

StuH 42 L/28 Alkett (05.1944)



Over the last few years I had build some other tanks with Zimmerit but this was to be my first tank with a complete Zimmerit coating already moulded in place. Thank you Dragon for that improvement!

I also collected over the years a large amount of books on German tanks, and before I start building a new model I always try to get as much information on it as possible and I also try to find some good reference pictures of the model I would be building.

When I first saw the box art of the dragon kit I had the nagging feeling that there was something slightly wrong. Once I received the kit and read the instructions, I was sure that there was something wrong. The quality of Dragon kits is normally really very good, but there are some basic mistakes in this one, and the reason is simple - they copied the fantastic StuG G kit and then added the Zimmerit coating.

Building the Dragon Kit 6454 – 10,5cm Sturmhaubitze 42 Ausf. G with Zimmerit

Here is the picture of the Dragon box art....



And of course a photo of a real Sturmhaubitze 42:



If you look closely you can see that there are some basic differences.

Here's a short historical review;

There were two main companies in Germany which built the StuG III. Their names were MIAG and ALKETT. Both used different variants of some components and two different Zimmerit patterns for their StuG's. If you know these differences it's possible to identify the manufacturer and the exact production date.

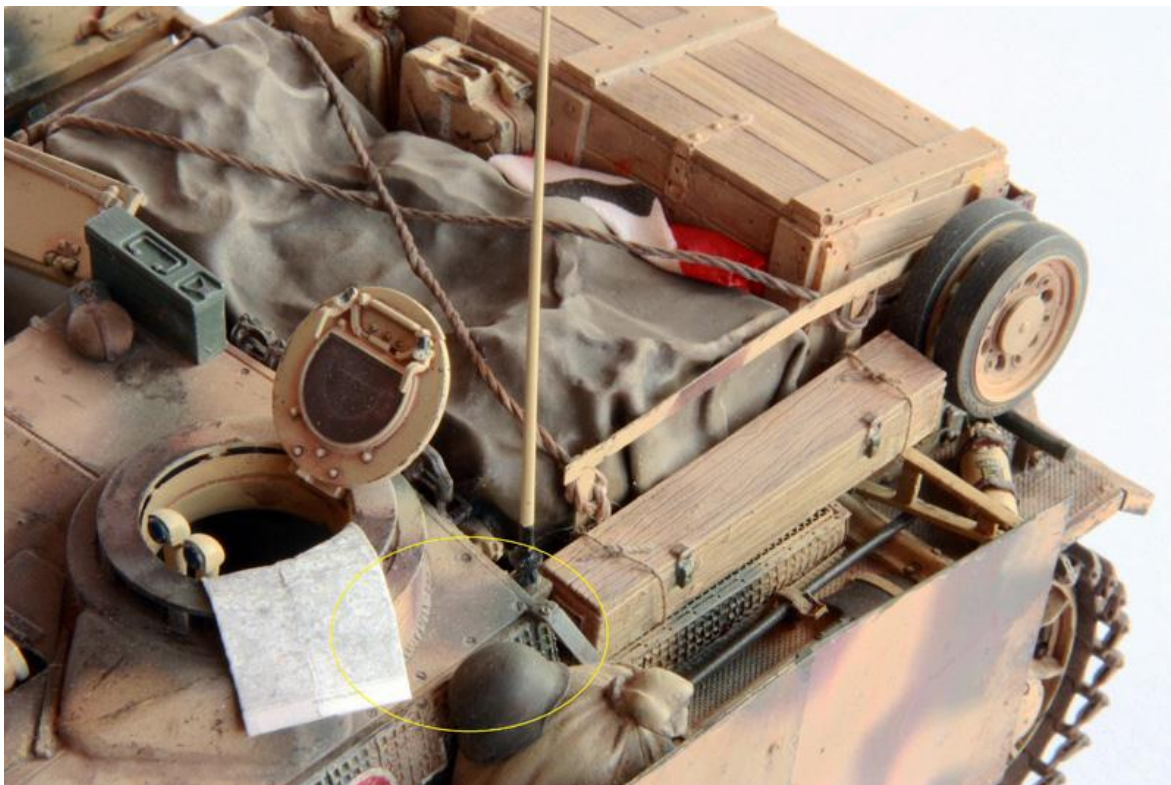
The wonderful Dragon StuG G is a MIAG StuG and what Dragon did with this kit is that they added an ALKETT Zimmerit pattern on this MIAG StuG. Zimmerit is the name of the coating which comes from the name of the company Zimmer which produced it. This coating was only used between September 1943 and September 1944. During this time only ALKETT had produced Sturmhaubitzen (StuH's).

You can read all these information in the books from Peter Mueller and Wolfgang Zimmermann:

Sturmgeschütz III - Backbone of the German Infantry, Volume I, History; Development, Production, Deployment

Sturmgeschütz III - Backbone of the German Infantry, Volume II, Visual Appearance; Variants, Modifications, Technical Drawings

The version of the StuH I could build out of the Dragon kit depended on the time period in which is fixed because of the Zimmerit and characteristic screws on the roof.



From June 1944 Alkett used different screws for fixing the roof plate, so I have to build the StuH in a version which was produced before the end of May 1944.

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Right! Let's start modelling!

I will try to describe how I rebuilt the Dragon kit into a more accurate 10,5 cm Sturmhaubitze 42 Ausf. G, and how I corrected some faults.

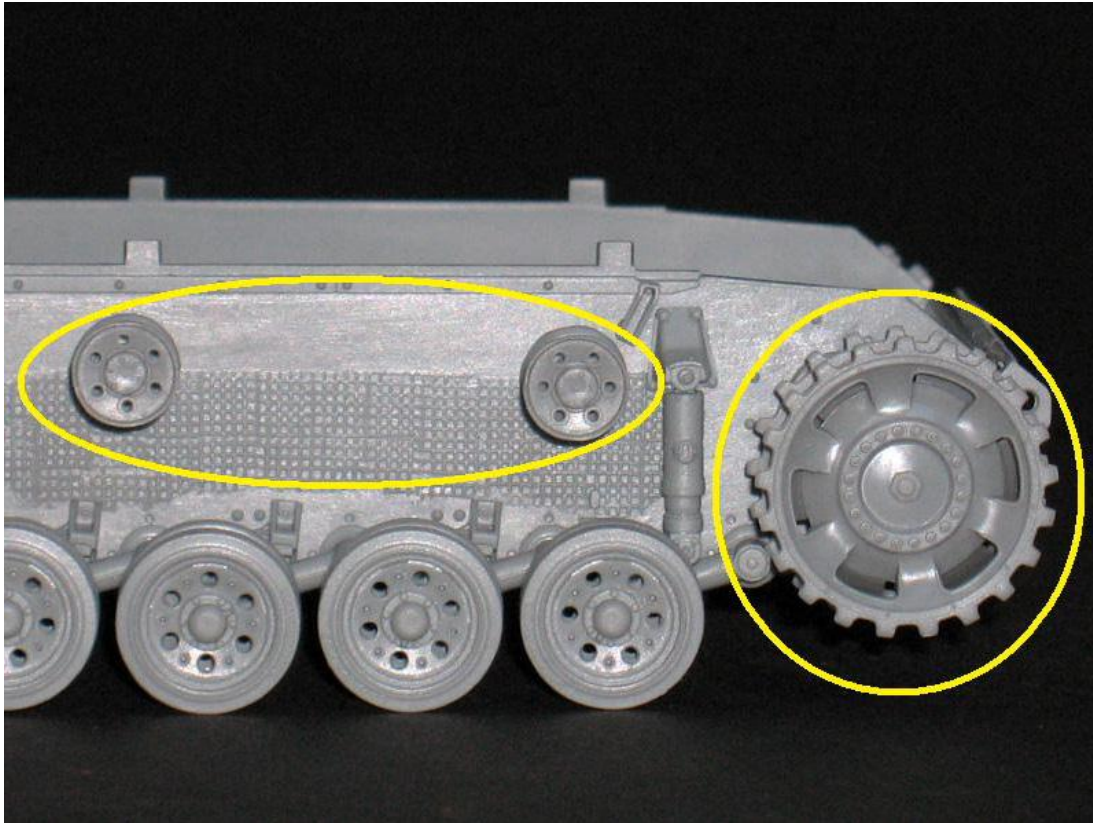


The picture below of a damaged ALKETT StuG shows the details of the original wheels:

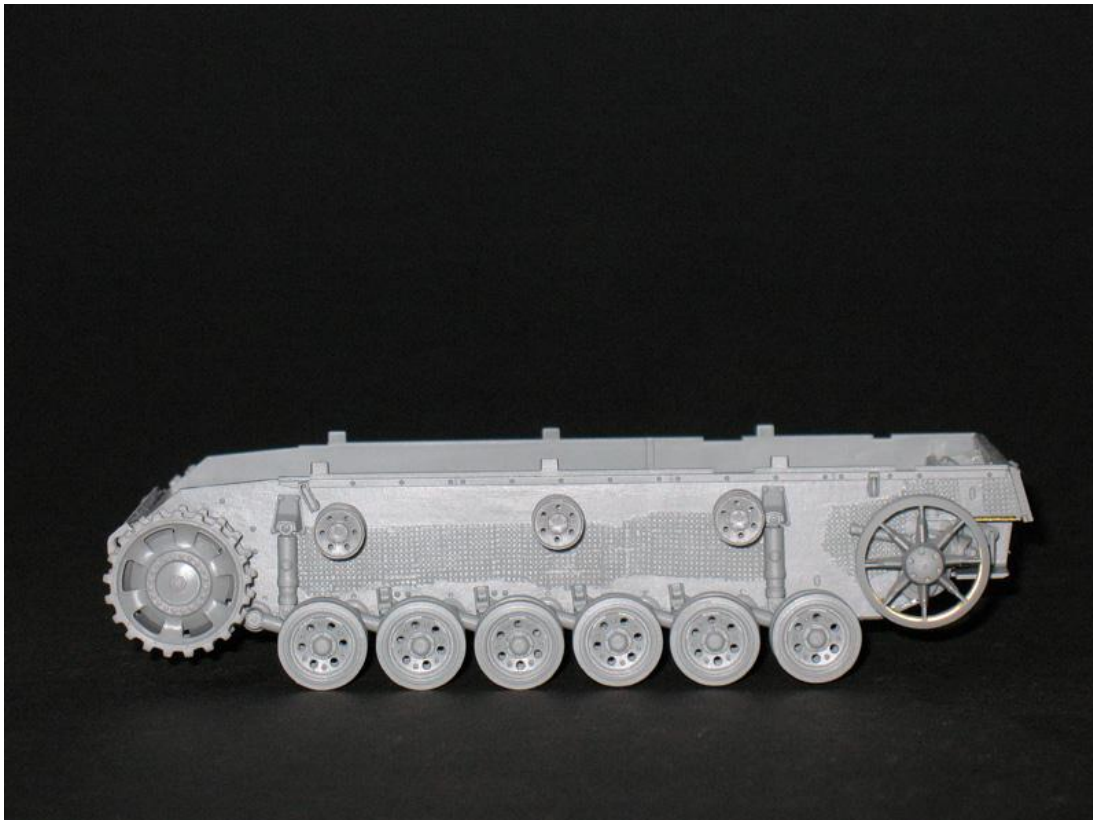


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All StuH's of this version had steel return rollers and drive sprockets of the final versions of the StuG G's 1944. The sprockets were actually castings with detachable gear rings. The Dragon kits contains only the 'old' and 'normal' return rollers and drive sprockets. I took the correct return rollers, the drive sprockets and the final drives from the older Dragon StuH kit 9058 that I had in my stash.

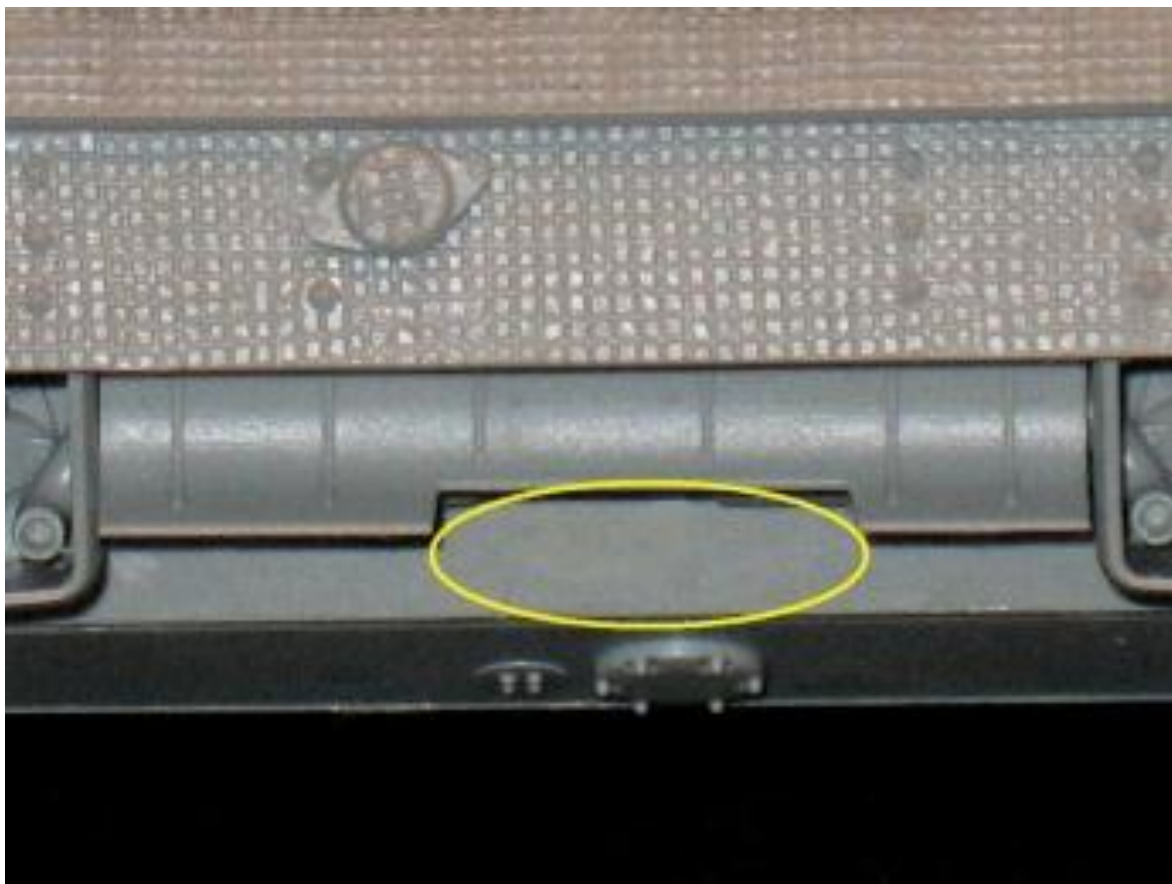


These are the correct wheels for this version of the 10,5 cm Sturmhaubitze 42 Ausf. G from ALKETT.



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In step 5 of the instructions you can see a ball-shaped cover below and between the two exhausts on part B30. This ball shaped cover was not used on ALKLETT StuH's of this version, and so had to be removed.



MIAG and ALKETT had different variants for the support of the fenders. The following two pictures show the differences between MIAG and ALKETT.

Support for MIAG StuG's:

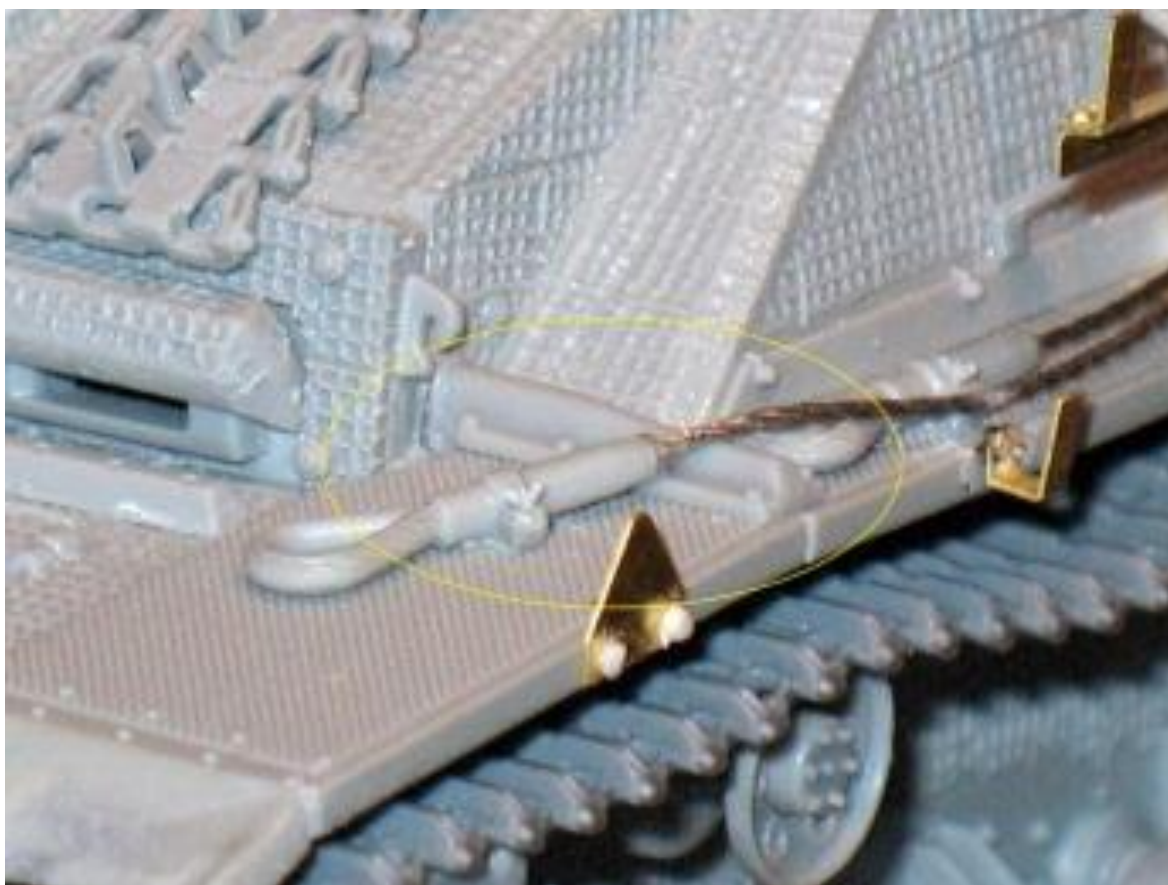


Support for ALKETT StuG's:



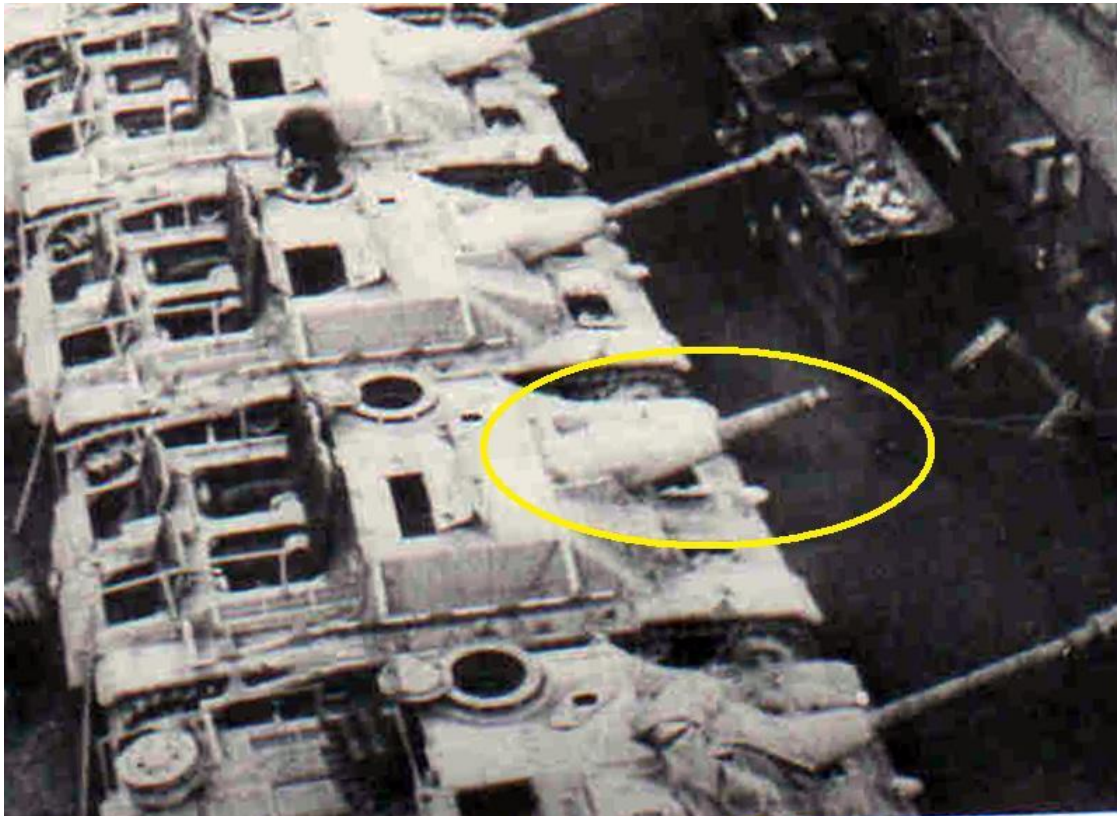
Building the Dragon Kit 6454 – 10,5cm Sturmhaubitze 42 Ausf. G with Zimmerit

In stage 6 of the instructions part F3 is constructed from G33 and MA12. This is the support for MIAG fenders. To correct it I again used the supports from the older Dragon StuH kit 9058.



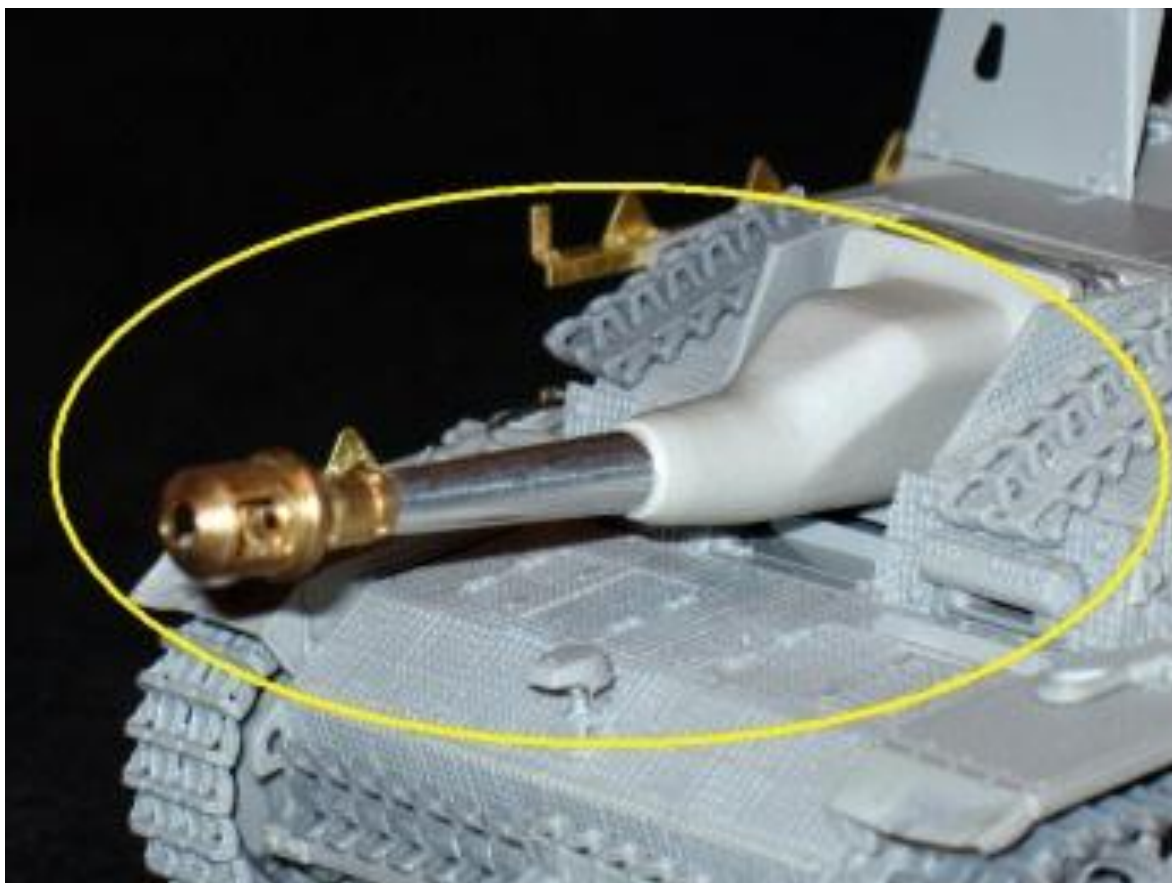
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From autumn 1943 onwards, all ALKETT StuG's and StuH's were equipped with the new 'Saukopfblende' (sow's head) gun mantle. This is a picture from the ALKETT factory in March/April 1944. You can see a Sturmhaubitze (2nd vehicle bottom) between the StuG's.



For my model I have used the very detailed Armorscale set B35-039 with the correct 10.5 cm gun L/28.





The gap between the gun mantle and the upper hull was covered with a small tarpaulin to protect the gun mechanic from rain and dust.



I made the small tarpaulin from lead foil...



VERLINDEN PRODUCTIONS
811 Lone Star Drive, O'Fallon MO 63366 USA

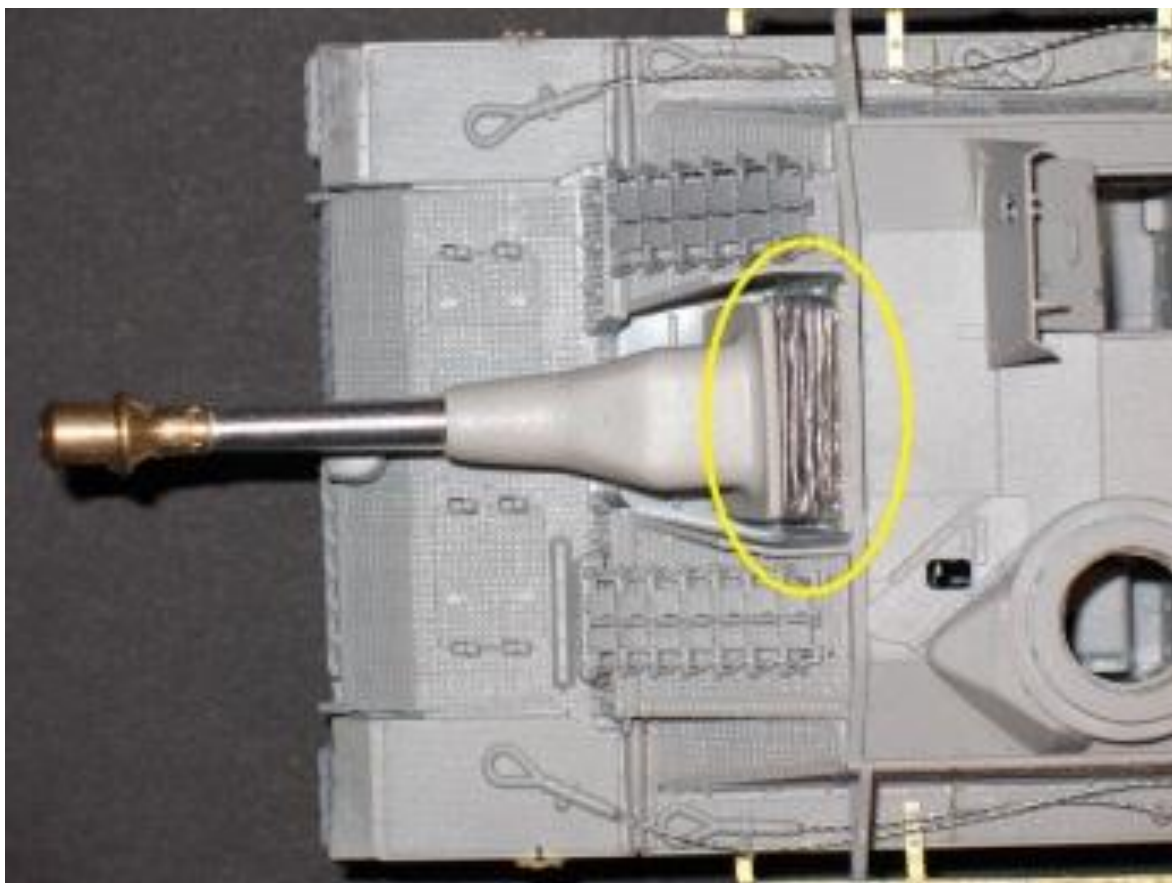
N°050 Lead Foil Any Scale

Applications:

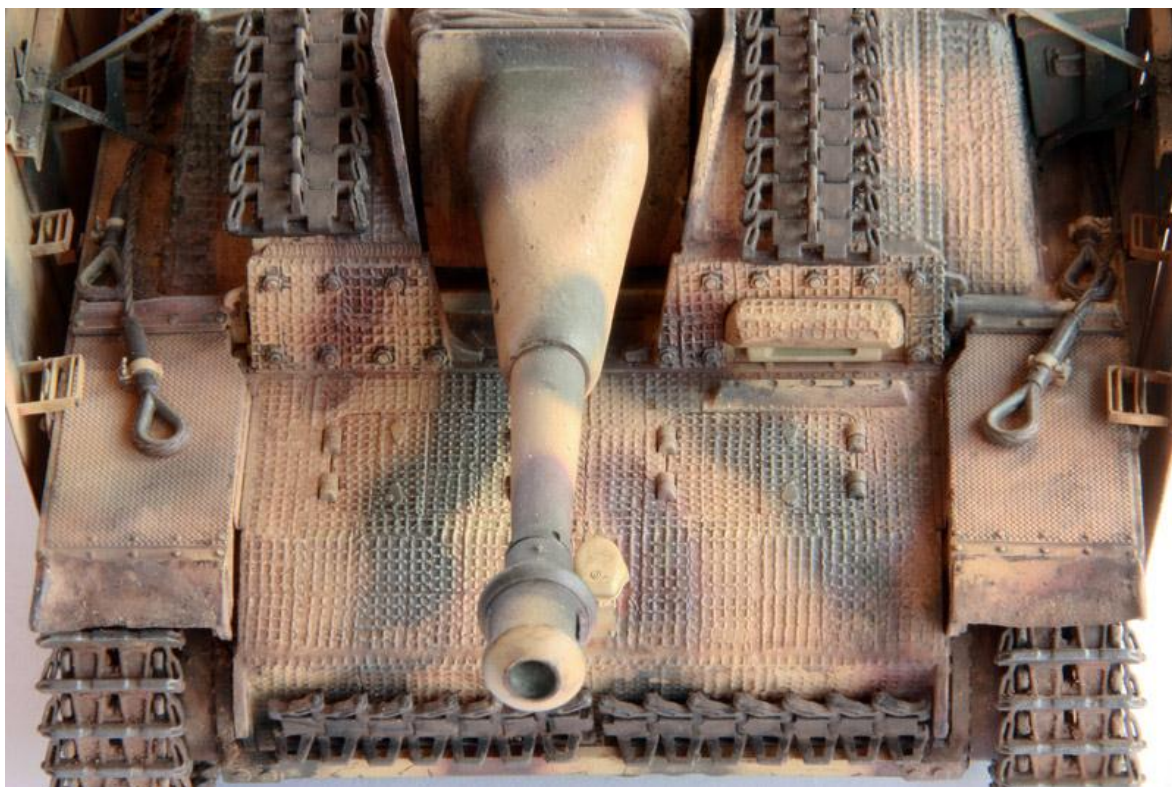


I have glued the lead foil on to the upper hull before I fixed the gun.

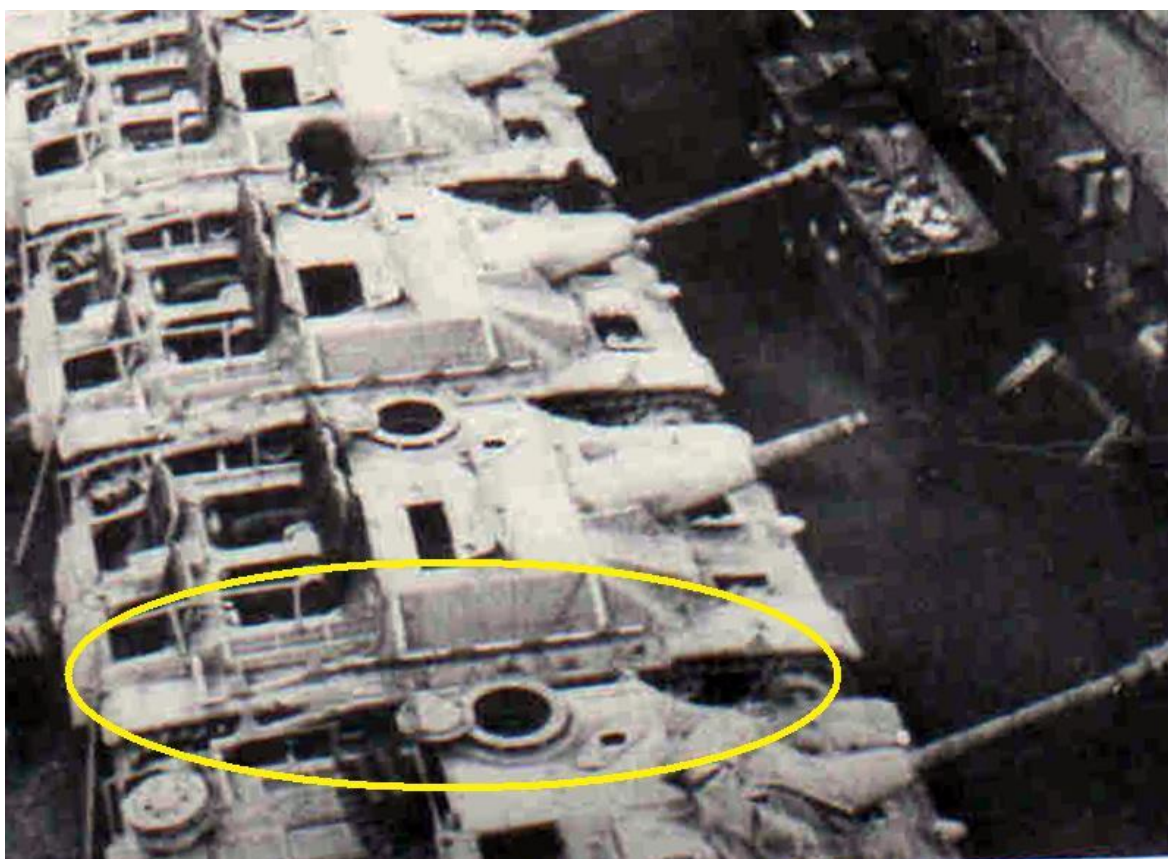




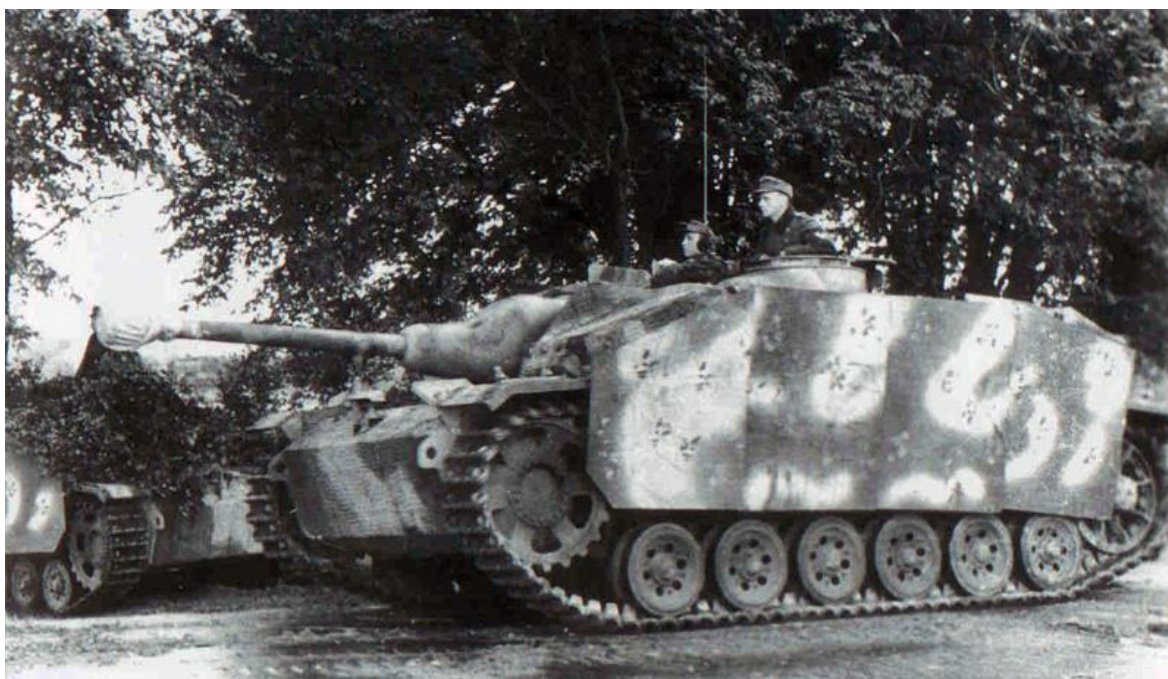
I thought the result looked pretty good!



All ALKETT StuG's and StuH's were equipped with the new final version of the Schuerzen (skirts) in the factory (see the picture from the ALKETT factory).



The side skirts were an extra protection against enemy tank hunting teams.



Building the Dragon Kit 6454 – 10,5cm Sturmhaubitze 42 Ausf. G with Zimmerit

The skirts are not supplied in the kit. For my model I have used the excellent PE set P35-022 from Armorscale for the skirts.

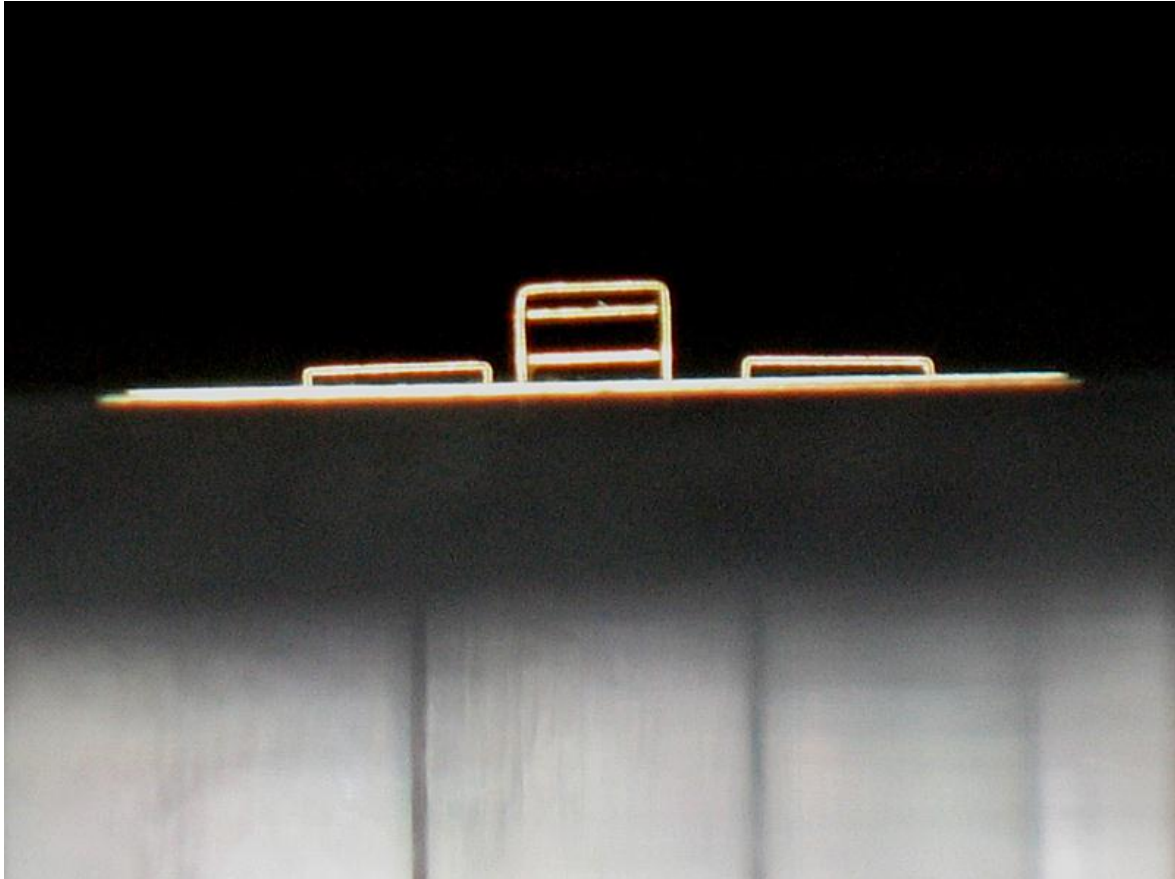


It's a lot of work and I need more than one day to build them and for fixing the brackets at the model but they are worth it.

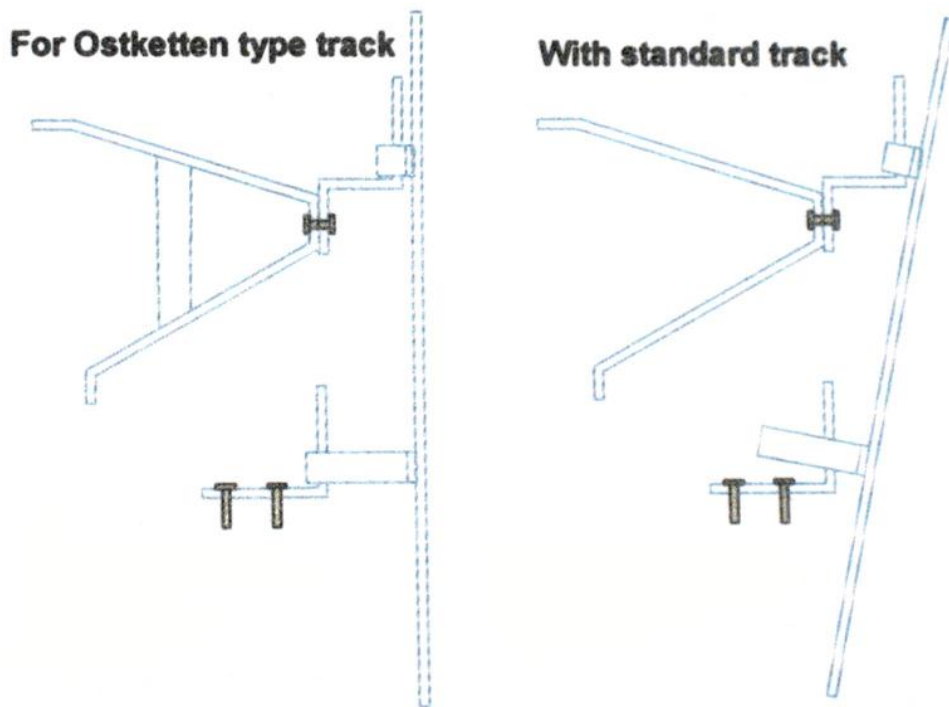
You can see the two skirts in the middle of each side are thicker in the upper part inside.



With the special brackets it's possible to use them with the normal tracks and also with Ostketten.



ALKETT StuG with Ostketten and the final version skirts...see the different angle of the skirts.



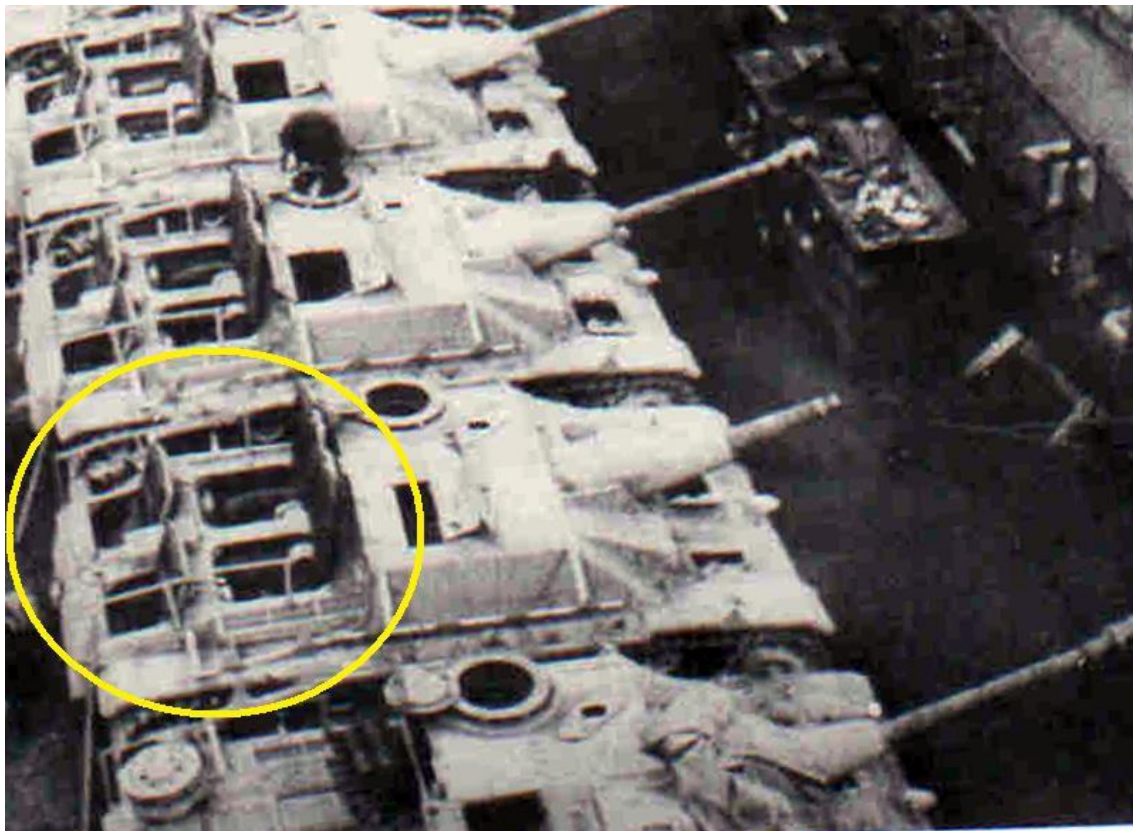
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The Armorscale skirts fit perfect and they are not glued at the StuH. With the skirts the StuH looks really compact.



Building the Dragon Kit 6454 – 10,5cm Sturmhaubitze 42 Ausf. G with Zimmerit

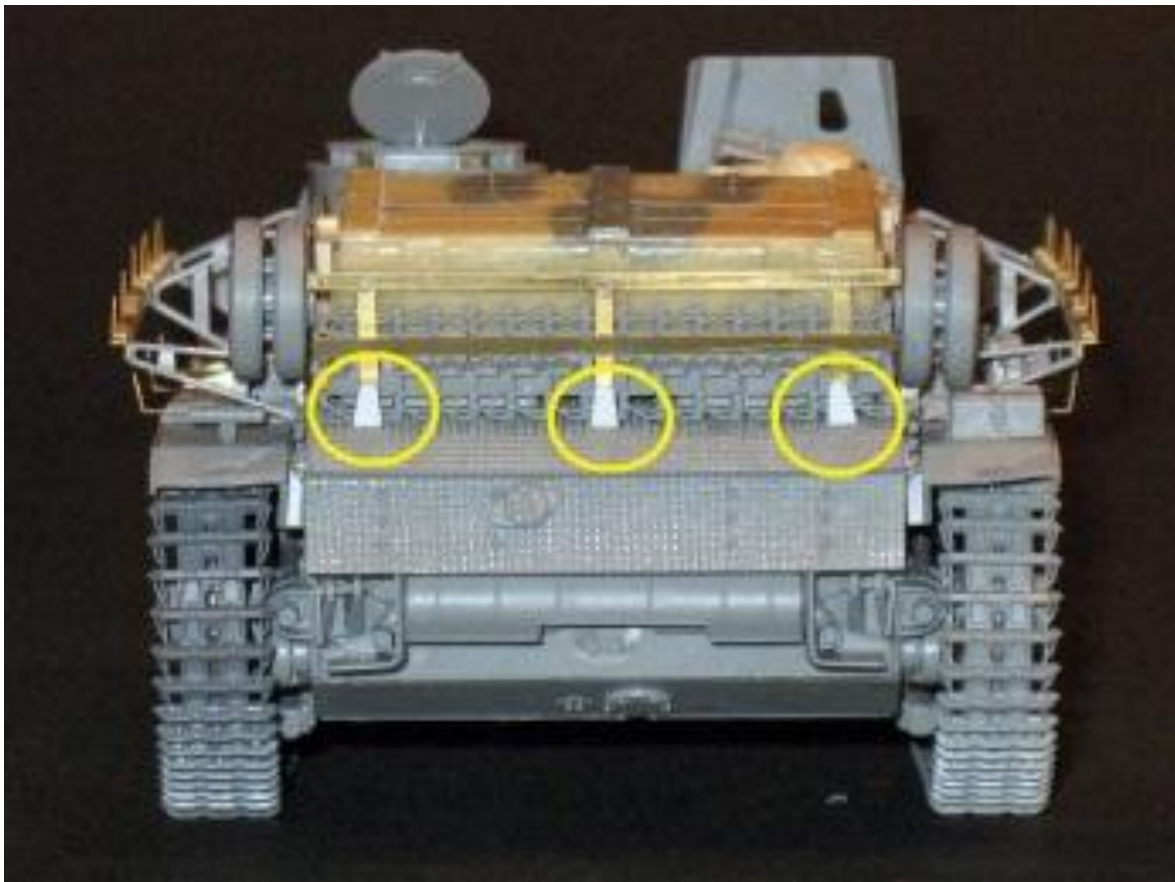
The ALKETT StuG's and StuH's were equipped with a stowage rack fitted to the roof of the vehicle's engine compartment (see the previous picture from the ALKETT factory). The stowage rack for these ALKETT vehicles wasn't a field modification. Unfortunately the stowage rack is also not supplied in the kit.



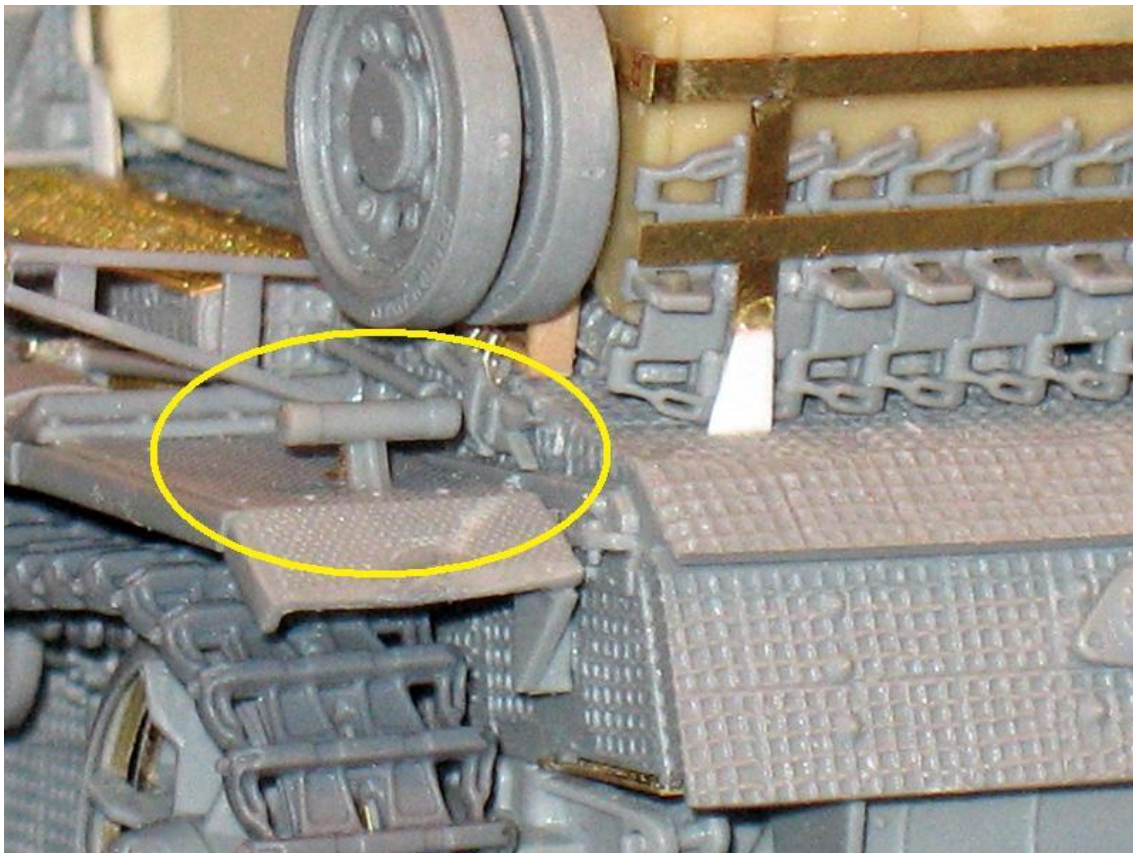
For my model I have used the PE parts from the set of Legend Production LF1149.



I also added some small pieces of a styrene sheet as improved support for the stowage rack.



The last small correction I had to make was to fit the correct type of convoy light (Marschlicht) to the rear of the vehicle. Since March 1944 all ALKETT StuG's and StuH's had the new Marschlicht which was a blue glass tube with 4 small lamps in it. If the driver of a following StuG could see all 4 single lamps then the distance between the tanks was to short. If he could see only one broad light then the distance was ok!



In stage 6 of the instructions the parts G2 and G9 are incorrect. I used the correct rear light from my spare part box.



Building the Dragon Kit 6454 – 10,5cm Sturmhaubitze 42 Ausf. G with Zimmerit

These were all the mistakes I had found. If you correct them and paint your StuH with the dark yellow base colour RAL 7028, then you'll get a factory new 10,5 cm Sturmhaubitze 42 L/28 Ausf. G!

Now that you have an accurate ALKETT StuG with Zimmerit coating, and the final version of the skirts, here are some small additions and changes I made juts to make the model more visually interesting!

I rebuilt and added some details that can be seen on many reference photos. These changes were mostly field modifications.

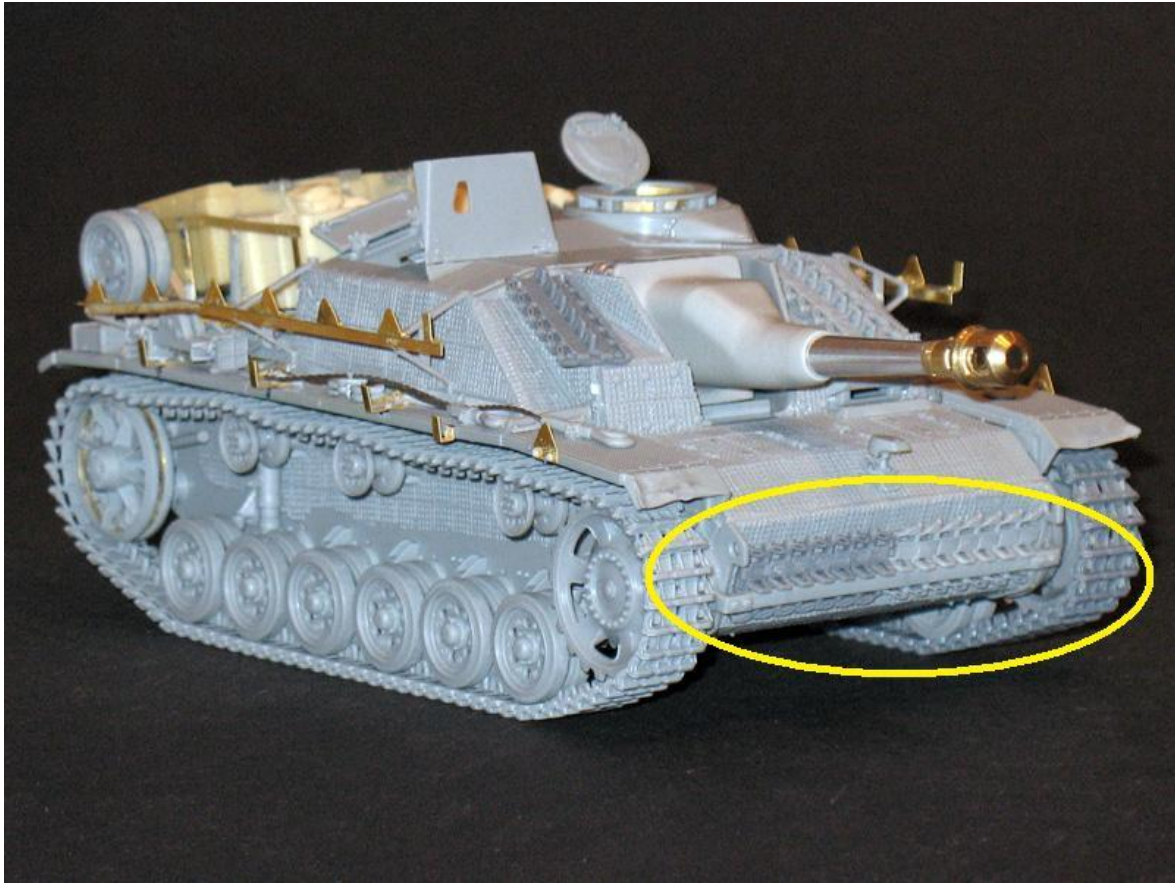


Many StuG's carried spare track links on the front walls of hulls and superstructures for added protection and therefore acting as extra armour.



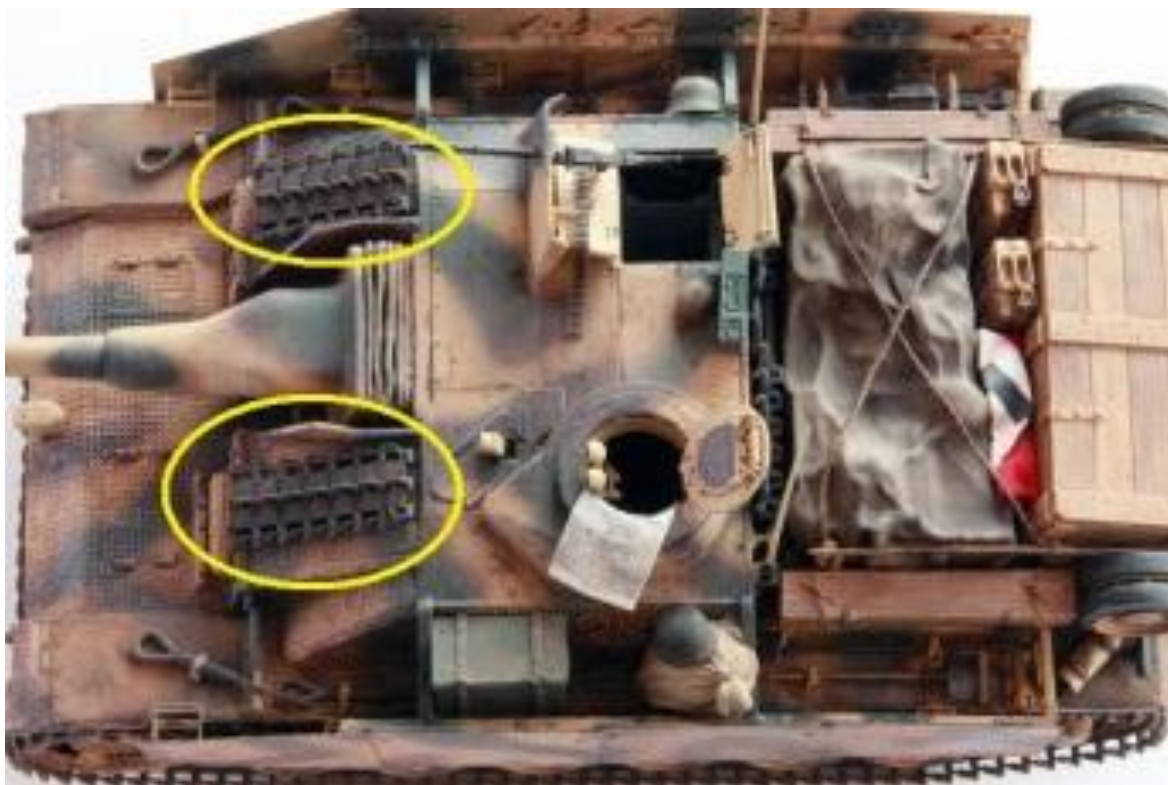
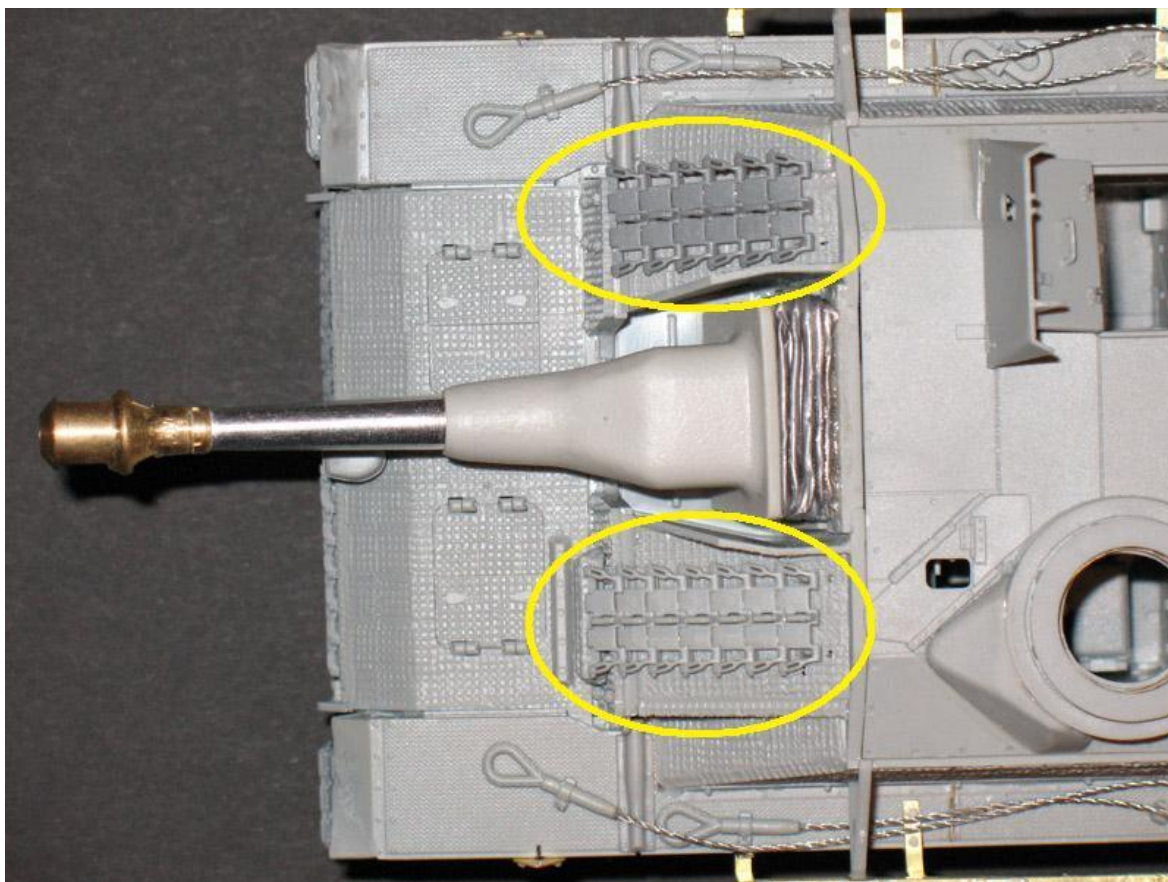
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For the mounting brackets on the lower hull I have used some parts from my spare part box which I hadn't used on older Panzer IV kits. I had to shorten the length so that they fit.



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For mounting spare track links on the upper hull, I used some old PE parts. I think with the extra protection the StuH looks much more interesting.





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Another detail that I added was the ammunition of the machine gun. I saw many StuG models with mounted machine guns but I couldn't remember seeing one with ammunition? Then I found a photograph, and as you can see on this reference photo the ammunition is not actually in the ammunition box

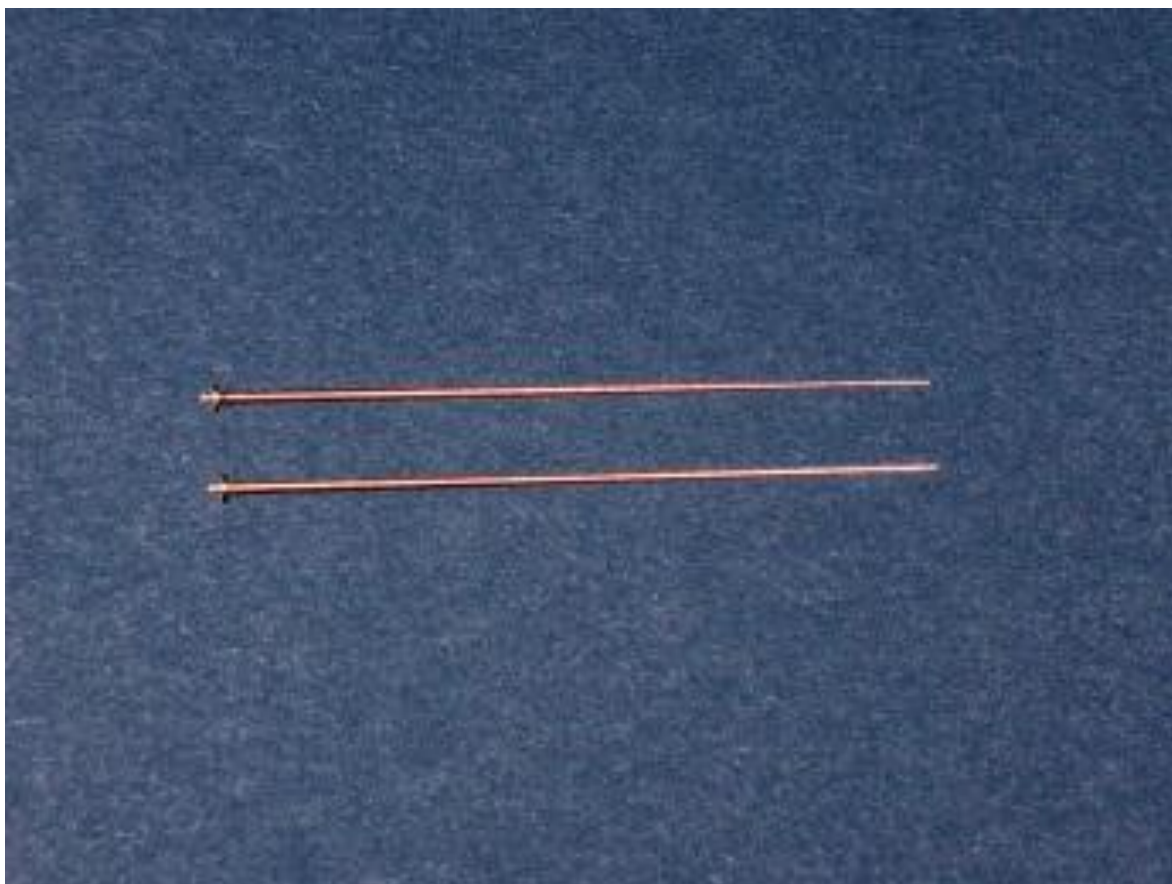


I have used machine gun ammunition from an older Tamiya halftrack kit from my spares part box for this model.



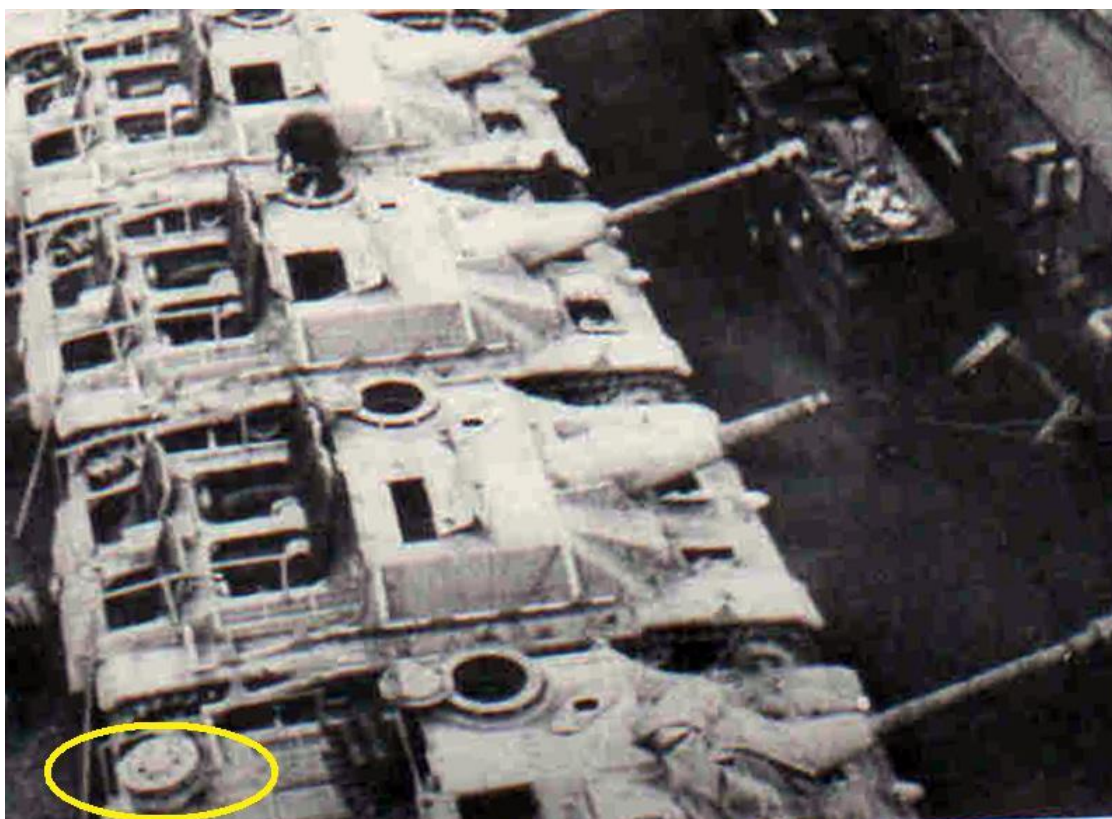
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The StuG's and StuH's were equipped with an excellent radio. I have used 2 meter antennas from Schatton Modellbau 3528 for this StuH because I have built it as a platoon commander tank. One antenna was for the communication with the platoon and one for the brigade headquarter.



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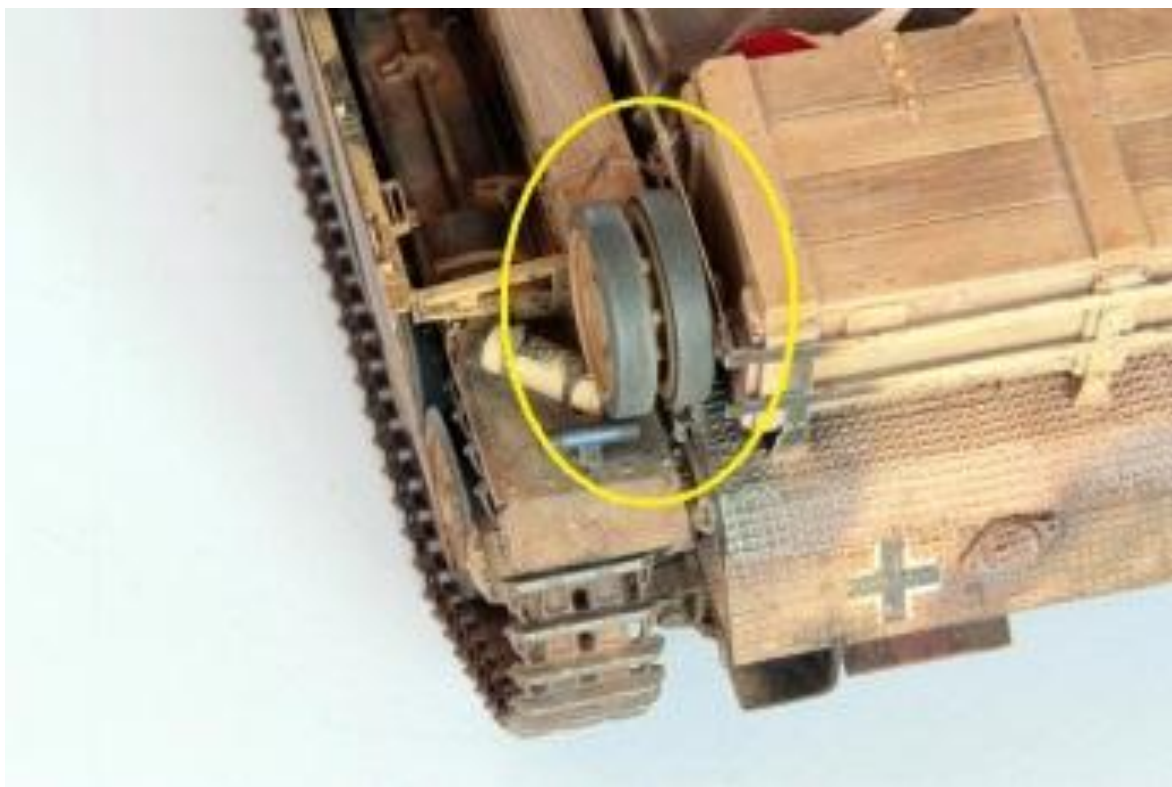
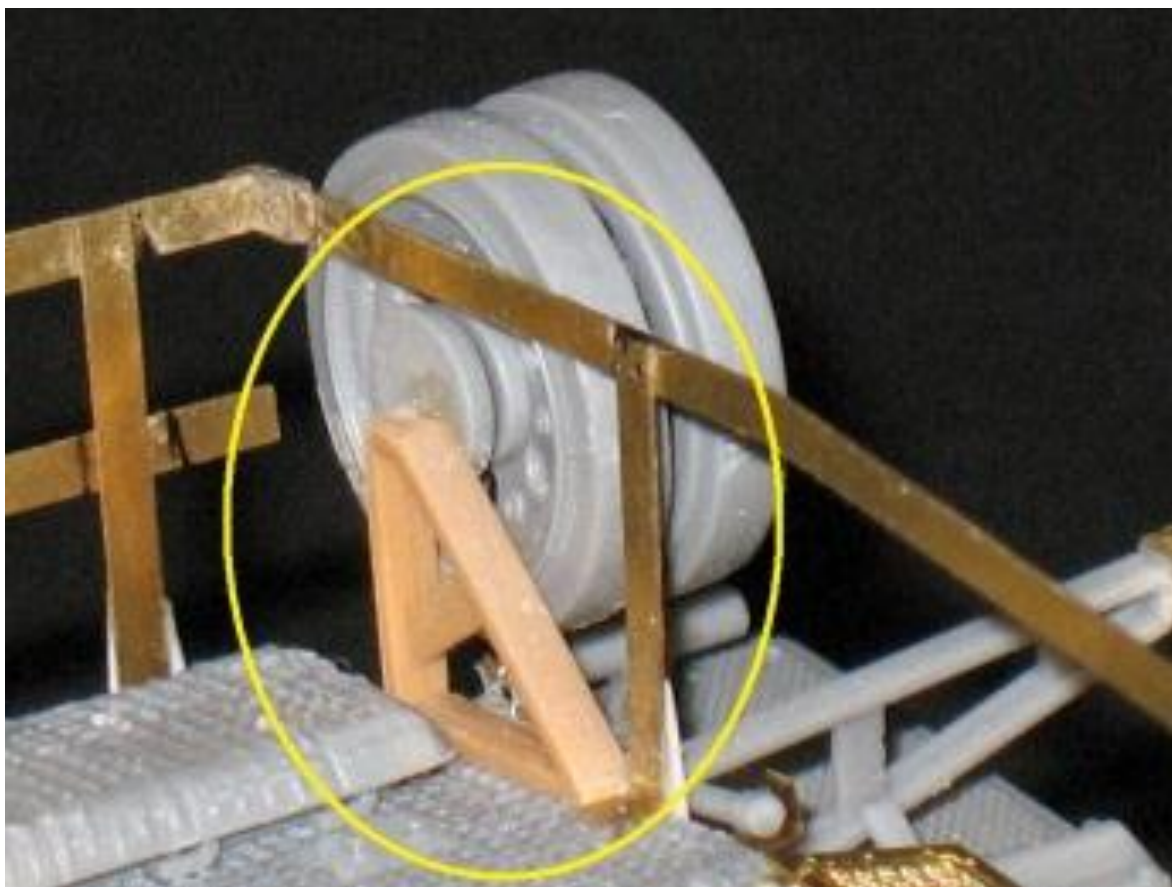
Next up with the spare road wheels and the stowage. In the ALKETT factory mounts for the spare road wheels were fitted on the roof of the engine compartment.



Limited storage space inside the StuH forced the crew to carry most of their auxiliary equipment on the roof of the engine compartment. To use all the space on the roof the troops often built revised mounts for the spare road wheels on the rear part of the mudguards. I have seen many photos with different variants of these field modifications.



I built the mount on my model from old Tamiya brackets for skirts. When the stowage is fully loaded these are hardly visible anyway.

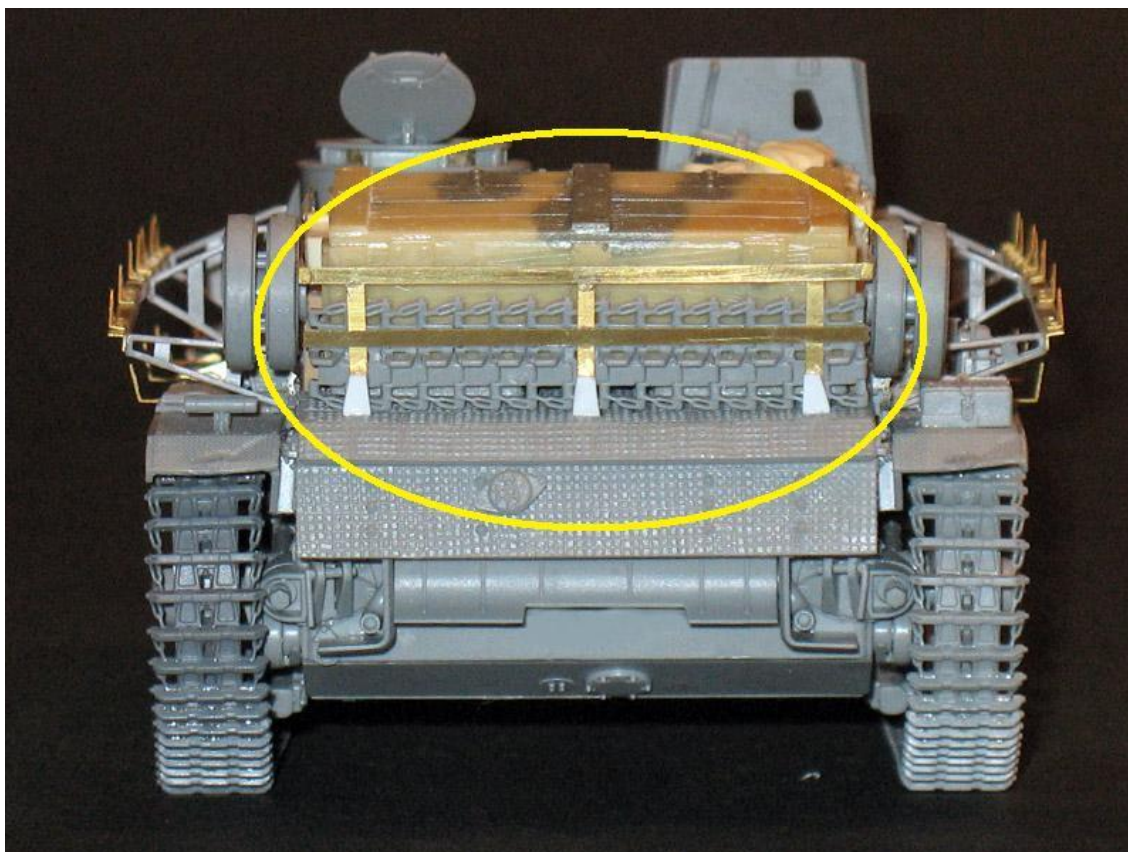


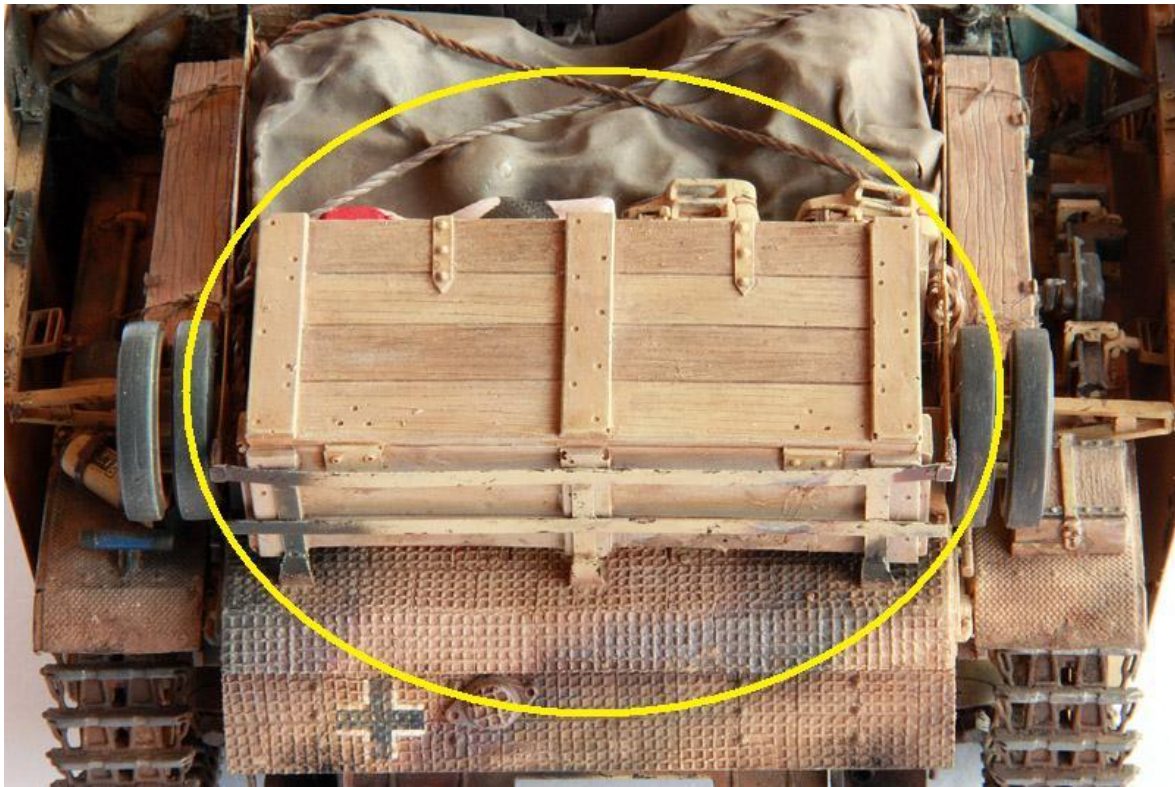
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Carrying all necessary equipment onboard was common practice on the vast Russian plains. The equipment like smaller tools, spare parts and articles of daily use for the crew has been stored in a big box on the roof of the engine compartment.



For my model I used an old resin box from my spare part box again. This box fits perfectly to the stowage rack!





I filled the rest of the roof with parts of the stowage set from Legend Production set no.LF1149. although I used only a few parts from it.



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I covered the parts with lead foil from Verlinden and added two old jerry cans. One of these is for water and the other for fuel.

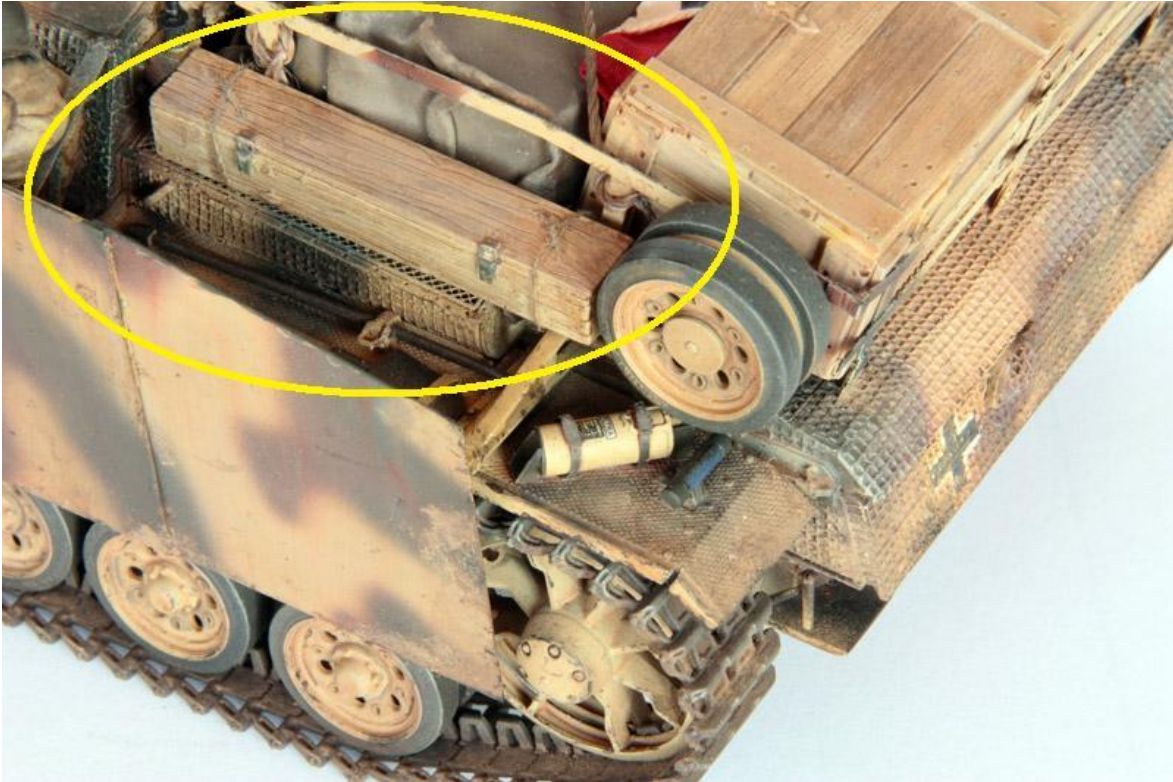


I made the 'Fliegersichttuch' (flag) out of an old silk shirt which I painted with Tamiya colours.



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On both sides of the engine compartment I stowed wooden boxes which were former ammunition boxes for a Tiger. I took both from my spare part box.



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I built my StuH as a Zug-platoon commanders tank, hence why I stowed a metal box, which is also a resin part from my spare part box, and also a kitbag which is part of the Legend stowage set behind the right side skirts.



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Sometime in the future I'll integrate this StuH into a diorama but I have no concept about the scene in the moment. I added some more personal crew equipment like the water bottle, the helmets and a map to bring the StuH to life a little more.



Any comments and all questions on this build, or about StuG's and StuH's are more than welcome!