

Battalion Bits BT14: PzKpfw IV Ausf F2/G

Background

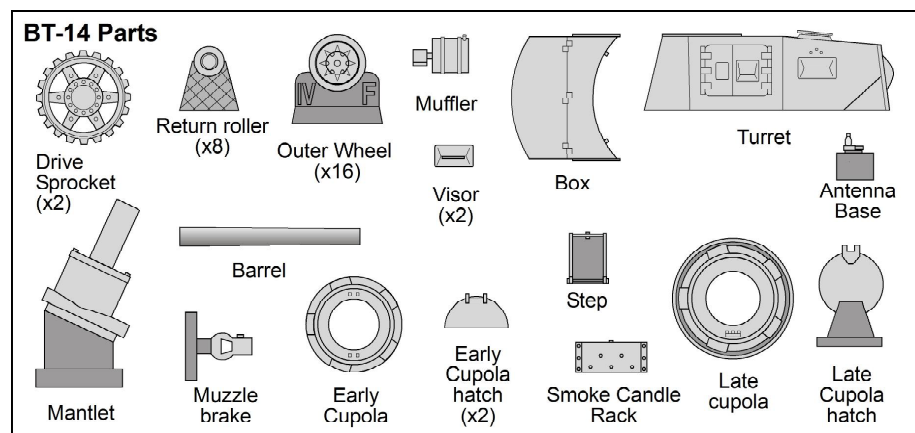
The PzKpfw IV was the heavier of the two standard tanks with which Germany started the war, and it continued in service with various upgrades through to the end. Initially fitted with a short 75mm gun as an infantry support vehicle, its larger turret allowed it to carry higher velocity 75mm guns and so continue in service until 1945. The first variant to carry the longer 75mm KwK 40 L/43 gun was the Ausf F2, used in Russia and North Africa from mid-1942. This was sometimes called the Mark IV Special by the Allies. In fact, various marks of the PzKpfw IV were continually updated throughout their production runs, so a late production F is virtually the same as an early production G. Spielberger and Jentz state that short barreled Fs were referred to as Fs, but long barreled F2s were actually officially classed as early Gs. Later Gs had the even longer barreled KwK 40/L48 gun.

The Tamiya Wirbelwind kit represents a mid-series hull, so this resin conversion set allows the builder to produce an Ausf F2 (early G). Note this conversion can also be used with the PzKpfw IVJ as a base, although you should modify the splashguards around the front hatches and turret to the earlier configuration. Starting with the PzKpfw IVJ kit and the use of the kit barrel, you can make a late Ausf G.

Before Assembly

As with all resin sets, wash all the parts in a strong detergent and rinse in clear water to remove any oils or mould releases. Remove pour stubs and clean up the parts; use a mask when sanding resin and wet sand where possible. Cyanoacrylate adhesives work best but quickly; use five minute epoxy if joint requires manipulation while setting. These instructions follow the step-by-step kit instructions with variations where applicable.

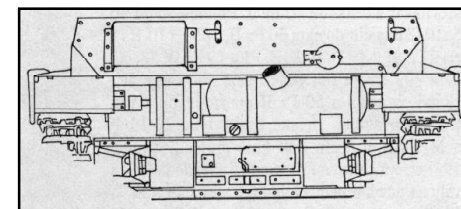
Step 1: Substitute resin drive sprockets for kit parts A21, and resin outer road wheels for parts A22. Use the early idlers A16 and A17. Substitute resin return rollers for kit parts A10.



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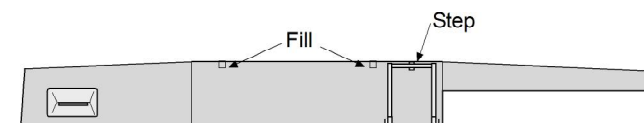
Step 2: As per kit instructions, but add the small muffler for the turret traverse motor to the left of the main muffler. Add the smoke candle rack to the left side of the rear plate as shown.



Step 3-6: As per kit instructions.

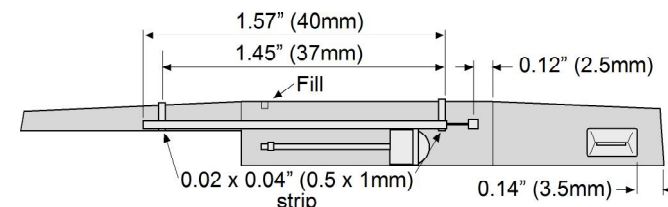
Step 7: Do not glue on kit parts A11. Early F2s did not use the left side roadwheel stowage, so leave off kit parts B30, B32 and B33 and fill mounting slots. However, later Gs did have these. The Bosch headlight is a later fitting, so carefully trim off the mounting socket on the fender, and the two small mounting studs for the fire extinguisher. The extinguisher (kit part D26) mounts further forward and inboard, covering the light socket. See the stowage diagrams for more details. Use the kit visors P2; the resin visors are included if you are starting with the PzKpfw IVJ kit.

Step 8: As per kit instructions, but do not zimmeritt the hull.. Add the folding step where shown below.



Step 9: Parts D1 and D2 are not required. Most photos of F2s show only the Notek convoy light included with the kit as part D10. Spare wheels are not required.

Step 10: Parts B31 and the gunbarrel cases are not required. Some stowage is rearranged; see the drawings on the next page for more details. Kit part D16 mounted on left side fender. Kit part D4 mounted on right side hull. You can find three spare track links by cutting them off of kit parts B39 or D5. Glue on some small strips where shown below, then glue the brass channel provided on those strips. The antenna hinged down into this channel when not in use. Resin antenna base part is fitted on the right-hand side where shown below.



Step 11-17: Not applicable.



Note this photo shows the turret without the rain gutters over the side doors, now provided as part of the turret casting.

Resin Turret Assembly:

Clean up the resin turret base and cut a disc of 0.040" (1mm) plastic card to 1.34" (34mm) dia and glue to the bottom of the turret. Use the kit turret as a guide for location.

Clean up the resin mantlet, insert the aluminum barrel and glue in position. Remove the muzzle brake from its base, sand the front to a spherical shape and drill a 0.06" (1.5mm) hole in the end. Use a sharp knife and mouse-tail files if you have them to clean out the slots in the side. Glue on the end of the aluminum barrel, with the small nub on the collar of the muzzle brake on top. Glue kit part C8 on the mantlet shield, then glue the gun assembly to the turret.

For the F2, use the resin early cupola which sits in the hole on the turret top. The pair of hatch hinges go on the sides with one of the five armoured slots facing forwards (note that it is possible to put this piece in backwards, so double check before gluing). The cupola hatches can be fixed closed or open if you have a figure to sit in it.

The turret stowage box glues to the rear of the turret, with its top at the same level as the top of the turret plate.

If you want to make a later Ausf G, use the kit barrel C6 and C7. Remove the visors from the side of the turret. Remove the vision port cover on the right side of the turret front plate. Remove the signal flap (to the left front of the cupola) and sand the hatch ring on the top of the resin turret flush with the roof. Sand the resin late cupola base so there is just a thin flash holding the splash ring to the cupola. Glue the cupola to the turret roof, centered on the hole. Note this will mean part of the splash ring extends out beyond the edge of the turret roof at the back. When set, use a sharp knife and clean out the gap between the turret roof and the splash ring. This will leave a small arc of the ring unsupported and it will not be too strong, so be careful here. The late cupola hatch can be removed from its support and glued either open or closed.

Note that many Gs used the armor skirts on the turret but not always the hull skirts.

Painting and finishing are up to you; lots of good references exist. However, the best reason to model this tank is its important role in North Africa where its long

75mm gun caused a problem for the Allies until the Grants and Shermans showed up, so you GOTTA do it in Afrika Korps colours!

References

1. **Panzer Tracts No. 4 Panzerkampfwagen IV**, Tom Jentz and H.L. Doyle, Darlington Publications 1997 (and still available ... go get it!)
2. **PzKpfw IV and its variants Book 2**, Spielberger, Doyle and Jentz, Schiffer Publications, 2011 (excellent reference)
3. **PzKpfw IV in Action**, Squadron Signal Publications
4. **Achtung Panzer No. 1 PzKpfw IV**, Dai Nihon Kaiga Publication, 1989
5. **Modelling the Early PzKpfw IV**, Tom Cockle, Osprey Publishing, 2005

The following two drawings are extracted from the Achtung Panzer book, and are excellent illustrations showing the stowage arrangements on the F2 (early G). Note that the lengthened barrel requires four cleaning rods rather than two for the earlier short barreled 75mm gun, and I assume this diagram indicates that the additional two rods were either placed on the left hull side, right rear side or packaged together with the rest of the cleaning rods on the left rear side.

Note also this sketch shows the location of the Notek light on the left fender.

