



Mouse Armour

1/35 scale kit MA138
Australian M3 Buna Stuart
mid production turret
(based on Academy M3A1
Stuart Kit 1398)

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Background

The Australian Army during World War II was supplied with a range of Lend Lease armoured vehicles including the Stuart Light tank M3, M3 with mid production turrets and M3A1. The Australian Army also followed the add-ons and improvements to the M3 Stuart as developed by the British. So, whilst this conversion set makes an Australian Stuart as used on the attack on the Japanese held Buna airfield, these modifications were also used on British Stuarts in the North African desert and later in Burma.

Parts

Horseshoe turret	Front sponson cover (left)
2 x turret hatches	Front sponson cover (right)
Turret ring shield	2 x POL cans in brackets
Armoured air intake cover upper	2 x Fire extinguishers in brackets
Armoured air intake cover lower	2 x Curved auxiliary fuel tank mounts
2 x Grouser racks	1 x Flat auxiliary fuel tank mount
Angled front stowage bin	

Tools

Handy tools would include a sharp model knife and wet and dry sandpaper.

Safety

This is a resin product so keep it away from extreme heat and naked flames. When sanding do it in a well-ventilated area and do not inhale the resin dust – wear a mask. Use wet sanding methods to reduce the dust.

Construction

General

(For use with Academy kit No. 1398, M3A1 Stuart)

Note: Although the base kit is an M3A1, the conversion produces an M3, so the kit supplied interior is incorrect for this model and should not be used.

1. Build as per kit instructions for step 1.
2. Omit steps 2 and 3, see note above.
3. At step 4, only attach kit part E6.
4. At step 5 replace 'C' and 'D' with the left and right front sponson covers. Replace part B48 with the new two-part armoured air intake cover, by placing the intake base in the kit hole with the 'V' pointing rearward, then positioning the intake cover over the base so that it's 'V' underside mates with the base.
5. At step 6, omit parts E9. Place parts B49/B38 slightly more rearward and left so as to clear the new air intake cover. Attach a POL can in bracket to the rear of 'H' and 'J', near the bin's outside edge and with about half the can hanging below the lower edge of the bin. Also attach a fire extinguisher to the angled upper rear face of each bin lid so that the extinguisher base is facing down towards the centre of the rear of the tank.
6. Add a grouser rack to each hull sponson side so that they start with the front hull corner and overhang the air cleaners and sit slightly higher than the hull top. On the upper hull rear, do not add the shovel, part D1, but instead, glue it to the lower rear hull under the engine access doors on part B36. Add the flat strip of the auxiliary fuel tank mount so that it is centred across the bottom edge of the rear plate, just under where the shovel would have been.

7. At the top of the rear plate, remove the fourth rivet head in from each side, then attach a curved auxiliary fuel tank mount in place of each rivet with the short arm uppermost, and the longer lower arm sitting on the horizontal flat mount.
8. At step 7, assemble the gun as indicated. Do not use the turret basket parts on part E8, see note above. Replace the turret shell with the new horseshoe turret. Slide the turret ring shield down over the turret part and make sure it is centred with the low cut-out at the front. Then add the three vision port covers E30 as required.
9. Attach the two hatches to the cupola with the larger of the two hatches forward. Glue parts E25 and E22 to the scribed marks on the rear of the cupola. Do not use any other turret external kit parts. Then glue the gun to E8 as per instructions. Slide the horseshoe turret and E11 over the barrel and attach them to E8.
10. At step 8 do not use the two spare fuel tanks or their mounts E32.



The image at left shows the position of the fuel tank mounts and the supporting bar at the rear of the hull. Although this is a M3 Stuart the mounting was the same on all M3 / M3A1 Stuart tanks.

The rear of the hexagonal turret also shows the placement of the Squadron symbol and troop number.

Other Mouse House Items:

MA131 – Buna Stuart with hexagonal turret based on Academy kit 1399

MAD610 – 1/35 scale decals for both hexagonal and horseshoe mid production M3 Stuarts used during the Buna battles.