

VERLINDEN PRODUCTIONS

Modeling



Magazine

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SHOWCASE

Seen at
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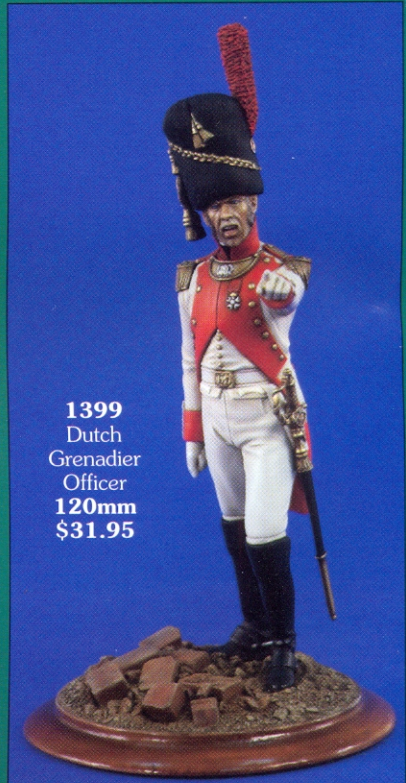
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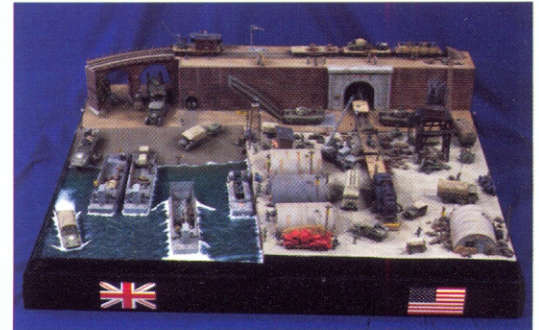
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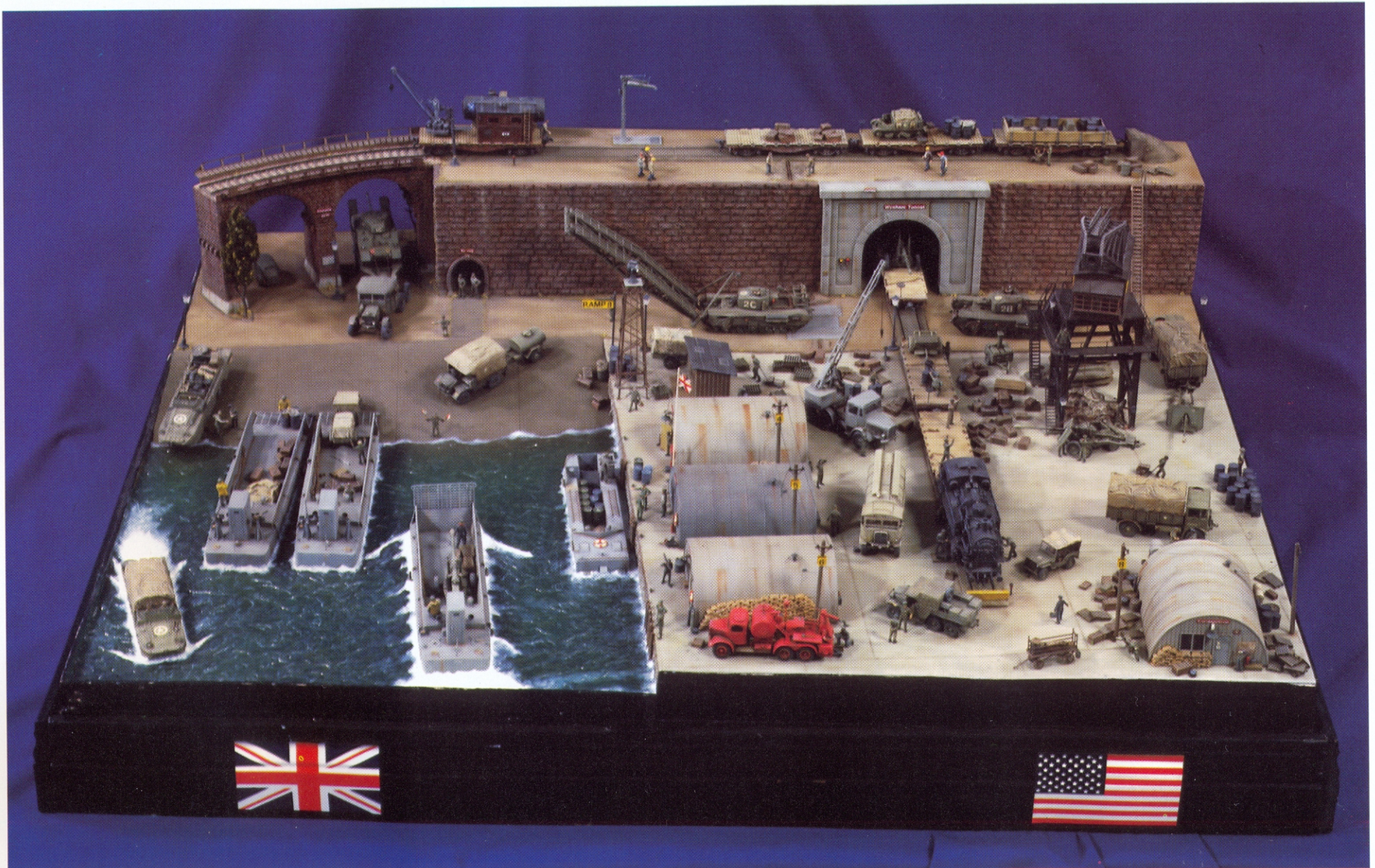
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D-Day Minus 25

1:76 Scale Diorama by Mike McFADDEN



At first glance, this appears to be another one of those giant, suicidal "superdioramas", but in 1:76 scale, this masterpiece measures only 2 1/2 x 3 feet.



The inspiration for D-Day -25 came from a multitude of stories about the preparations done by the Allies for the invasion, and statements such as: "there was so much equipment and so many men on the isles that only the barrage balloons kept them from sinking", and a single photo of a dock area crammed to the hilt with invasion ships, vehicles, equipment, and men.

I love all things British from the WWII era. The setting had to be English, the equipment and landing craft were so by choice. Although many modellers have dioramas that double as dining room tables, I felt that this large of a scene would be prohibitive in size; and so chose to do it in 1:76 scale, thus creating a comprehensive scene within the dimensions of 3 feet by 2 1/2 feet.

For this scene I wanted to bring several elements surrounding the crowded, cramped, and chaotic preparations for the invasion to life. The key elements- rail, sea, and dock areas were emphasized by placement at three different levels.

The highest level provides the background of the scene and connection of this small scene to the larger picture-by the railroad. The rail also symbolizes the stockpiling and mobilization needed for D-Day. In this area I was able to explore and enjoy the world of HO scale modeling.



A scene of chaotic preparation on a British dock. All of the figures interact in multiple mini-vignettes, increasing the sense of urgency, and helping to tie the whole scene together.

The dock area (main level) provided the biggest showcase for the models. Once the huts, lanes, and roadways were created, it was time to show-off the "goods"! Many of the models are of interesting subjects but difficult to construct.

The fire engine is a showcase of detail in small scales that is now possible with new high-tech accessories. The hose was made from phone wire, the ladder photoetched with the secondary nozzle being white metal. The wood panels were scribed with old-fashioned creativity.

At sea level, we can see the landing-craft manouevring into position along the incredibly realistic shore-line.



Resembling ants at work, these Allied servicemen are busy preparing for the inevitable invasion of D-Day. Note the heavy crane hoisting the howitzer onto the flatbed railcar.

Other vehicles of interest to me were the Scammel tank transporter with the piggy-back Firefly Sherman, the AVRE "funnies", the American utilitarian DUKW and the very British looking crane and fuel trucks. Each was modified and tricked out with individual windshields, wipers, rear-view mirrors, etc. One of the DUKW's was scratch-built.

Another key element of the dock area is the ubiquitous quonset huts seen in many pictures of the period. Accessories were added to show the temporary nature of the scene. Phone lines, garbage pails, and equipment are small in this scale, but add so much realism. The large crane and searchlight add levels of height to the diorama as well as action. The rail engine lights, streetlights, and lamps on and in the quonset huts light-up.

This is a multi-tiered diorama, which conveys a significant sense of depth and scale. The sea-level in particular adds a great deal of variety to this diorama, in the way of both vehicles and activity.

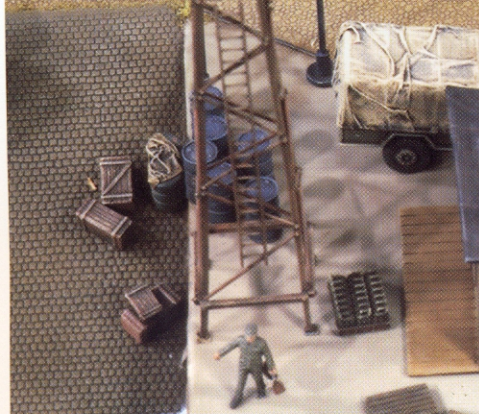
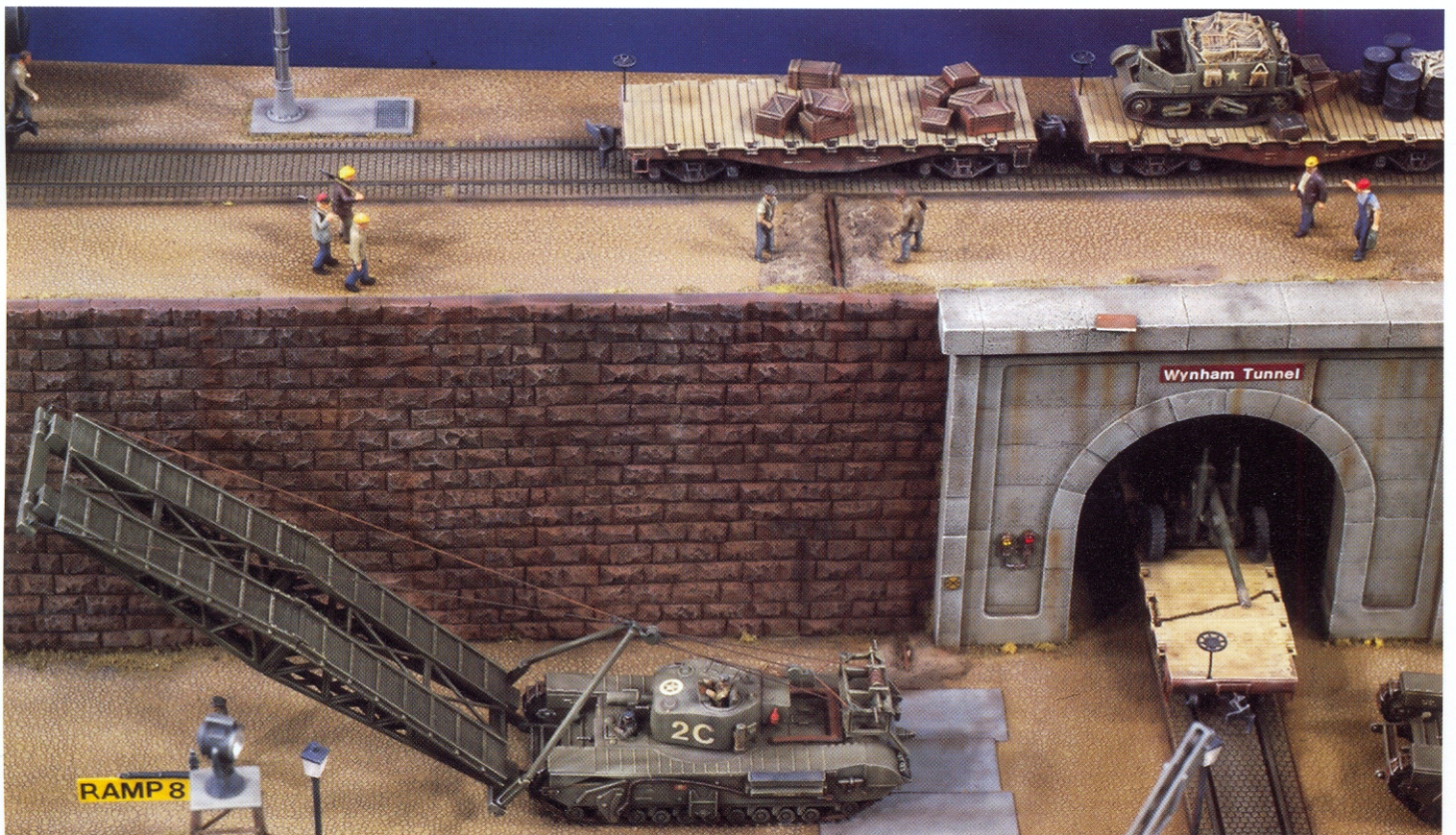




The lower level of the scene is the sea level. I wanted the viewer to "feel" in his or her imagination the connection between the large bay full of ships and the dock-area. At the time I made the diorama the main landing-craft modelled was discontinued, so I made two resin copies of the one kit I had. I added to this scratch-built pilot houses, ropes, funnels, ladders, fire extinguishers, etc. The small craft tied to the dock was scratch-built.

Water is one of the most difficult things to model. For my section of water I wanted three things: depth perception, movement, and color variation. The water started with layers of "washed" epoxy resin. The wave action and wakes were done with artist's acrylic gel. These were accentuated with light grey to white high-lights and glossed with Future floor wax. The rail engine is HO scale from ROCO, and although not British, very European in it's construction and silhouette.





Short HO scale flat cars were chosen to simulate the British narrow gauge rail system. Each rail-car was detailed with brake wheels, photo-etched steps, and bolts. To add depth and distance to the equation, figures chosen for the upper level are 1:87 scale.

The figures add vignettes, direction, and flow to the diorama. The flow in this case was chosen to illustrate the chaos of preparation that occurred on a daily level in the days of preparation for the invasion. The machines and people are dense in the scene to show the small size of the English docking areas available.

The British landings went off more smoothly than the American ones at Omaha and Utah beaches. Some historians believe that the use of specialized armor, such as the "funnies" depicted in the diorama, as well as the greater coordination of troop movements with sea and air arms account for much of this.

KILLING GROUND - GERMANY 1945

By Greg CIHLAR

By the spring of 1945, German forces were in grudging retreat on every front. The Allies had long ago gained air superiority, forcing German ground forces to make extra efforts to find cover and concealment from Allied weapons in the air as well as on the ground. As the fighting moved from city to city, the days of wide-open offensive tactics of the earlier Blitzkrieg were long gone, having given way to the close-in defensive battle of the German cities.

Armor is particularly vulnerable to tank and antitank fire in built-up areas. One man with a shoulder fired antitank weapon or a Molotov cocktail in an upper story window can easily destroy an armored vehicle in the streets below. Tanks lose the advantage of mobility, and buildings and rubble reduce their fields of fire to a few meters. Their main guns have limited traverse and elevation, hampering their ability to engage targets.

To operate in cities or towns, tanks must have infantry support.



This view gives a good idea how to blend the vehicle with the ground through use of color and fine sand.

In this diorama, we see antitank infantry working in close cooperation with the crew of a Pzkw IV, which is lurking in the shadow of a ruined building while they look for their next targets. Each makes up for the weaknesses of the other. These fellows are a deadly combination for any Allied armor that stumbles in their way.

The focal point of the diorama is the Tamiya model of the Pzkw IV, ausf. J. The ausf. J was the final production version of the Panzer IV and first appeared in 1944. Nibelungenwerke produced 1758 of these vehicles from June 1944 to March 1945. Weighing 25 tons and armed with the venerable 75mm KwK40L/48 main gun, it had a five-man crew and was powered by the Maybach HL 120TRM112 engine.



This overall view shows how figures, tank, building and rubble are melded together and how every corner of the diorama is filled with something. It also illustrates a basic rule in diorama composition: do not have any major elements parallel to the edge of the base.



The VP lamppost and abandoned bicycle once saw happier days. The building ruin is weathered with a dark wash and careful drybrushing. Note how it is sunk into the ground work, not sitting on top.

It was primed with gray auto body primer, then individual bricks were painted with varying colors of Polly S Venetian Dull Red, Medium Gray and Rust. Once dry, it was washed with thinned Testors Flat Black and Burnt Sienna artist oils.

Some individual shingles, rubble on the attic floor, and the remains of a window complete the building. A few posters and signs from various VP sets hang on the ruined walls.

THE FIGURES

VP and Warrior figures were used to portray the Panzer crew and the antitank squad, with only a few modifications. Except for the driver and the officer engaged in conversation, the others are alert for target opportunities. They are outfitted in a mixture of uniforms.

THE TANK

The Pzkw IV was basically built straight from the box. A recent release from Tamiya, the kit details and engineering are excellent. The tank has additional spaced armor around the turret but lacks the brackets and side skirts often seen. It is equipped with winterketten tracks from DML.

It was painted in a two-tone scheme with Polly S Dark Yellow as a base coat, then a Polly S Woodland Brown pattern was air-brushed. It received a thin dark wash to give depth to the details, then weathered by dry brushing in the usual fashion.

Some fine sand and dirt were affixed to the running gear and lower portions of the hull, and small amounts of rubble added to the deck and turret roof.

THE BUILDING

The building is the Trophy Ruined Train Station (#T20017), with parts rearranged. Wood strips became remnants of the attic floor and what is left of the roof.

The rear of the action. Note the brick colors and the remains of the second floor.





The heavily armed infantrymen sport a mixture of uniforms and headgear. Notice the grenades attached to the jerry cans, which would have made a significant bang. This is a nice use of small detail to add to the character of the diorama. The composition immediately draws the eye to the center of the scene.

The faded appearance of the rear turret markings, created with subtle dry brushing or pastels, is evident. Note the markings on the panzerfaust carried by the soldier on the right.



By the time an Allied soldier saw this end of the Panzer's main gun, it would be too late. The added drain pipe imparts detail to this corner of the former Ortskommandatura.



It would be difficult to spot this tank from the air because it blends in with its surroundings.



PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

The diorama started with a 9 x 9-inch piece of 5/8-inch plywood. It was built up with styrofoam and Celluclay. While the ground cover was still wet, the ruined building, tank and figures were placed to check position and pressed slightly into the ground work.

The whole was covered with Trophy Red Bricks and other debris, attached with diluted white glue, and all carefully placed to leave no empty spaces in the scene. Once again, a wash of Testors Flat Black deepens shadows, and dusting with pastel chalks melds the vehicle, building and figures into a unified appearance. A VP lamppost (#0874), the recently released Tamiya German bicycle (#94005) and a few VP ammo boxes and Italeri jerry cans complete the scene. Everything looks like it belongs.

The diorama sits into a picture framed molding that completes the presentation.

This would be a tough shot. The variety of brick colors is well seen here. Be careful not to use too much red. It won't look right in scale. Note the smoke stains above the broken windows and the dark pointing between bricks.



MATERIALS USED

Figures:

Verlinden Productions: 0868 1189

Warriors: 35081 35104 35030

Vehicle: Tamiya Panzer IV Ausf. J (#TA35181)

Building: Trophy Ruined Train Station (#T20017)

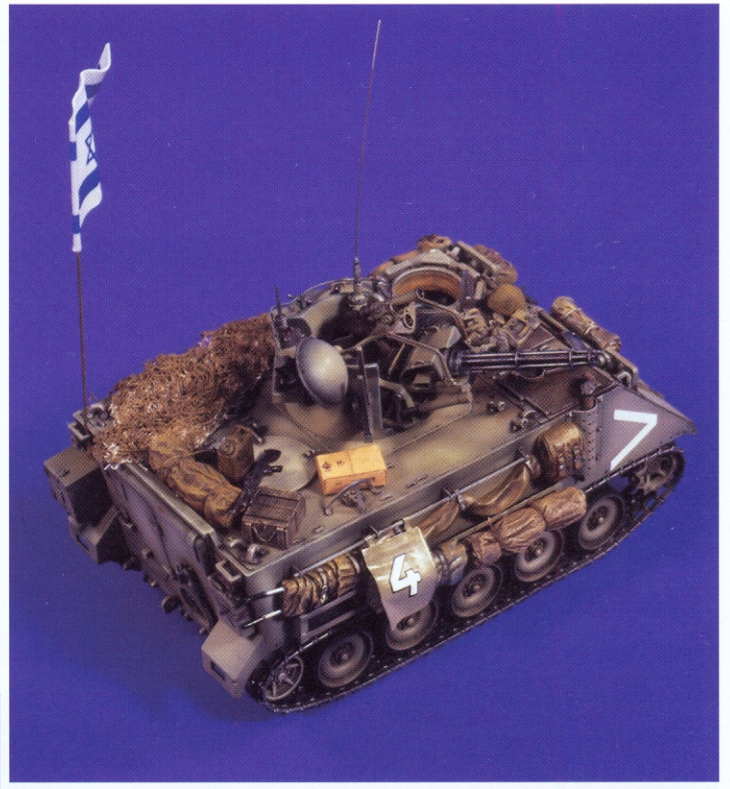
Accessories: Tamiya German Bicycle (#94005)

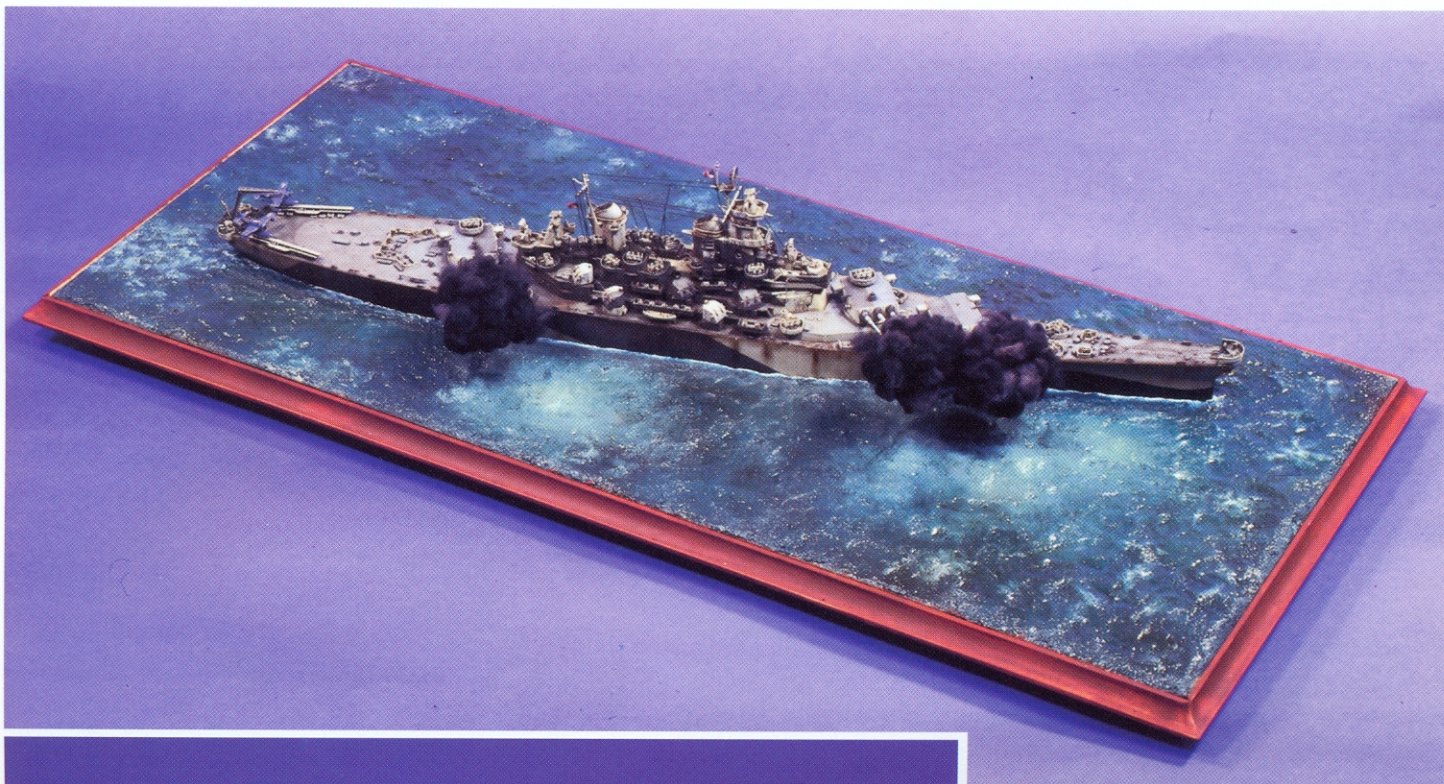
SHOWCASE

Seen at Mastercon 7

Israeli M163 Vulcan
1:35 Scale

"Traffic Jam" France 1940
1:35 Scale by Scott LARTER





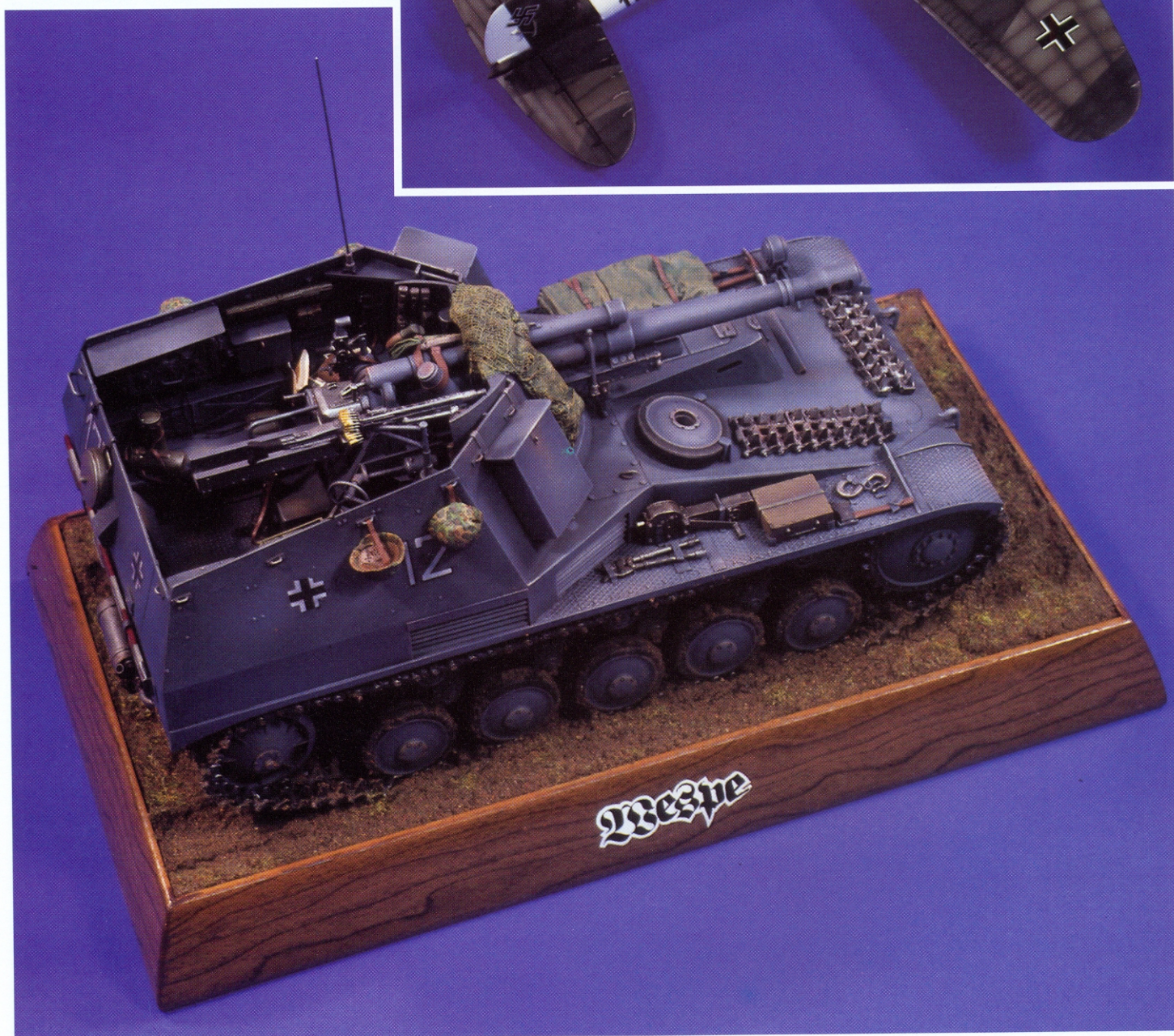
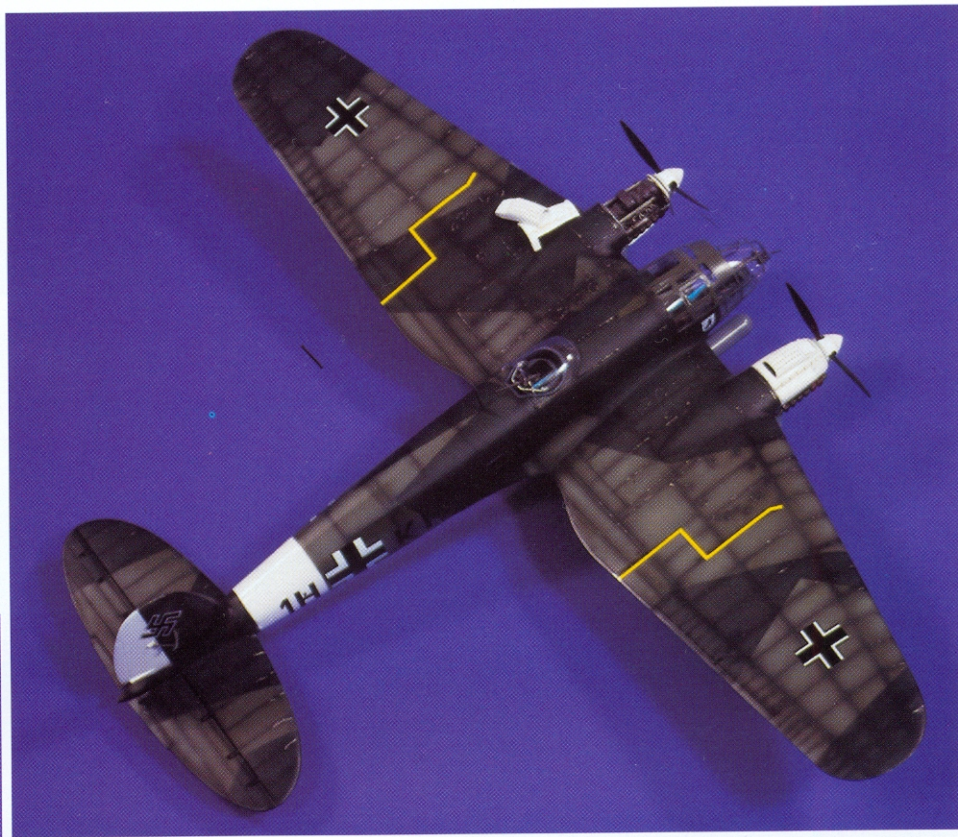
Battleship Missouri
1:350 Scale
by Lewis PRUNEAU

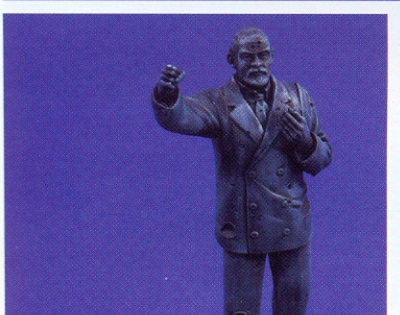


Panzer IV J
w/Thoma Armor
1:35 Scale
by Alexander BABICH

Heinkel III
1:48 Scale
by Alexander BABICH

"WESPE"
1:16 Scale / 120mm
by Duane PFISTER



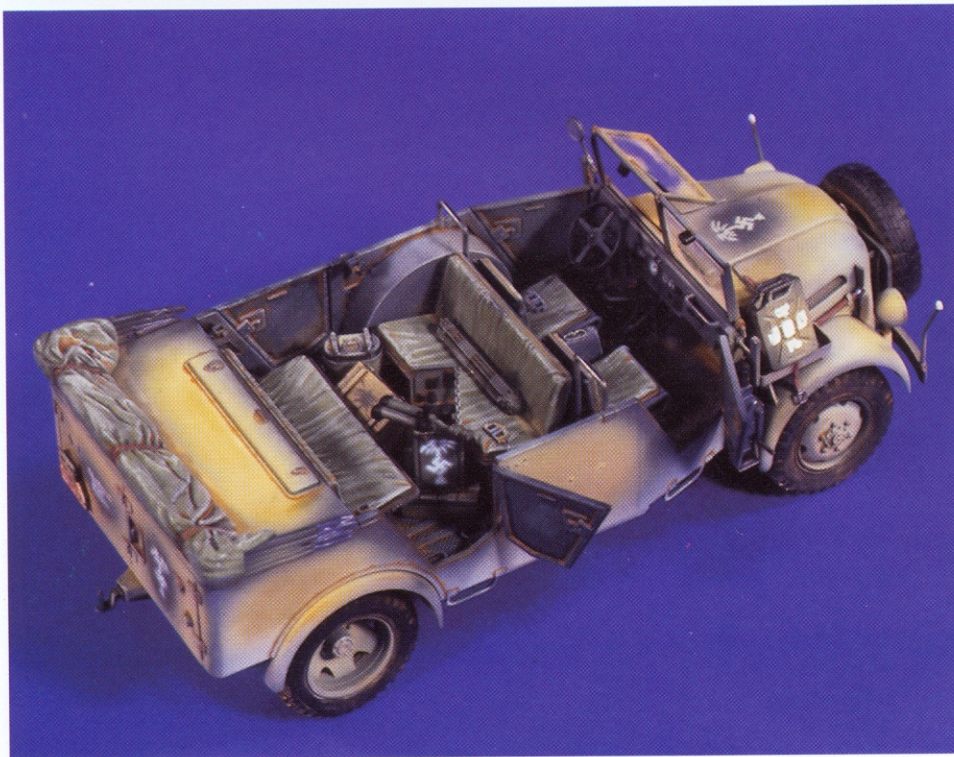


"Battle for Casino"
1:35 Scale
by Sam GARCIA

"Der Foto"
1:35 Scale
by Pat COONEY



STREET DEFENSE



"Street Defense"
1:35 Scale
by Greg CHILAR

Steyer 1500
1:35 Scale
by Jon BAKER

Retreat from Budapest

1:16 Scale / 120MM
by Greg CIHLAR



**Kubelwagen
Ambulance
1:35 Scale
by Jon BAKER**



**Defeat at Falaise
1:35 Scale
by Sam GARCIA**





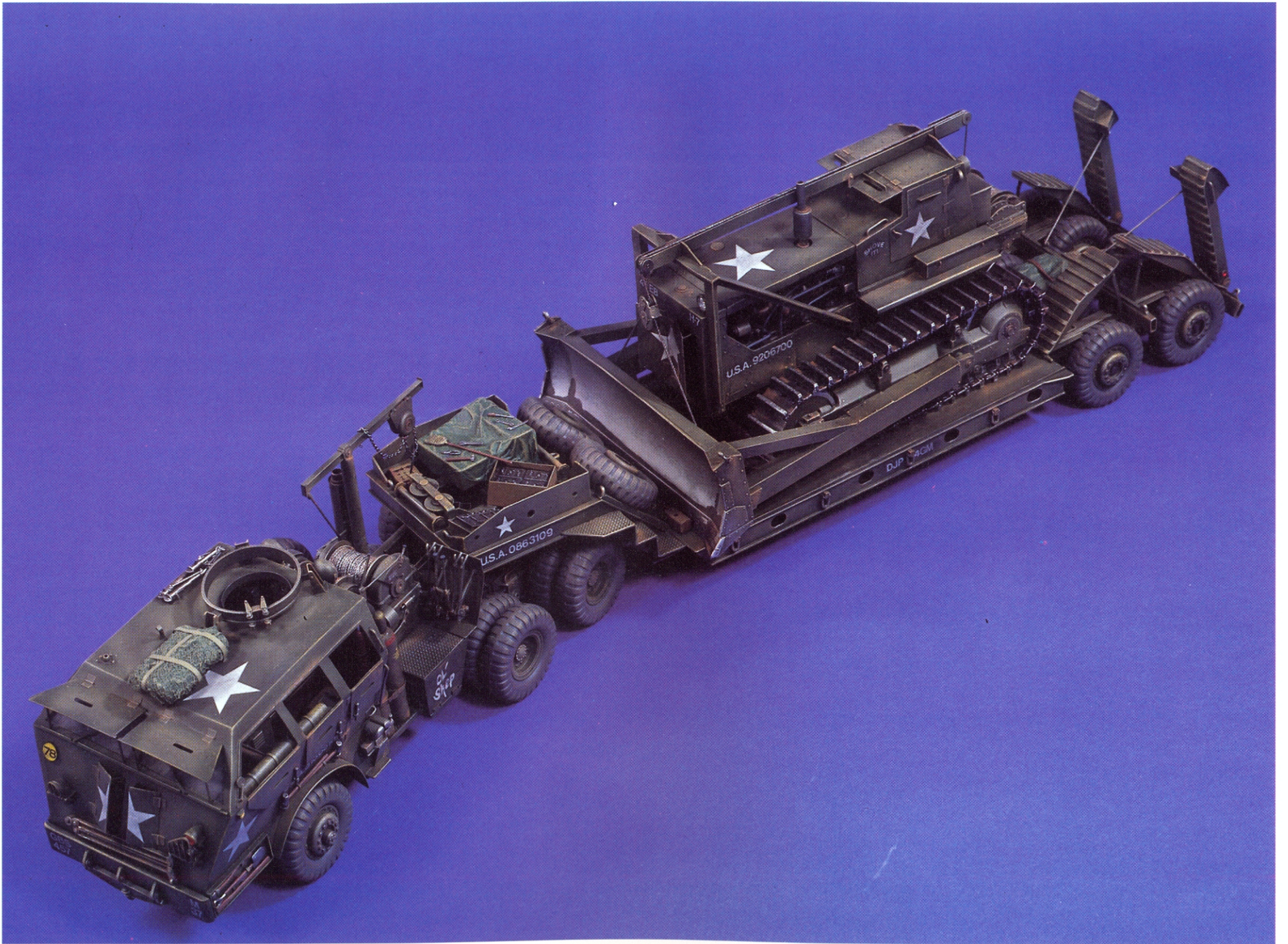
Winter ME 109-G2
1:48 Scale
by Daniel CLOVER

"Dauntless"
1:32 Scale
by Noel LAWSON





"Intruders in the Temple" 54mm by Greg PIERCE



Dragon Wagon 1:24 Scale by Duane PFISTER

"Battle of Berlin"

A 120mm Diorama by Lewis Pruneau

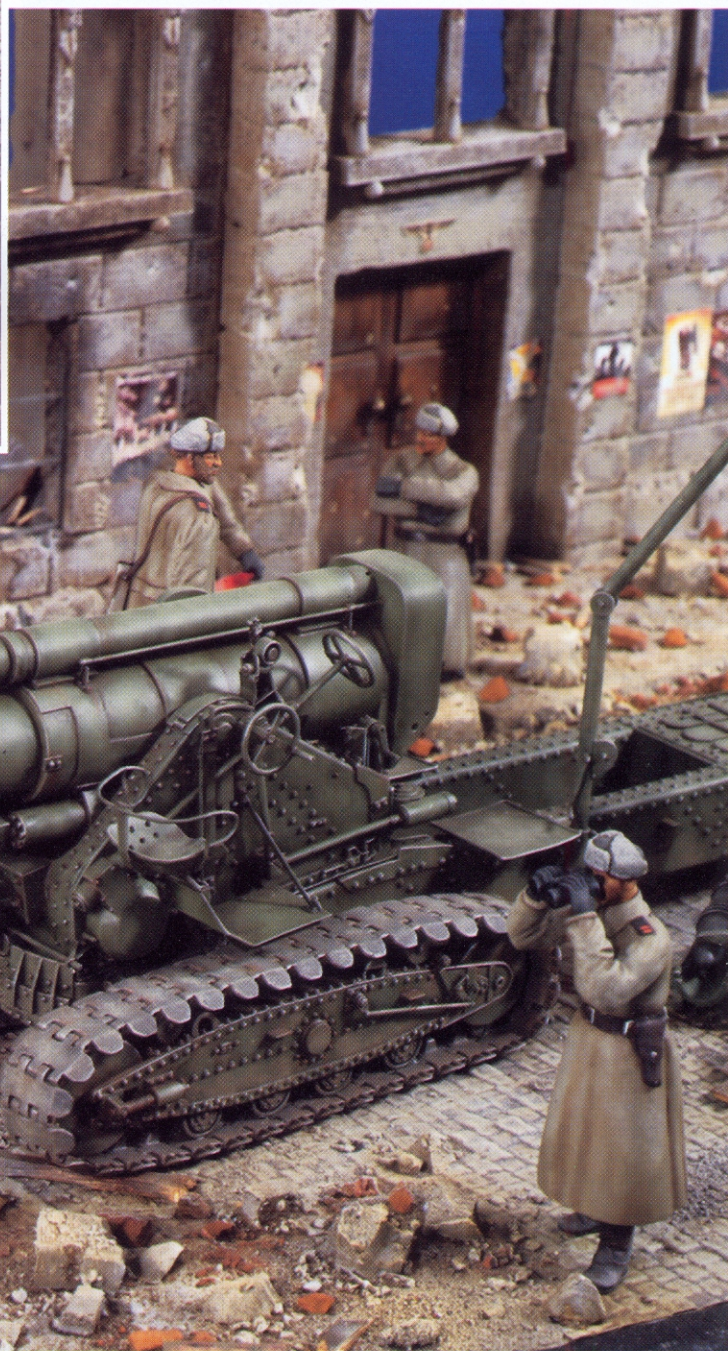
The actual "Battle of Berlin" was fought outside the city. The Russians had reached the Oder river in January of 1945. The Russian generals believed at that time they would be in Berlin within a week. As it turned out, it would be months before the Soviet tanks actually crossed the city limits. Hitler had envisioned a "Fortress Berlin" that would be the greatest fortress city during World War II. Compared with the fighting outside the city during the first four months of 1945, the fighting in the streets was hardly more than a contested mop-up. Fortress Berlin never came into existence. The relentless bombing from the Americans and British over the years, coupled with the air, artillery and rocket attacks from the Russians during 1945, had reduced the city to rubble. Most activity in the city was subterranean - the air raid shelters, subway and sewer systems becoming the habitat of the Berliners.



Overview of the siege gun, over 30 feet long from stem to stern. The 120mm version is over 24 inches long.



I attempted to achieve the atmosphere of that environment with this diorama, the focal point being a scratchbuilt Soviet 203mm siege gun. At casual glance, this piece of equipment appears to be self propelled. The tracks were actually powered by a drive shaft and universal joint attached to a tractor which not only supplied the power for its own tracks but also for the gun as well. I had come upon the reference material for this gun several years ago and finally decided to build it. It is a very unique piece of equipment and I am always drawn to that sort of project. These were used in considerable numbers by the Russians during the Battle of Berlin and elsewhere. The entire gun was built from sheet plastic, rods and tubes. A little help from the lathe to fashion the gun barrel and a lot of rivets completed the task. The base coat was dark green, washed with raw umber and a little drybrushing and metalizing finished the model.





Another one bites the dust. A converted VP Panzergrenadier.

All figures are modified VP. Russian figures are modified from the Soviet Officer Berlin (0608) and the Belgian Wallonie (0512). The Panzergrenadier France 1940 (0476) served as the recently departed German. The base of the diorama is from plywood, covered with Celluclay. The ruined building was made from blue insulating styrofoam, a very useful material! I made a single windowframe from plastic strip, then made a mold and cast the rest. The cobblestone streets are VP and the lamppost was made from scratch. Rubble is a mixture of cat litter, busted bricks and stones from the styrofoam. A heavy dusting of pastels throughout brings the diorama together.

An overview of the diorama. Base dimensions are 36 inches by 24 inches.

Years of bombing, artillery and rocket attacks have left the buildings of Berlin in ruins. A lot of rubble was needed to cover 6 square feet of diorama base.





Dancing in the streets. The conquering Soviet soldiers show their contempt for the Nazi flag.

Trailing arm of the siege gun and the scratchbuilt lamppost.







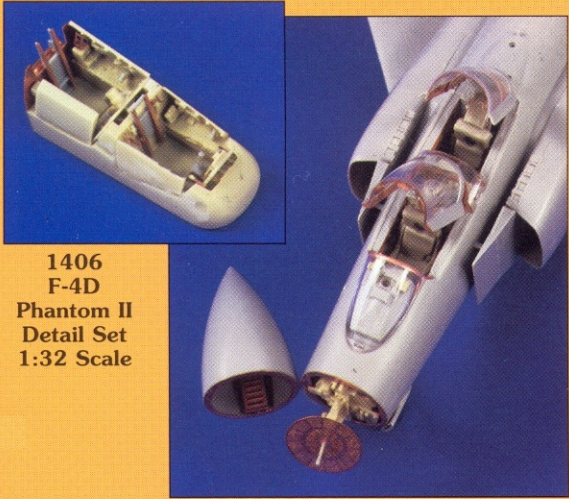
1405 "Attack" 1:35 Scale



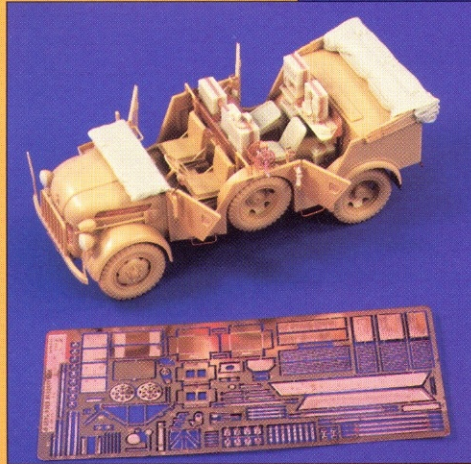
1409 Steyr Radio & Command Conversion
1:35 Scale



1403 Samurai Warlord 120mm



1406
F-4D
Phantom II
Detail Set
1:32 Scale



1404 City House Front
1:35 Scale

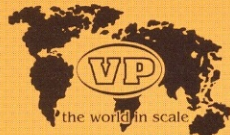
VP Magazine
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1408 Retreat From Moscow
120mm

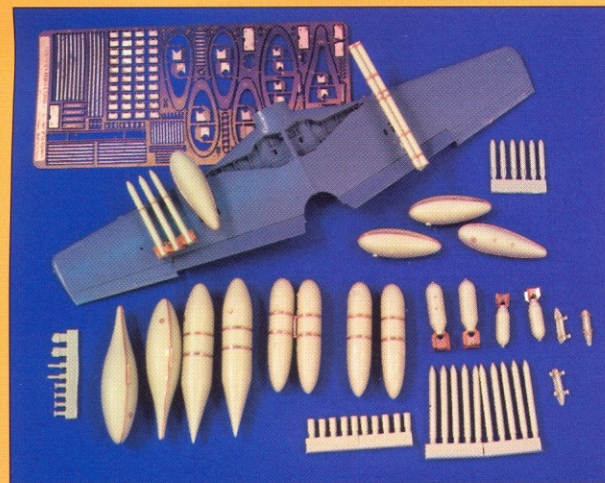
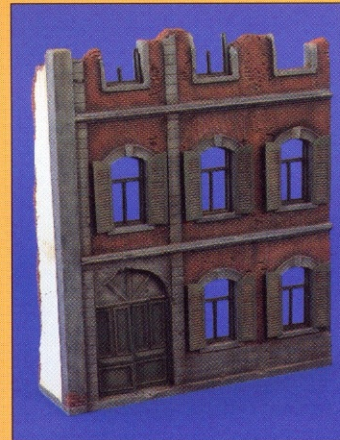


1402 German Motorcyclist & Medic
1:35 Scale



**VERLINDEN
PRODUCTIONS**

January 1999 Releases



1407 P-51 Mustang underwing stores 1:48 Scale

1401
French Foreign Legion,
Camerone-Mexico 1863
200mm Bust

