



## Feature Article

Tamiya

Panther Ausf G Late

1:35 scale

with

Davide Montaldo

(January 2022)

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Just before we get going, here's another look at how it all turned out...



After the [Revell Spitfire build](#) and conversion project, I started looking more and more intensively to my stash and decided to go back to armour.

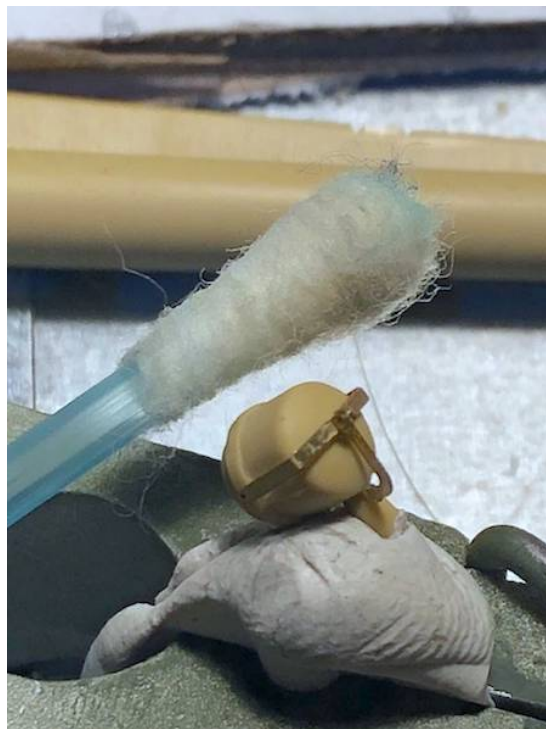
I made a choice based on the later to be proven ...wrong assumption that it would have worked out to be a shorter and easier build than the previous one; on the other hand, what was inevitably correct from the beginning was that the build had to be also instrumental to enable me to grasp more techniques I still needed to learn. As an example, the Spitfire did not offer me the possibility to do soft edged camouflage and therefore the Tamiya Panther G Late was a perfect candidate for this as it's camo looked to be not too intricate for a first attempt at this (unlike the Tiger 1 late which was the other candidate to be picked from my stash).

From my first 2 armour projects (the M13/40 and the Ariete) I learned that armour models need volume, therefore I decided that when I got to the painting stage I wanted to experiment also colour modulation.

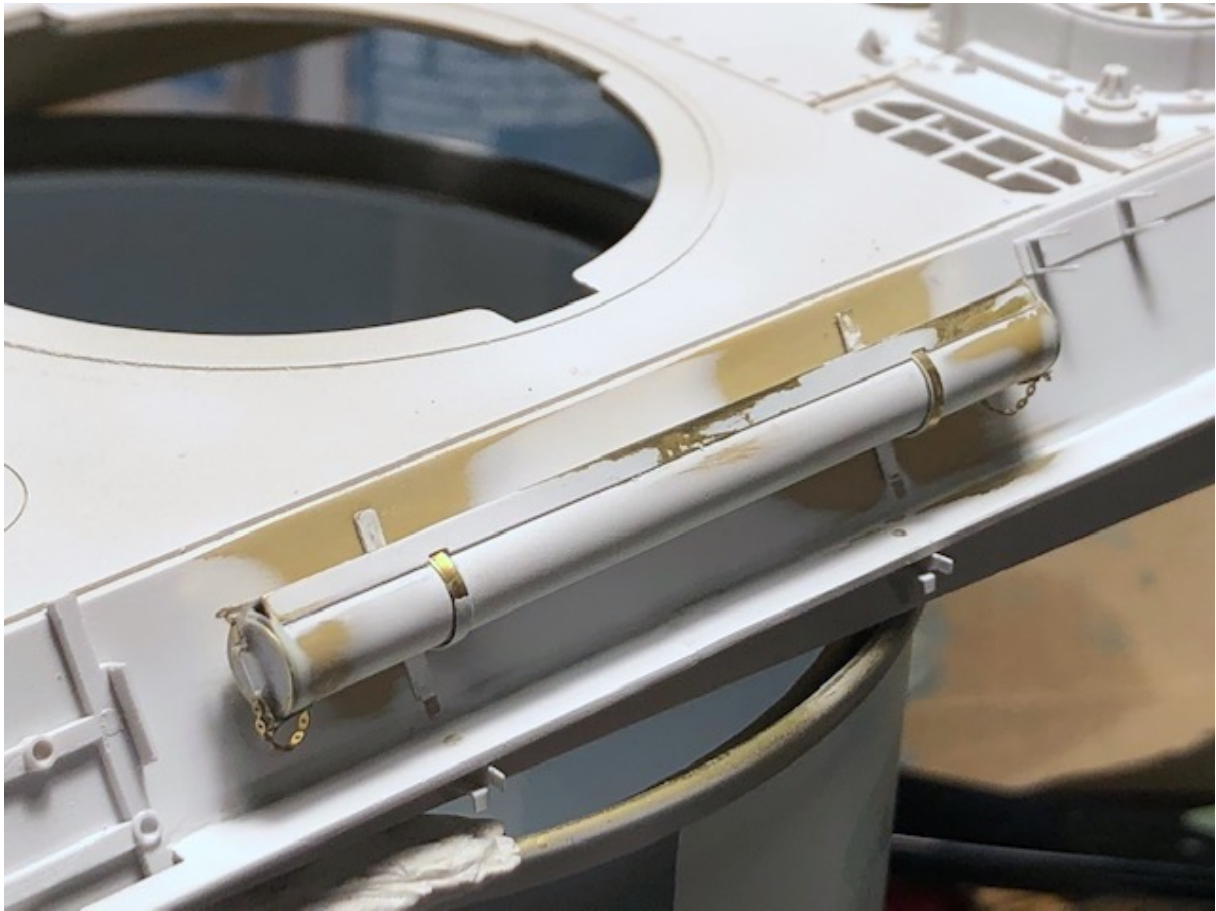
Before getting started with the build, I acquired a set of Eduard PE detail set (including side fenders and their supports, an Aber metal gun barrel and a set of Friul metal tracks. Barrel and tracks would be also my first attempt.

After reading carefully the instructions of both the kit and the PE set, I then started with the build and decided for a vehicle corresponding to a winter 1944 version, that from research did appear to have been employed in Luxembourg in the last months of the war.

As a start, I did not choose to replace the track fenders with PE equivalents (something that I would do today and that will be implemented on my actual project, Tamiya's Tiger 1 late) but recognising the scale issue I filed down the fenders to the right thickness. The Bosch headlight was particularly challenging since its brackets were sanded off and replaced with 3 separate PE parts, resulting in a very fiddly process.







Neither the kit, nor the PE set did not have the headlight feeding cable, which was created using a copper wire, cut and bent to purpose

The side skirts rails and supports were also replaced with PE alternatives and I did struggle a bit with getting the right geometry and fit with the hull; PVA glue and CA Glue to fix the parts to the hull was used whereas Vallejo acrylic filler was applied in gaps with excess removed with a water dipped cotton bud.

Side-skirts bolts were applied one by one using CA glue. This was a real challenge considering the diameter of approximately 1 mm of each one of them. To locate such minute parts, toothpick end covered with silly putty was used as a parts locator

The exhaust supports were replaced with PE equivalents and chain segments were used to the bottom rear of the vehicle replicating the lower hull hatches retaining means.

The barrel cleaning rod holder was almost entirely re-constructed using PE parts and creating, in a likewise manner as for the rear of the vehicle, lid retainers using chains. Rod holder supports were also replaced with PE parts.



Tool clamps and holders as well as shovel blade were also made from PE and a careful study of the tools was carried out to allow mounting only at later stage of the build and once painting and first stages of weathering had taken place.

The extinguisher had also a good deal of modifications done to it, replacing kit moulded parts with separately mounted PE brackets and latches.

The turret was implemented with PE parts, in particular the gun mantlet cover replaced with PE, the gun barrel and muzzle brake replaced with metal equivalents and periscopes (totally missing in the aged Tamiya kit) were bent to shape later to be primed, coloured and installed in the final stages of the build.



The machine gun mounting ring was kept from the kit and not replaced from PE, as its thickness appeared to be more in scale.

Engine covers grilles came also from PE and applied using CA glue.

Periscopes in the hull were painted in semi-gloss black and the lenses got a coat of silver, after which Tamiya clear blue and clear green in sequence. A final coat of Tamiya smoke was applied to soften brightness

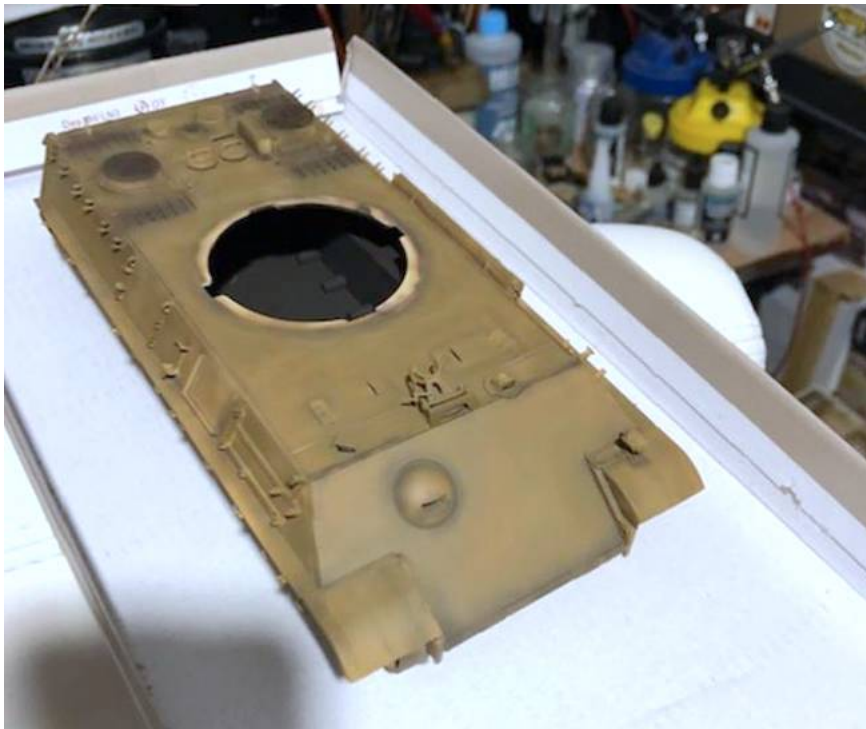
After hull and turret mounting of the above mentioned sections was completed, an overall coat of Mr. Surfacer 1500 white, thinned in 50% with Gunze Mr. Leveling

Thinner was applied to all the pre-built sections and to the wheels which in the meantime were cut off from sprues and cleaned from the burr using sanding sticks of various grading.

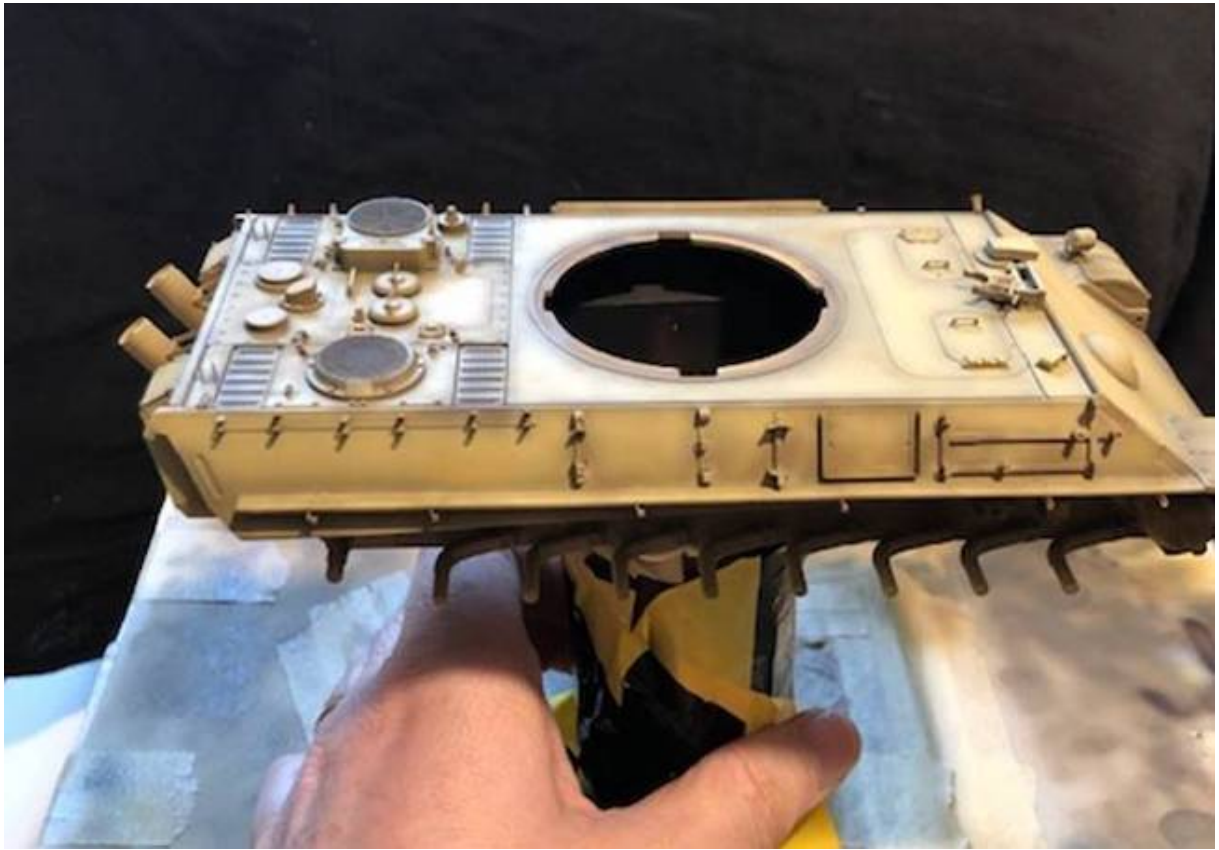
To initiate the colour modulation process, a 50% XF-10 Flat Brown and XF-1 Flat Black was applied as pre-shading in all recessed parts as well as shadow areas.







The colour modulation process then started by starting with the darker tone of *Dunkelgelb* modulation set from Mr. Color, thinned with Mr Leveling Thinner (MLT) in approx. 60% if not even 70% ratio. Utmost care was taken in making sure not to cover completely the first pre-shading.







Subsequent, lighter tones were then applied with same thinning ratio but covering progressively less areas as to create a modulation effect. Generally lower and recessed areas were kept darker than other light exposed areas and parts.

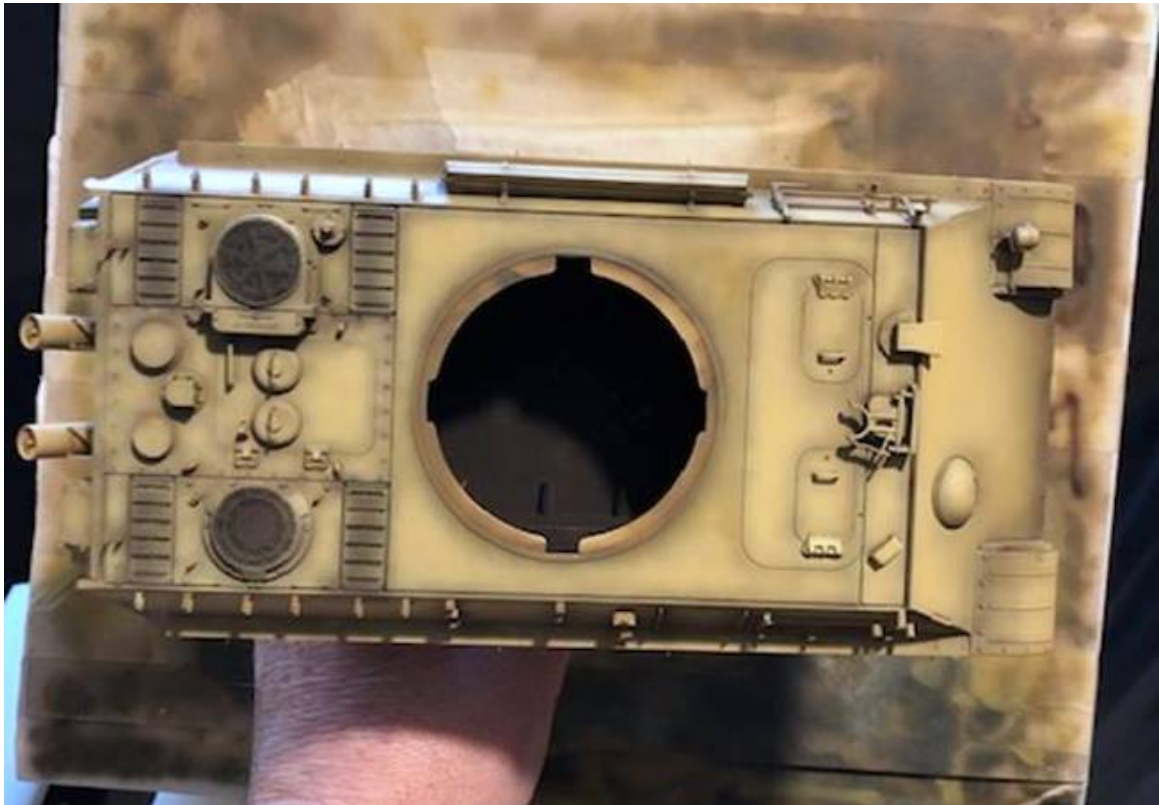
It is to be mentioned that despite the eduard PE being quite comprehensive, some scratch building was deemed necessary. For instance, one of the air intakes on the engine deck had to be equipped with a cross-shaped grill, which was built using the fret of the PE set itself. It was subsequently primed and painted in a likewise manner.



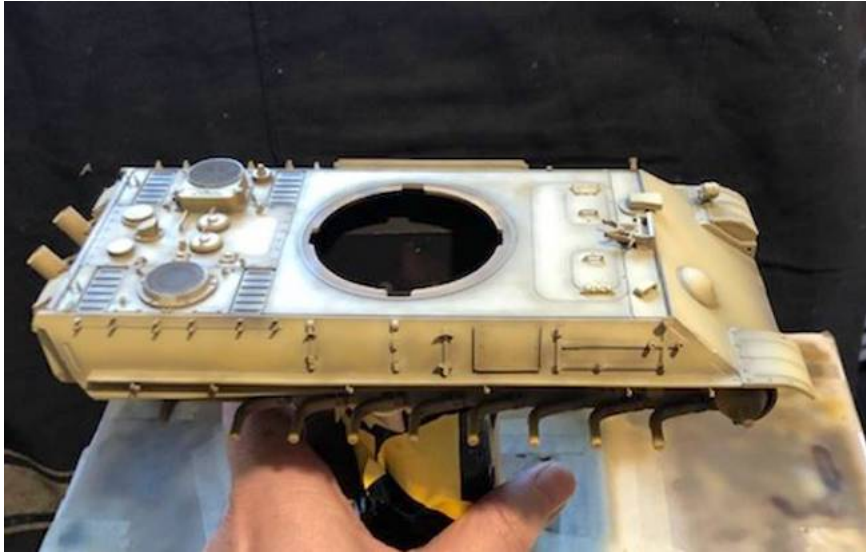












The same was applied to wheels, sprockets and idler wheels



Once the base colour was applied and modulated, it was then the turn to start applying the camouflage pattern (one of the rationales of this build). After some research done here in Germany, I was advised by fellow modellers for a vehicle of the period chosen, Tamiya XF-67 NATO Green was deemed to be the correct match for the *Olivgrün* and therefore applied. After the pattern was created lighter shades of the same colour where heavily thinned down and applied where the modulated areas of *Dunkelgelb* had been applied. This was a particularly challenging part of the painting as it proved to be very difficult to stay within the edges of each area and to curtail overspray.

The *Rotbraun* or *Schockoladebraun* was applied choosing Tamiya Dark Brown XF-10 in the same fashion, modulation included.

To soften edges even more and to smoothen the modulation of the camouflage patches, a filter was applied to light and shadow areas by diluting flat white and flat black to almost 90% respectively and applied with my airbrush. Filters therefore were therefore somehow modulated as well.

The model was then treated with a gloss coat (Mr. Color GX 112) in preparation to decal application and to the stages of weathering. Decals were treated with usual sequence of Microscale Micro Set and Micro Sol after which another coat of gloss was applied to seal them in and to avoid any possible silvering. Whilst the turret markings gave no problems whatsoever (despite the “1” of the “301” stood right on the escape hatch) I did need to pay some attention at the *Balkankreuzen* located in the front of the vehicle to avoid silvering. A dark wash was then applied using AK wash for NATO Vehicles, due to the camouflaged pattern and the requested level of contrast. The wash was then cleaned with AK odourless thinner.











The second completely new technique that was tested was oil dot rendering which was implemented with both Abteilung 502 colours and AMMO Mig Oil brushers. The stippling is by far the most important part of the technique and a brush having the right consistency, length and width was used. Some highlighting was done using *Abteilung* oil colours. However due to colour modulation previously applied, this phase proved to be relatively small and quick.

After this technique was successfully implemented and having reached a degree of satisfaction with the result, the model was sealed with a matt coat (Mr Color GX 114)

It was then the turn of tools which were fixed in the previously mounted, painted and weathered brackets and that were also previously painted before mounting. To simulate shade areas in the handles, near the brackets, oilbrusher was used.

Spare tracks retaining chains were then mounted, prior to the mounting of the spare track themselves.

In parallel the running gear followed the same process (including weathering) and was now ready to be installed.

It was then the turn of the Tracks which was the 3<sup>rd</sup> new technique or aspect completely new for me in this build, having opted for metal tracks from *Friulmodel*. A lot of time was spent cleaning each link and then dipping each link in 50% diluted AK burnishing fluid with water. The desired degree of burnishing was reached after 3 days, after which each track section was rinsed with water and gradually assembled to form the right and left tracks using the metal wire provided by *Friul*. Once the links were assembled, they were located on a flat cardboard base and received a wash with AK track wash which served also as pigment fixer for a mixture of 3 different pigments (European earth, sand and dark earth). The pigment mixture was prepared in a little abundance as it had to be used to the vehicle later.





The lower front and rear part of the tank as well as the lower sides were treated with enamel earth effects, oils and Mud effects from Mig. This application was not heavy and was kept relatively light.







Once pigments and track wash were dried I then proceeded in the mounting process, leaving the outer road wheels unmounted to ease the track application process. This proved to be particularly challenging considering the weight of each track, but then succeeded to locate the ends close enough to insert the last locking pin, slightly beneath the sprocket.



The last turret assembly consisted of periscopes, a bit fiddly to be installed, as they had to be located in the right position with blue tack and then secured with CA glue.

The MG 34 provided in the kit had its barrel cut away and replaced by an ABER metal one which was fitted with gunsight. It was then primed, coloured in lacquer

gun metal from Gunze and subsequently dark washed and dry brushed in silver. The bow mounted machine gun was replaced and mounted in a likewise manner.

The Antenna was created from stretched sprue and cut to 5,7 cm to reproduce in scale the original length of 2 m.







This concluded the build that lasted some 5 months, proved to be challenging but pleased me very much with the result. It provided me also with the right confidence to tackle more challenging (or perhaps not) projects like the long awaited Tiger I operating in the Normandy Theatre.

Detmold, December 2022 Davide M.











