

# Model Maker



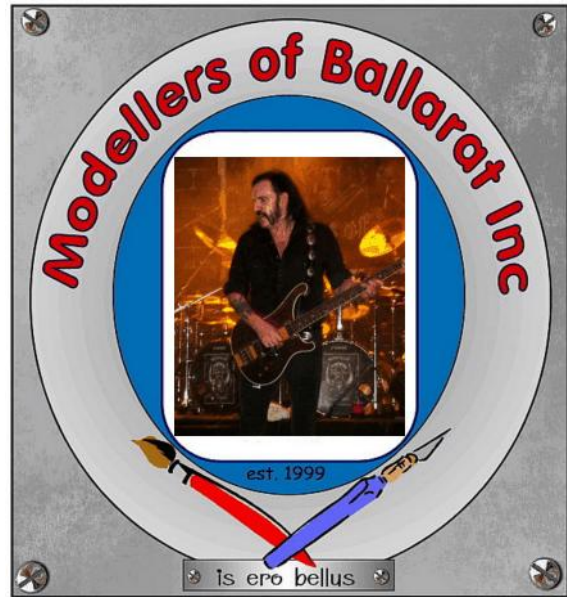
March 2016



**Model Maker is the Newsletter  
of the Modellers of Ballarat Inc**

### **Club Office Bearers**

**President:** Gary Zimmer  
**Vice President:** Mark Pilbeam  
**Treasurer:** Sean Haley  
**Number IV:** Andrew Martin  
**Number V:** Kevin Williams  
**Secretary:** Steve Pulbrook  
**Publicity Officer:** Yvette Eagles  
**Newsletter Editor:** Leigh Edmonds



### **Address for correspondence:**

Modellers of Ballarat Inc, Box 1141, Ballarat Mail Centre, Bakery Hill, Victoria 3354

**Editorial Address:** snail mail, as above. email, [hhandc@hemsleypark.com.au](mailto:hhandc@hemsleypark.com.au)

### **Club Membership Fees:** (1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015)

Single adult \$30  
Junior \$15  
Associate (Newsletter only, on approval from committee) \$15

Annual membership fees for new financial year are due and payable from 1 July 2014

(Note: New members who join during or after April and pay full membership are members until the end of the following financial year and do not need to pay again at the end of the current financial year. Fees may be paid in instalments with the agreement of the Treasurer.)

### **Monthly Meetings:**

The first Saturday of every month except for January  
Doors open at 7:30pm. The meeting starts at 8.00 sharp.  
Location: Kohinoor Community Centre on the corner of Errard and Sebastopol Streets, Ballarat.

### **Disclaimer:**

Any views expressed in the articles in the MOB Newsletter are not to be taken to be those of the club or its members as a whole unless expressly stated. Accordingly, any concerns in regard to any articles should be addressed to the writer of the article and/or the editor who will pass them on to the relevant person.

The Modelers of Ballarat (MOB) is an incorporated association and operated under the model rules presented in the Associations Incorporation Regulations, 1998



# PRESIDENT'S RANT

Well I am back from the wilderness (North Queensland, that is). In my absence I left Herr Doktor was in charge, I hope he was tough and ruthless not just rough and toothless. All I can say is that I am glad I don't live in Townsville. I did once upon a time. This was 1980 and it was backwards hillbilly land back then. The Bruce highway, up the coast from Brisbane, was dirt from Marlboro to Sarina. Apparently stopping on that stretch was not on, because you would get murdered. North of that most bridges were one lane wide, southbound having to give way. The last one was still there in 1997. On weekends all the petrol stations closed, except for the two on roster. The weekend price was about 39 cents a litre instead of the usual 33. If you told the locals that down south all the petrol stations were open every weekend they wouldn't believe you. And who did we have to thank for all this? King Joh was on the throne, and of course he wasn't corrupt, or rigged electoral boundaries or any of that stuff. The locals wouldn't hear a word against him. I had a bumper sticker on my car "Welcome to Queensland: Turn clocks back 10 years".



There wasn't a lot to do in Townsville in 1980, but one thing I did was that I bought a model. It was a Tamiya 1/35 Centurion, with interior, working suspension and tracks. It cost me the vast sum of \$42. I still have it. I bought other kits too, because there was nothing happening in 1/72 armour. These were mainly 70's American cars, because at the time I was buying American hot rod magazines. In retrospect these mags were just how to stuff up your Camaro: wheel tubs, pizza cutters on the front,

and a hole in the bonnet for the blower if they had money, or a tunnel ram if they didn't. And a 5 point something ratio diff. In the US if you can physically attach a number plate, it can go on the road. Meanwhile in Queensland putting a HZ disc rear in a HQ was not on.



The point is that in 1980 several shops sold model kits. Fast forward to this year, and there is basically one, a Toyworld that has a tiny section. The last specialist hobby shop closed a few years ago. Times have changed. All I can say is that if you were marooned in that part of the world for any length of time, the dearth of retail suppliers is not the issue it could have been, 35 years ago, provided you have two pieces of plastic: the credit card and the keyboard.

During my stay I ventured further north to Cairns to have a second look at the Australian Armour and Artillery Museum. They have a few more items since my last trip, and the collection is growing. A spread will follow soon.

Of course there is stuff happening down south. The ESSMC swap meet happens in March, and there is no standing around in the cold at this one. April 17 is our show, which as usual promises to be a full rich day. There will be a bunch of flyers, once I do the copying, but it seems other MoBsters have found even more ways of advertising. There are a multitude of little tasks that go to making such an event come together, but we seem to be getting pretty good at it by now. Crikey, we've had enough practice.

Zim



# MOB STAR

The start of another year for the club and the first meeting was a quiet affair, a few faces missing after the holiday break. Even the club president was AWOL off on some jaunt to the tropics, he even had to ring on club night to see if we were all missing him, and I think he got the gist of what the loud chorus of voices who answered him were saying.



Most of the members were more interested in if the president and the dog had a reliable set of floaties, life jackets or a decent rubber dinghy to paddle back to Ballarat in after all the rain in QLD. The vice president had the meeting ticking over nicely and informed the members about the progress of the pre show proceedings and some other things, which, I've now forgotten about completely, as usual.

I've managed to have a long talk with Frank Morgan about his health, which is improving daily but slowly, as I'm more than aware having gone down the same road and still have an occasional moment or two. So Frank has a long way to go and as

we both said, a stroke has a way of changing the way you look at life and priorities which affect you in your everyday handling of regaining a normal family life and friends. I passed the information about our annual show which Frank didn't have and he has managed to get it included into his latest issue of ModelArt on the upcoming club events section.

So far, I've only had one Swap n Sell trader contact me that being John Baxter who informed me that he had plenty of book bargains to bring this year. My mobile number is not included in the ModelArt ad so be prepared to field any enquiries from





interested parties. The Prez is handling the traders once again and from what I was told, those that attended last year were returning. So save your money you may get a bargain.

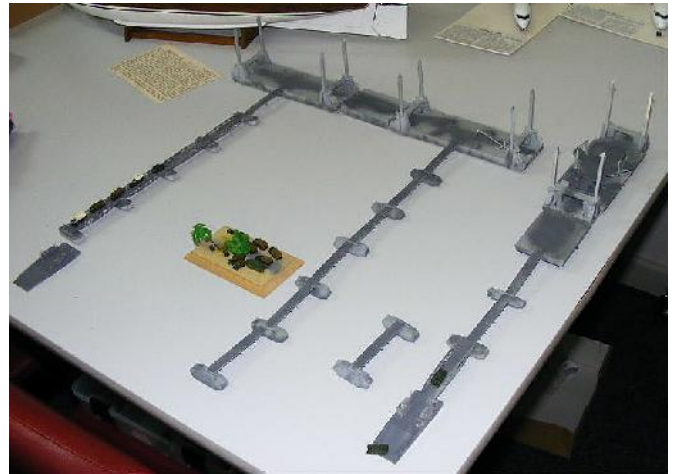


I don't intend to take a great swag of models to the show, mainly because I haven't been doing much serious modelling for quite some time, but my IDF armour bug has bitten me again so that's given me some incentive to extract the digit. I've raided my stash and put my IDF armour aside to start on and even bought some more kits and books. Is there no hope for modellers who just can't say enough, no more kits or books?

Once again my camera and my computer decided to ignore each other in regards to



downloading photos from club night. Something to do with the software refusing to interact, probably because I haven't used it for a couple of months. So prior to writing this Yvette and I spent some time downloading photos by a very convoluted and trying fashion, the Prof I think received them after much editing but sorry no captions. Time for a new camera software installation I think, once again.



I've been thinning out the amount of models on my shelves to make room lately for possible newer models that I'm counting on building, which raises another problem, do I use them as a readily available spare parts providers, throw them out or donate them to some more kids like I've done in the past or even pass them onto club members who may get some enjoyment out of them? I don't think the medical staff at the kids ward at the Hospital would be overjoyed with kids playing with items like this.



Well, enough waffling from me, time to go back to my Achzerit HAPC or sit under the tin roof on the rear deck listening to the rain with a glass of pain be gone, decisions, decisions. I'll flip a coin.

Look after yourselves and families and keep upright. CIAO. Wayne.



# The dull made interesting: Tiger Models M1A2 Abrams SEP TUSK

Zim

The Yanks like to name tanks after generals. They seem to have started this habit in the 1930s with Civil War generals from North and South, Ulysses S Grant, Robert E Lee, William Tecumseh Sherman, Jeb Stuart, Philip Sherridan. Pershing was a WW1 general, but before that had pinched a bit of real estate from Mexico; and George S Patton came to prominence in the next war. The Yank army has more generals than we have corporals, but by then they must have been running out. There was Creighton Abrams. Who?

When it comes to my favorite tanks, the M1 Abrams would have to be so far down it isn't even on the list. The reason is that the Abrams is not very interesting. 70's Brit prog rock is interesting, someone playing a kazoo isn't, even if they are very good at playing it.

I added an Abrams to my collection back in the 80s, with a then-new Esci kit. See what I mean? What can I say about this? Nothing basically. It's just bland and uninteresting, Maybe General Abrams was bland and uninteresting too. Meanwhile there were plenty of other topics that needed a rendition in plastic, and it produced in me great pangs of despair when yet another kit maker would release another Abrams kit. I need another Abrams kit like I need a

third nipple. In fact the two I currently have don't do anything now.



Esci Abrams

So along comes new manufacturer, Tiger Models, and their opening gambits for a range of 1/72 tanks is... an Abrams. Actually four of them. M1, M1A-something, and some other one, but the stand-out is the M1A2 SEP TUSK. Don't know what SEP means, but TUSK is I am pretty sure has nothing to do with the Fleetwood Mac album. It stands for Tank Urban Survival Kit, which is a technological solution to the golden rule of tank tactics, don't take

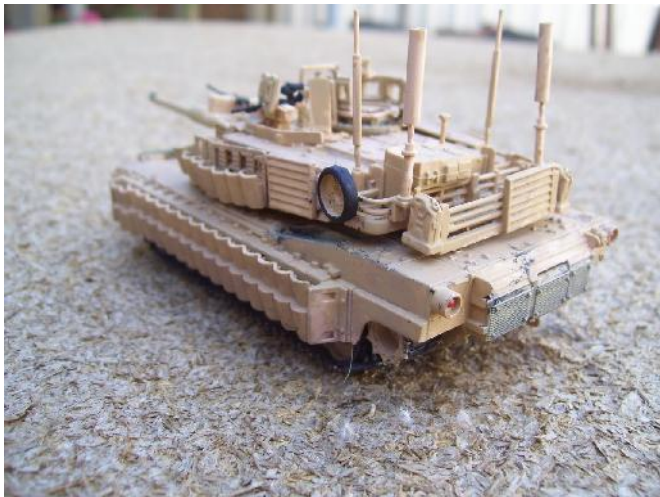






your tank to town.

The TUSK features a massive belly plate, to protect the crew if they drive over a mine, but the tank now has the same ground clearance as a P-plater's seriously lowered Hyunbaru. A speed hump would be a major obstacle for both. The side skirts are extra thick, pretty much like a P-plater driving a lowered Hyunbaru. The skirts I am guessing are some sort of composite armor, and attached to these are two rows of what look like terracotta roof tiles. My



second guess is that these are explosive reactive armor, for when Johnny Jihad takes a pot shot with an RPG. The tiles are inclined, so it probably means that is to direct the blast down. The turret sides also

have these, but the first four on the upper row are absent, possibly because they obstruct vision. There is a .50 cal mounted on top of the main gun tube, common on IDF tanks. There are armoured shields with windows around the commanders and loaders hatches, for protection when opened up. Brad Pitt would have loved this, he could have rode from Utah beach to the Elbe hanging out the hatch all the way. And he'd have a .50 cal too, because there is one on the commander's hatch and a 7.62 of some description on the loader's side. The turret rear is festooned with aerials, presumably so the crew can do tweeting and facebook during a firefight.



### The kit

The model is just fine, everything fits mostly. There are transparent pieces on a separate sheet that make the windows for the hatch shields, and every vision block on the cupolas and everywhere else are molded with a slot from below. Then you have to cut out a transparent piece about 2mm square, and slot them in. The commander's cupola has 8 of them. And you can hardly see them anyway.

See what I mean? Thanks to all this junk, at last there is an interesting Abrams model. Now I want to see what happens when one of these TUSKs drives on a bit of soft ground.



# DHL 727 Freighters in Australia

Leigh

It may not have escaped your attention that I've been making a few models of Boeing 727s of late, all in a range of Australian liveries. My basic rule in planning this project was that if it didn't have a VH- registration I wouldn't be making it. Hawkeye make a lot of decals for Australian 727s so this hasn't been a difficult project, up until now, when it has come to the more obscure 727s.

The international freight company DHL has been flying a Trans-Tasman daily freighter service using 727s since 1987, initially using a 727-100 converted to a freighter until 1995 when it was replaced by a 727-200.



The 727-100 began life as one of Ansett-ANA's 727s registered as VH-RMS, flying with that airline from 1969 to 1980. It was then sold to Air Nauru but came back onto the Australian register in 1987 as VH-TBS. After that it flew in a number of liveries for even more owners, spending two years from 1993 to 1995 flying in the DHL red and white scheme, before going to Australian air Express and then to Aviation Training College in Brisbane where it was used as a training aid, and where it remains today.



The 727-200 carried passengers in Europe from 1980 to 1995 when it was converted to a freighter, given the DHL red and white livery and arrived in Australia where it was registered as VH-DHE. It flew on the Trans-Tasman route in that scheme until 2002 when it was repainted in DHL's new red and yellow scheme and continued flying the route until 2011 when it was taken off the Australian register. It is still flying, in Asia in DHL colours, with a Thai registration.

There is nothing terribly difficult about

making the models, if you call making a kit that must now be fifty years old with all the problems that that entails, easy. Airfix recently reissued the 727-200 kit so that is readily available, but the 727-100 is much rarer and some of them came from my own kit collection and some came from ebay at not inconsiderable prices. The more challenging part of the project comes in painting and decaling the models.



There are no readily available decals for either of the two 727s I wanted to make. The best I could find on the interweb was an Aviagraphics sheet for an American DHL red and white 727-200 and a Draw Decals DHL red and yellow set for various European Boeing 757s. It was either use these or not make the two DHL 727s.

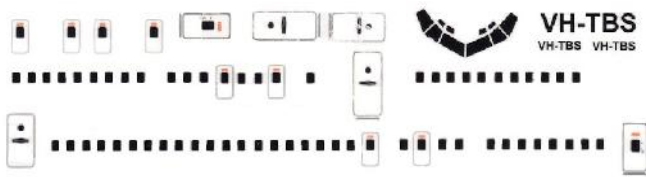


Painting was also straight forward for the 727-100 with its white fuselage but not so simple for the red and yellow 727-200. The best match for the underside red was good old Tamiya TS-8 Italian Red, a lacquer that dries quickly and with a good sheen. The best upper yellow match I could find was Humbrol 69 yellow which is, fortunately, gloss. It is a long time since I've used gloss enamels and they take days to dry properly, unlike Tamiya lacquers which are ready to use after less than an hour. And I'm not as patient as I used to be.

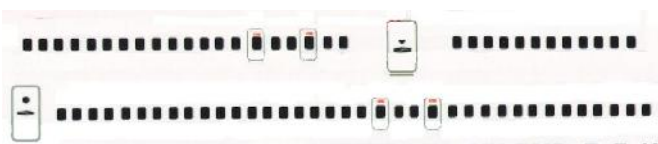
Getting the main Aviagraphics decals to fit onto the 727-100 was mainly a matter of peering at lots of photos and figuring out where to cut the



longer decals to fit the shorter fuselage. More careful and patient work followed. The same went for fitting the DHL 757 decals to the 727-200. In fact, it all went better than I expected, but took a lot of time.



The hard part came in making the windows and doors, since the ones on the decal sheets were not at all appropriate. Fortunately, perhaps, I have a bit of computer software what allows me to cut and paste images so I have a limited ability to make my own decals. So, I spent an evening amending the Hawkeye decals sheet for Australian air Express 727-100 and 727-200 freighters. The end result was a work of art. Then I went and looked at photos of the two aeroplanes I was setting out to model ... If I had looked at the photos first I would have saved myself an evening's painful work.



Back to the drawing board, this time performing even more surgery on the Australian air Express sheet for the 727-200 and using the basic Hawkeye decals for the original livery of the Ansett ANA 727-100 as the basis for the windows and doors for the DHL 727-100. None of this is to the standard of accuracy that you'd expect on a 1/48 model, but it's as accurate as I'm ever likely to make anything these days. The results are then printed onto some blank decal paper, given a light spray of clear glass lacquer and left to dry overnight before using.



Then there was the business of the Australian flag and registrations for the 727-100. The registration was made by cutting and pasting letters from the decal sheet and then printing and varnishing them.

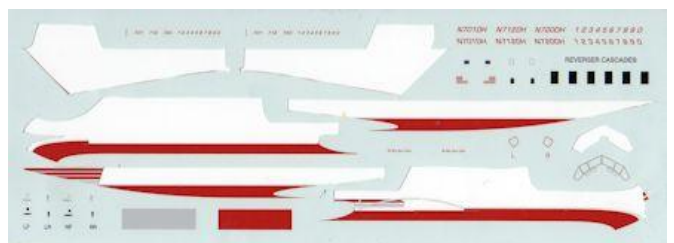
I made four because I thought I might need to put down two to get the necessary colour density, but only one was needed. The Australian flag was scanned from an old Qantas 747 decal sheet but, being too

VH-DHE  
 VH-DHE  
 VH-DHE  
 VH-DHE

big for a 727, I had to reduce it by about 50 per cent to make it suitable for this 727. Then, because the flags had to be positioned on the yellow fuselage I printed them on white decal paper. I used the same white decal paper for the wing emergency exits which were scanned from another decal sheet, manipulated a bit and printed on the white decal paper.



The other thing I should mention is the use of Selly's Aquadhere. Often the glue backing on decals does not stick too well on airliners so I use a mixture of water and Aquadhere which serves as a wetting agent and then secures the decals more strongly to the model. Those of you with DIY aspirations may know that Aquadhere now comes in two versions, the old fashioned version and a new 'fast bonding' glue. I can tell you that it is not a really good idea to use that glue for this process.



Here's the two models so far, it's all down hill from here to completion with the engines and stuff. And here's what's left of the Aviagraphics decal sheet after I'd finished with it.

# The Great Bulldog Roundup

Steve

Early in the Second World War there were large numbers of light tanks in service with many countries. These tanks were available in much greater numbers than mediums and were usually fighting light tanks so were mostly able to hold their own. By the time of Barbarossa, the time for the light tank had passed, as the German light tank forces came up against small numbers of Russian heavy KV's and medium T34s, and generally came off second best. This in turn prompted the Germans to increase production of mediums and begin development of heavies. The German light tanks would thereafter be relegated to second line duties as mediums became available.

The remaining tank building nations took a little longer to learn this lesson. The British had rubbish light tanks anyway and these were used for the traditional cavalry tasks of recon and flank screening. The British main tank force was split between cruisers and infantry tanks. The cruisers were characterized by high speed, light armour coupled with an anti-armour main gun. This was the basic formula of the Czech light tanks that had formed the backbone of the German forces during Barbarossa so early cruisers could be considered to be light tanks.

The Americans, being late to the party as usual, had spent little time or effort in developing any tanks at all. The main tank of the interwar years was the M1917, a retooled Renault FT adapted to American manufacturing methods. These tanks were

still in use at the beginning of WW2 and were given to Canada for training vehicles.

The interwar years were marked by a few designs that were not developed or deployed in any quantity. The most notable of these designs was the Christie series. These were the brainchild of designer Walter Christie and developed in the late 20's Christie was known to be a difficult person to deal with and constantly tinkered with the design. Tanks that were developed were wheel come track designs able to run on either. Little thought was given to how the tank would actually fight and designs frequently did not have guns. Where the Christie excelled was the suspension system. Several countries would license or steal the technology but it was not used in the USA. Christie suspension would be used on the Soviet BT series and the T-34. It was used on British cruisers A13, Crusader, Centaur, Cromwell and Comet.

American interwar light tanks were greatly influenced by a foreign design, namely the British 6 ton Vickers. This tank was largely ignored in its home country but found a wide foreign market. The most well-known user was the Soviet Union, where it was the basis of the T-26 series. In the US, a couple of copies were built with version fitted with volute springs in the suspension rather than the leaf springs of the Vickers. These prototypes when developed became the M1 Combat car and M2 tank series, leading directly to the M3 Stuart light tank.

The M3 was the first US tank to see combat





as it was supplied to the British in large numbers. In respect of armament and armour, it was close enough to the contemporary cruisers to be deployed the same way. Where the M3 series excelled was in mechanical reliability, something that was unknown in British cruisers. This factor alone caused the M3 to be used for longer than it should have been. By the time of its first combat, the enemy vehicles being faced were mostly mediums armed with 50mm guns. Development of a successor began even as the first M3s joined combat, The first fruit of this program was the M5 Stuart. This tank did little to address the lack of firepower or armour, but replaced the aircraft radial engine with standard vehicle engines, reducing the strain on the engine building plants.

The next development took the automotive improvements of the M5 series and incorporated those into a new chassis with torsion bar suspension. Armour was redesign and the whole vehicle was lowered. The deficiencies of the main gun were finally recognised and a new 75mm gun was used. This vehicle finally emerged as the M24 Chaffee. This vehicle was an adequate performer however it was still a light tank in a world of mediums and heavies. The gun had actually been derived from the B-25 Mitchell bomber. It fired the same size ammunition as the Medium M4 Sherman but at greatly reduced velocity. The engine pack was designed to be removed as a complete assembly and slide out of the rear on rails. This was one of the earliest cases where a tank was designed for ease of maintenance. The M24 was easily the best light tank of WW2. Post war it was widely exported and some continue in service today.

Good as it was, the M24 could not stand up to

contemporary mediums and heavies. In WW2 this meant Panzer IVs, Panthers and Tigers. Post war the opposition was most likely to be a T34. What was needed was a tank that could deal with opposition much heavier than itself. American tactics finally recognised that the best defenders against tanks were other tanks and the tank destroyers were done away with in the army structure. Development of a new light tank began immediately after the war as the production of all wartime tanks was terminated with the end of hostilities.

The new tank was to weigh 25 tons (much heavier than an early war medium) and have firepower equivalent to the contemporary medium being the M26 Pershing. (Which in 1945 was a heavy tank before being reclassified to a medium.) It was to have better armour and mobility than the Chaffee. It would also incorporate new technology such as a superimposed coincidence range finder and stabilization in azimuth and elevation. Development continued slowly and in 1949, three prototypes were completed.

The new tank was powered by a new six cylinder supercharged engine. This engine was basically one cylinder bank of the AV-1790 engine used in the generation of mediums such as the M47. The engine itself had its pedigree in the Allison series of V12 aircraft engines. The superchargers gave an output of approx. 500hp, This engine was coupled to a cross drive transmission, arranged into an easily removable power pack. The chassis retained the layout of the M24 but everything was beefed up.

The gun used was 76mm, the same calibre as the final Shermans. Improvements in ammunition



and a higher velocity meant that the gun was actually more powerful than the 90mm gun used on the Pershing medium tank. The gun was also given a fume extractor and a T shaped blast deflector. The highly sophisticated range finder and stab systems got the chop due to the high cost of the system. This was not the only victim as the remote controlled machine gun pods on the turret were also cut from the production version. This resulted in a much sleeker turret with the commander's cupola relocated to the left. The resulting vehicle was ordered into production as the T41E1, with an initial order of 1000, in 1950.

The new tank was named the "Little Bulldog" in what was to be a departure from normal US practices of naming tanks after famous generals. (In fact this was not normal US practice as US tanks were not named, only numbered. The Yanks had just adopted the British names). The death of General Walton Walker, the commander of US forces in Korea, prompted the name change to "Walker Bulldog". By mid 1951, with the Korean conflict in full

swing, the US tank inventories were severely depleted. The new tanks were mass produced, however there were severe flaws in the design and the newly built tanks went straight into storage awaiting modification. These modifications were completed by 1953, just too late for the tank to see service in the Korean war. The new tank began replacing the old M24 Chaffee throughout the US Army with most going to Europe.

Unfortunately for the M41, another new tank appeared in Soviet inventories, this being the T54. On paper the M41 was no match for the T54 so a program to replace the M41 was soon started. By the time of the Vietnam conflict, the M41 had been replaced by the M551 Sheridan. The M41 was destined not to see any combat with US forces. The M41 would be supplied in large numbers to US allies under various military aid programs. It soon became the tank of choice in the smaller NATO countries and was very popular in Asia. The Japanese in particular found the new tank to their liking as conditions that were cramped for Western tank crews were comfortable for the smaller stature of the local crews. In Asia, the tank was also supplied to South Vietnam, Taiwan and Thailand.

The M41 was produced for over 10 years

with over 5000 built. There were four basic models however most changes were internal. The first 70 or so had a prominent weld seam around the upper portion of the turret. A change to this casting eliminated this weld and squared off the casting joints. Early vehicles also had square fenders which were cut diagonally in later vehicles. The chassis formed the basis of a number of special purpose vehicles. The M42 Duster is the only one of these available in kit form. There was also the M75 APC which was the first squad sized bucket and set the



pattern for those that would follow including the M113. Open topped artillery carriers were built in small numbers,

The M41's main combat use came in the hands of the South Vietnamese troops. In the early part of the war, the M41s were basically voting machines, being used only to protect against (or participate in) the various coups that occurred. During the Tet offensive of 1968, M41s were used to repel communist attacks against cities and bases. After Tet, the Vietnamese armour corps was reorganised and became less political, spending more time in the field. This newly acquired experience was put to use in 1970 during the invasion of Cambodia where ARVN units performed well alongside their US counterparts. There were very few clashes against enemy armour in the invasion.

The next outing for the M41 was the invasion of Laos in 1971. Three squadrons of M41s, supported by infantry sought to cut the Ho Chi Minh trail. This attack was initially successful however the NVA responded with large numbers of tanks, artillery and infantry. A major battle was fought around LZ31 where five M41s with supporting fire managed to knock out six T54s and sixteen PT76 amphibious tanks. This success did not continue and continued



NVA attacks forced the retreat of the ARVN units from Laos. Mismanagement caused this retreat to become a rout and large numbers of men and tanks were lost during the retreat to South Vietnam. Some of the M41s were put on display in Hanoi afterwards.

After the invasions, the shortcomings of the M41 were recognised and M48s would begin to supplement the M41 in ARVN service. In March, 1972 the NVA launched a massive led assault into South Vietnam. The M41s were again in the front line but were unable to stop the large numbers of T54s, T59s, T34s and PT76s. This advance was finally slowed by US airstrikes and by a hastily formed M48 regiment. During subsequent battles, the M41 fought mostly from dug in positions and large numbers were lost due to the introduction of Soviet AT-1 Sagger missiles. In 1975, the NVA again attacked and as the US had withdrawn all support, the ARVN armour units were poorly handled and large numbers of M41s were captured by the NVA, many being placed into service and being used with the occupation forces.

Across the rest of the world, M41s continued to serve in large numbers. Many countries undertook upgrades and some M41s served into the 90s.

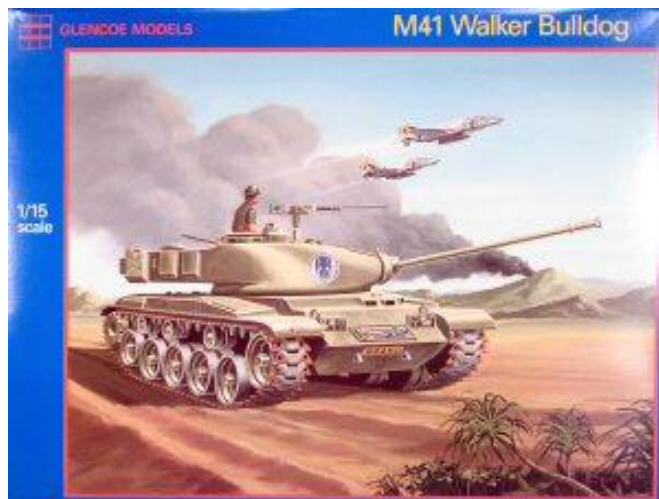
### **The Rainbow Warrior II**

Located at the Pucka armour museum, there is a former NZ tank named the Rainbow Warrior after Greenpeace's ship that the French took a dislike to. This was one of 10 tanks supplied to NZ in 1960,



which served until the 80s when replaced by the British Scorpion. These vehicles were supposedly M41A1s however the Rainbow Warrior is from the second production run, featuring the early turret castings and the second variation of headlight mounts. At some point during its life, the fenders have been cut to resemble the A3 variant. The NZ vehicles were originally painted dark green but were repainted to a scheme similar to US Merdc with a

dark red and dark yellow base. This paint has is so faded now the RW2 is Pink, Light yellow, light grey and black.

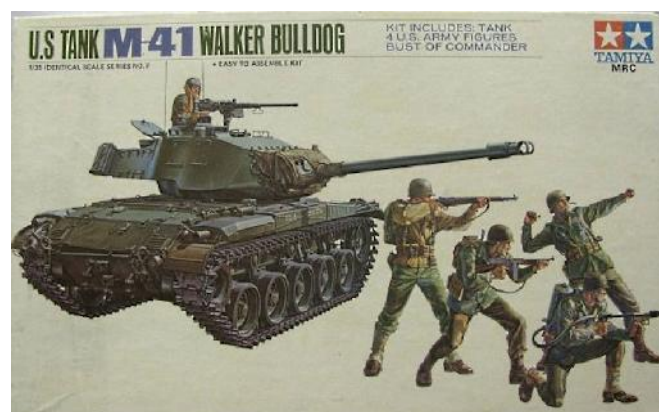


### **Available Kits**

Over the years the M41 has been well served by kit makers particularly in the early days of the hobby. Most of these early kits were toy like and are not considered to have stood the test of time. There were kits available in 1/15, 1/24, 1/32, 1/50 and 1/72. Most of these kits only bore a passing resemblance to the M41. The Palmer Plastics kit in 1/72 was particularly awful being the sort of thing you would find in a \$2 bag of green army men. Revell has a 1/32ish scale kit that is a repop of the old Renwall kit. This should be avoided unless you are on a nostalgia kick. This leaves 3 viable kits in 1/35 scale.

### **Tamiya M41**

This kit dates back to 1974 in its current form but there may be earlier versions. (My clouded memory leads me to believe I had one marked as Tamiya Mokei placing it in the late 60s). The kit was



originally made for motorization and is a fairly simple affair. It has around 100 parts and is an easy afternoon build. The detail is about what you would expect but many aftermarket parts are available to improve the basic vehicle. The tracks are detailed on the outside only and wheels are necessarily chunky.

Many years ago I used the Tamiya kit as a basis to model RW2. This was a 10 year journey, and many of the missing details were scratch built. The tracks were replaced and putty was used to replicate the mantlet cover. The shape of the turret was changed and most small details added in brass. When



it was finally completed I painted it using Testor's enamels in the faded Merdc scheme. The resulting model looked so bad that I threw the whole thing in a bucket of caustic to get rid of the paint. This had little effect on the paint but did dissolve most of the brass work. After the next rebuild, the tank was painted in British racing green. Markings for NZ were not available so a stencil of a prancing horse was cut out of tracing paper and sprayed on. Other markings were hand painted which explains the mutated kiwis on the front.

Somewhere in my garage there is also a motorised Tamiya M41. I built this with my youngest son when he was still young enough to enjoy such toys. It would lurch arthritically across the floor usually mowing down hoards of green army men whilst simultaneously interfering with TV and radio signals. This old kit was perfectly suited to this rough treatment, not having enough detail to suffer any breakages.

My latest attempt at the Tamiya kit came



about as an attempt to build one OOB. Of course I couldn't leave well enough alone, so the model ended up using some Eduard photoetch and AFV Club vinyl tracks.

### **Skybow M41A3**

Skybow was a Taiwanese company that appeared on the scene in the late 90s and disappeared a few years later. They produced kits that were far better in quality and detail than Tamiya or Dragon offerings at the time. The M41A3 was one these and to me it is a near perfect kit. It was well moulded, finely detailed and everything fit where it should. The kit had rubber tracks and a flexible plastic mantlet cover. There were four decal options, ARVN, USA and two Taiwanese.



Building begins with the turret stowage bin and jerry cans, I thought for a moment that the instructions should be read Japanese style, from the back to the front, as the roadwheels are the last stage. I like to build the chassis first so that everything will be square but really it doesn't matter that much on this kit. The only critical step is to attach the mantlet cover before adding the gun barrel as the t shaped blast deflector prevents the mantlet cover fitting over the end of the barrel.

The Skybow kit is an excellent representation of the M41. Although Skybow is gone, the moulds are not and were acquired by AFV Club. The kit was manufactured in M41A1 flavour with square fenders and a few different parts. This version was never marketed by Skybow but has been released by AFV Club as the West German M41A1G adding German style smoke grenade launchers. The A3 can still be found from Hobby Easy (Hong Kong) for about 30 bucks.

### **AFV Club M41A3**

This is the latest mould in the list from 2002. This kit is AFV Club's own mould and bears no relationship to the Skybow offering. It has glueable



plastic tracks and an aluminium barrel. No mantlet cover was provided. This kit is the only one that

activity as the cost to tart up the mutton is less than to get the AFV Club M41G, which includes the go fast bits.



correctly renders the dished roadwheels. The idler and sprocket also have mud holes. Six decals schemes are provided, USA, two ARVN, and three Taiwanese. This is a much more intricate kit than the Skybow but the roadwheels are the only real improvements. At the time of release, AFC Club also released a number of “Hop-Up” options that could be purchase separately. This included the vinyl kit tracks, link by link tracks, a plastic mantlet cover, roadwheels with suspension and a photoetch set. These could be used to dress up any of the other kits.

The AFV Club M41G is an amalgam of both Skybow and AFV Club bits. The basic kit is the unreleased M41 with the square fenders. The wheels are Skybow with rubber shod idler however a separate sprue contains the AFV steel perforated idler. The German bits are contained on a sprue that comes from the German version of the M88. This sprue has been slightly revised to contain a new front fender mounted auxiliary engine muffler. The rear fender mounted muffler is also included on the Skybow sprue. Mantlet cover and tracks are Skybow but the machine gun is AFV club. This kit contains markings for four Bundeswere and one Belgian vehicle. The Belgian vehicle is a vanilla M41 so most early vehicles can be built from the box.

Of these the tracks are most useful, being suitable for dressing up the old Tamiya M41 and being a minor improvement on the Skybow. The Skybow are detailed enough but the joint bisects the track pin. The AFV Club tracks join at the edge of a link. The AFV mantlet cover should be approached with caution as it only fits the AFV kit. It is too shallow for the Skybow and the Tamiya mantlet will need some surgery so that it fits. Dressing up the Tamiya kit with these accessories was once the only way of getting an early M41. Now it is a pointless



# THE BACK PAGE

## OUR NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Modellers of Ballarat will take place on Saturday 5 March 2016. It will take place at the Kohinoor Community Centre on the corner of Errard and Sebastopol Streets, Ballarat. Doors open at 7:30pm and the meeting starts at 8.00 sharp. That's what it says in the official literature and I wouldn't want to contradict that.

## FROM THE EDITORIAL DESK

Your humble editor has nothing to add at this juncture.

## MoB WEBSITE

Behind the scenes Master Andrew and I have been working to get some of the material from our newsletters onto the website. This will be done in the form of PDF files taken from the pages of past newsletters, but only articles that we have published about modelling specifically. Look for them real soon now on our website, which is:

<http://modellersonballarat.wordpress.com/>

## MASTER WAYNE'S

### WHACKY WORLD OF HUMOUR

Do you have feelings of inadequacy?

Do you suffer from shyness?

Do you sometimes wish you were more assertive?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, ask your doctor or pharmacist about:

### *Cabernet Sauvignon.*

Cabernet Sauvignon is the safe, natural way to feel better and more confident about yourself and your actions. It can help ease you out of your shyness and let you tell the world that you're ready and willing to do just about anything.

You will notice the benefits of Cabernet Sauvignon almost immediately and, with a regimen of regular doses, you can overcome any obstacles that prevent you from living the life you want to live.

Shyness and awkwardness will be a thing of the past and you will discover many talents you never knew you had. Stop hiding and start living.

Cabernet Sauvignon may not be right for everyone. Women who are pregnant or nursing should not use it. However, women who wouldn't mind nursing or becoming pregnant are encouraged to try it.

## Side effects

Side effects may include:

Dizziness, nausea, vomiting, incarceration, loss of motor control, loss of clothing, loss of money, loss of virginity, delusions of grandeur, table dancing, headache, dehydration, dry mouth, and a desire to sing Karaoke and play all-night rounds of Strip Poker, Truth Or Dare, and Naked Twister.

## Warnings

The consumption of Cabernet Sauvignon may make you think you are whispering when you are not.

The consumption of Cabernet Sauvignon may cause you to tell your friends over and over again that you love them.

The consumption of Cabernet Sauvignon may cause you to think you can sing.

The consumption of Cabernet Sauvignon may create the illusion that you are tougher, smarter, faster and better looking than most people.

Please feel free to share this important information with as many people as you feel may benefit!

Now just imagine what you could achieve with a good Shiraz or Merlot...

## WHY WE'LL NEVER RULE THE WORLD

I'm walking along with Master Wayne, thinking about a hamburger at our regular haunt. We round the corner, and what do we see... MoBsters doing what we do best.



What could be better on a fine Saturday afternoon than sitting and talking, about nothing in particular. The worries of the world can wait their turn.