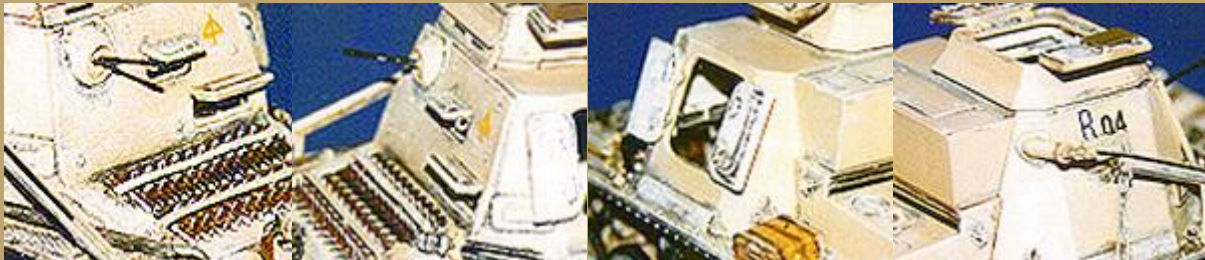


# AN AFRIKA KORPS COMMAND TANK

From The Libyan Desert

in World War II

The development of modern tank tactics continues to fascinate military historians. The contribution of the German army in World War Two was leadership from the attacking front with superior communications between attacking tanks and supporting units. This allowed for superior mobility, break-through of enemy front lines and continuous attack dependent only upon the ability to maintain supply sources. This concept was planned and the first tank for a commanding officer was the Panzerbefehlswagen I (Command Tank) developed to train the German armored forces. The little tank was designed in 1938 on the chassis of the Panzer IA and IB. The armor was sufficient to with stand rifle and machine-gun fire and little else. It was never envisioned as a combat vehicle but because of the political impetuosity of Hitler in precipitating the war, it was forced into combat 60 years ago when Hitler invaded Poland. The vehicle served in France, the Balkans, Africa and in Russia both as a command vehicle and an ambulance. (Click on images below for full views)



The Kit is from the Zvezda Company of Russia using injection plastic molds from the Italeri Company. Etched brass parts and tubing and sheet styrene plastic was used for detailing. Construction began by removing the Zvezda trademark from the hull bottom. The hull was built as per kit plans except that small metal chain was added to the tow bar, etched brass towing and lifting points and a metal muffler guard were substituted for the kit parts.

The hull interior parts from the Eduard Company include the driver's and two crew seats in the fighting compartment, the instrument panel, radio, steering levers and grab handles. Racks for signal flags are also from Eduard. The signal flags were made from

plastic tubing and glue-soaked tissue. Although I cannot find any current knowledge of the flag colors and their meanings, red, black, white and yellow flags were made.

A simulated transmission, drive-shaft and gear change lever were scratch built and gearshift gates were painted in. The ventilator louvers for the fighting compartment are etched brass. Latch details from the doors were replaced with etched brass. The cupola hatch interiors are from Eduard as are the head cushions. A rear fire wall was added to the fighting compartment from sheet styrene.

The interior was painted using ModelMaster buff paint. Winsor and Newton burnt umber was used as a wash for providing depth. The engine compartment was painted flat black and brass grills and lifting points were added.

The vehicle exterior is from the kit except for brass position light support and headlight blackout covers. The siren face plate is also brass. Front and rear fender flaps are etched brass with fine wire springs replacing the kit parts on the rear fenders. Tools are from the kit with clamps and quick-release clamps from Eduard in brass. A balsa wood jack block was substituted for the kit plastic block.

ModelMaster enamel RAL 8020 Afrika braun was used as exterior paint with Non-buffing metalizer Gunmetal for the machine gun and tracks. ModelMaster rust was applied to the tracks, a flat black wash followed and then the tracks were highlighted with steel paint. A similar treatment was given to the tow cable. An oil paint black and burnt umber wash was applied to the crevices and then dry-brushing with progressively lightened shades of Afrika braun and Panzer Buff were used to highlight details. The markings are of the 15<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division in Libya in 1941.

th century.

Charles B. Payne, Jr.