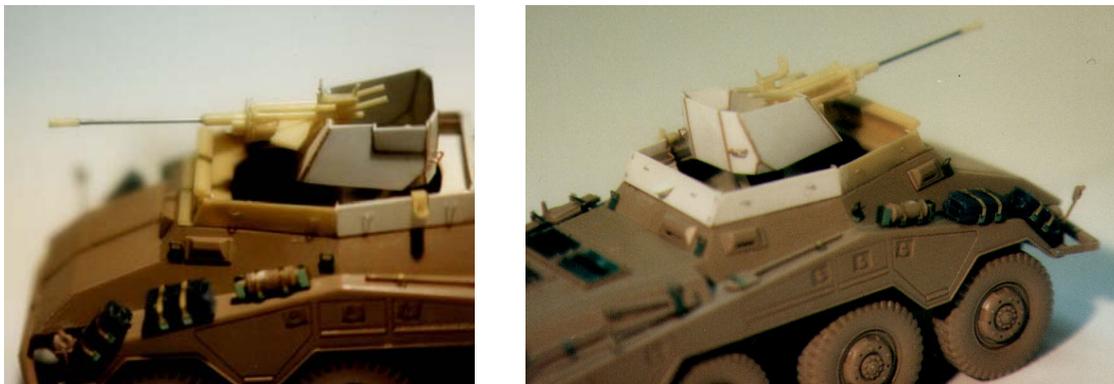
mounting bolts to the floor. I added a loader's seat by copying the gunner's seat and mounted it with brass rod.



These photos show a vast improvement with thinner armor added loader's seat.

THE MAIN VEHICLE

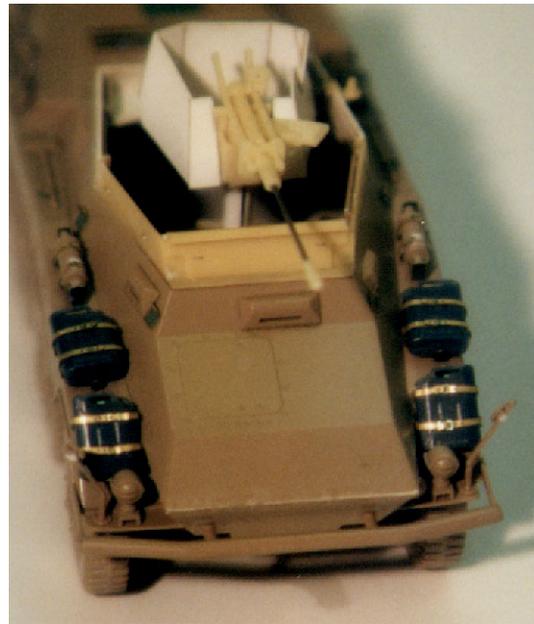
The main vehicle is built per the Italeri kit instructions. Not too many photo etch detail kits are available for this vehicle at the time, and the one I used was for the 234/2 Puma by Airwaves. I replaced all the jerry cans with the Italeri ones and used the PE belts and buckles to attach them to the fenders. The upper superstructure that came with the DES kit was not bad, although I replaced the rear panel, as the one in the kit was badly warped and consisted of a short shot. I replaced the jack and some of the tools with the Tamiya PZ VI OEM kit. The tie-downs are copper wires for which I painstakingly drill holes and super glue to the vehicle.



Left front view and rear right view with the gun test fit mounted before painting.



Rear view with new rear panel.



Front view showing turret height.

THE PAINTING

As you might know, when having an open-topped vehicle, the interior is the first part to paint. I painted a base coat of red brown throughout the interior. Once dry, I sprayed Airmodels panzer white interior (although it does not look white) lightly at first, the more heavily in the open areas away from the crevices. Once dry for 24 hrs I used a Windsor Newton burnt umber oil paint and turpentine wash. After that was dry, I used the same interior color mixed with white, and dry brushed the whole interior. Then once completely dry, I painted all the details, ammo in the ammo racks, gas mask containers, seat, radio, etc. Once the interior was done, I carefully glued both halves together, making sure both top and bottom had a good fit and leaving no glue in the interior.

For the exterior of the vehicle I stuffed the interior, with tissue paper and painted a base coat of dark brown to the entire vehicle and gun assembly. After 24 hrs drying time I then painted the dark yellow color lightly overall, then more solidly in the open areas away from the crevices. Once dry I painted on an irregular pattern of dark green and painted the tires a dark gray color to indicate wear. All model components were set aside to dry for 48 hrs.

I then mixed a 50/50 wash of Windsor Newton Blue/Black and turpentine and washed the entire vehicle. Once dry, I then started the dry brushing procedure. I lightened the dark yellow color with white and repeated the process, lightening the color each time. I then turned to the dark green color, repeating the process until content with the outcome. Remember that this is a late war vehicle, and probably did not see much action (except to surrender), so do not exaggerate the weathering. I also dry brushed the tires using the base coat, mixed with a lighter gray, until the desired finish was

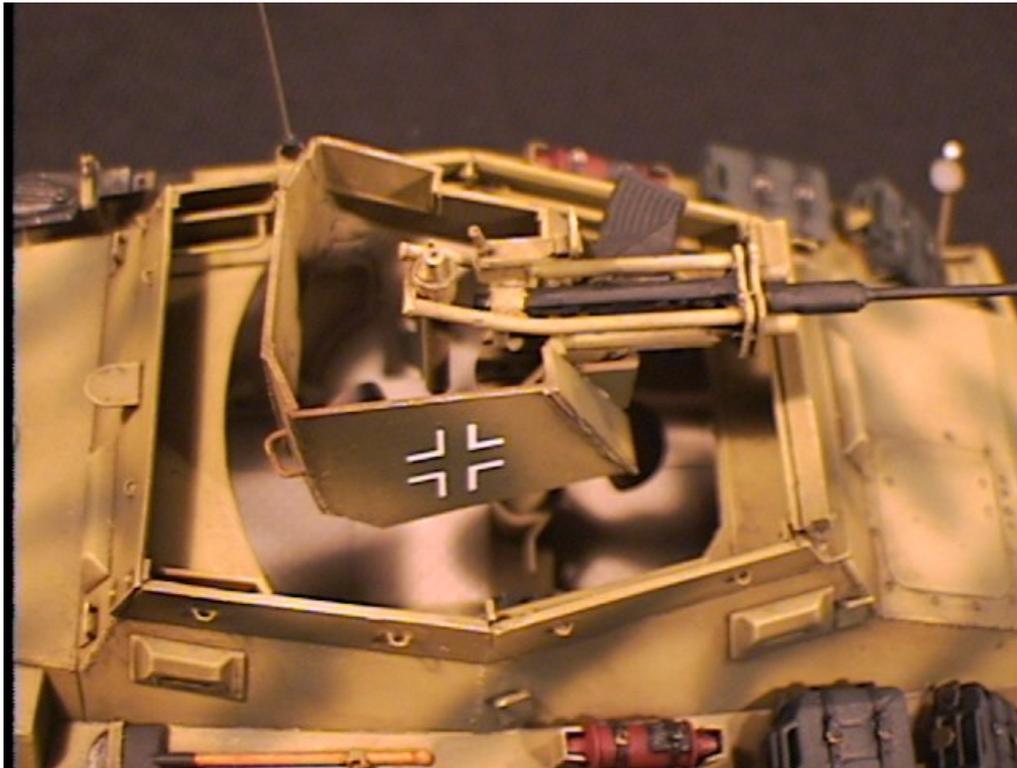
accomplished. Next came the tools and gun assembly, all painted by hand due to the delicate nature of the components. I used VLS dry transfers for the license plate and their PE template to spray on the crosses. I then added the wheels and the gun assembly to the model.

CONCLUSION

This was a very easy (except for the interior) conversion. I did not need to add such detail to the interior, especially since it would not be seen, but I would know that its there. What can I say-I love my hobby?

ADDITIONAL PHOTOS

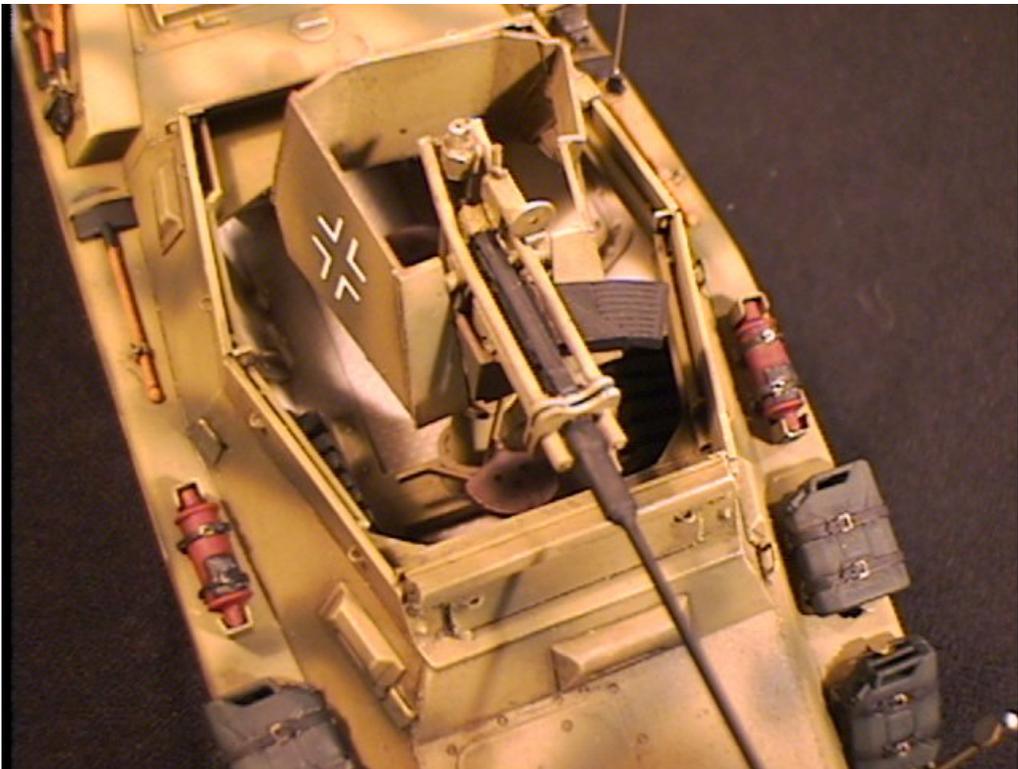
The following are some additional detail photos of the turret.



Right side shot showing gunner and loaders seat.



This indicated a very cramped crew compartment.



Front shot of the flak gun.