

SMM3552X Centurion Mantletless Turret (CMT)

For use with Centurion Mk.7 sets from **SMM** and **AFV Club** Centurion base kit

By the early 1960s, Centurion had been in service around the world for over ten years. It had already proved to be a reliable vehicle, highly adaptable, and well-liked by its crews.



Chieftain started development in the late 1950s, with British Army service beginning in 1967. Chieftain featured a 'mantletless' turret in which the gun extended through a slot in the turret face. With the Centurion proving to be a great export success, it was hoped that Chieftain would follow suit. However, it proved too expensive. Hearsay suggests that the Centurion Mantletless Turret was developed alongside Chieftain as a means of creating a method for poorer countries to upgrade their Centurion fleets – a more affordable route than buying the newer tank.

It is believed that only three turrets were produced. One was fitted with a Type B 20-pounder, a second with the 105 mm L7 (both of which were mounted on Mk.7 Centurion chassis) and a third turret was used for 'defensive firing trials' at Kirkcudbright in December 1957. The FVRDE (Fighting Vehicle Research and Development Establishment) report stated (truncated version here): *"The prototype turret, to drawing FV267252 submitted for test, was cast in armour steel by Messrs P.H. Lloyd, with the fitting of a mock-up mounting and dummy gun by Leyland Motors Ltd. The mock-up cradle was carried on correct pattern trunnions housed in recesses machined inside the turret walls. Bullet splash guards were fitted as for a service mounting. A .30 Browning MG was installed in the co-axial mounting, linked to the main armament."*

This set has parts for the two different guns (and other modifications) and creates a very different appearance to the standard Centurion. The Centurion 'Action X' was an FVRDE project featuring the CMT design. Though this adapted Centurion may appear similar to the FV4202 '40-ton Centurion', they have nothing in common.

Below: All that is left of the original experiment is this 20-pounder turret at Bovington.

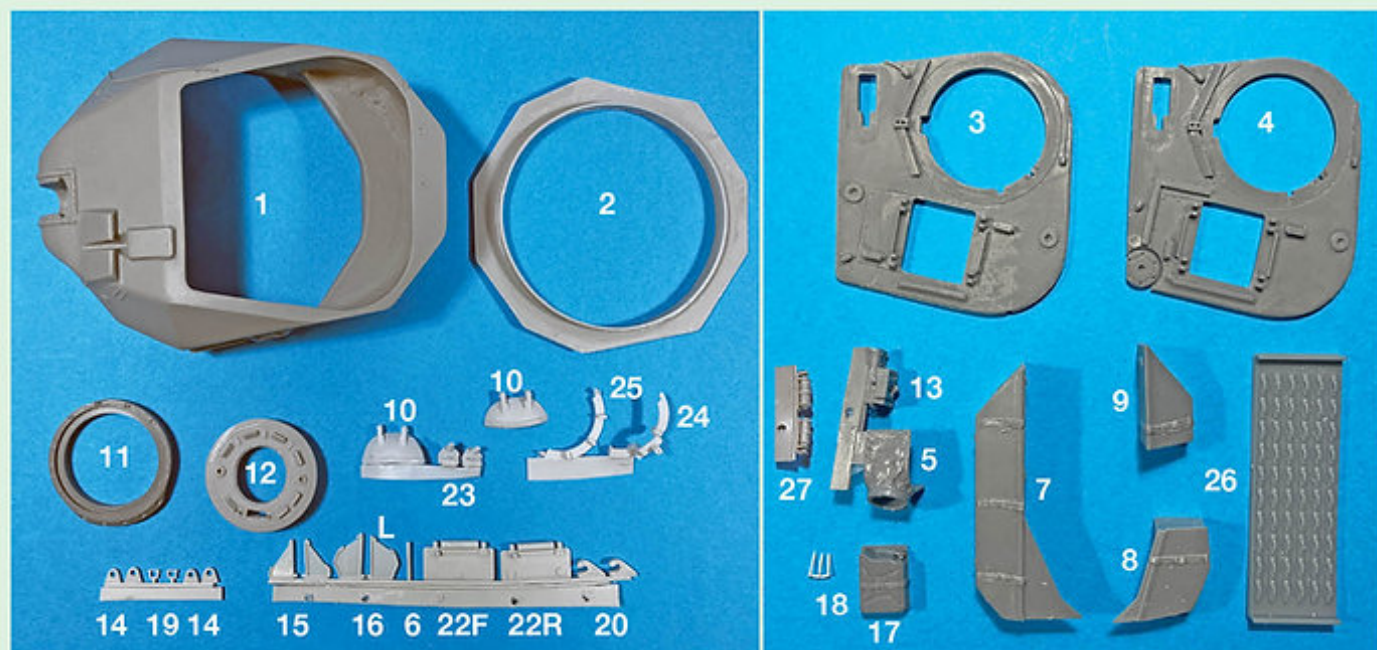
At least this has a complete set of tie-down handles, even though nearly everything else has been stripped away. *(Ossie Orsbourn photos)*



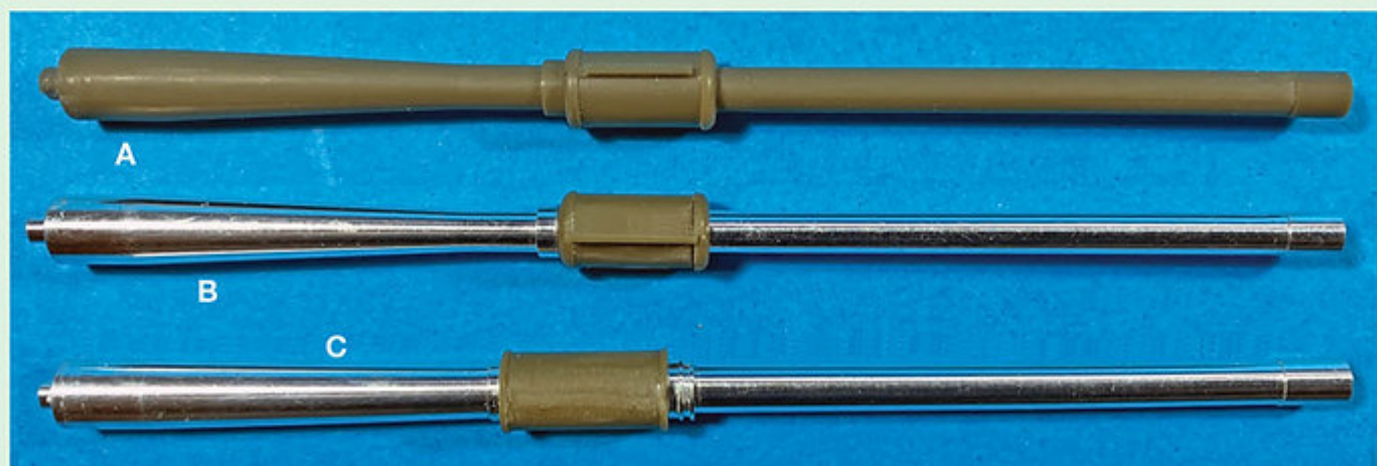
A Mk.7 hull built for earlier **SMM** Centurion sets is used here. Suggested **SMM** sets are noted on page 2. The **SMM** Mk.7 build has differences to the two prototype hulls.

The only known photos of the original vehicles are on page 4. I leave it up to the modeller to either match the actual prototypes – or envisage the vehicle as it may have looked had it seen service.

Parts List



- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. Turret shell | 11. Commander's cupola base ring | 18. Jerrycan handle |
| 2. Turret base/ring | 12. Cupola Mk.4 No.1, base ring | 19. 0.30 cal stowage brackets (2) |
| 3. Roof plate, 20-pdr type | 13. Gunner's sight housing | 20. Glacis plate 'hooks' |
| 4. Roof plate, 105 mm type | 14. Turret lift eyes (4) | 22. Loader's hatches, front & rear |
| 5. Gun cover | 15. Smoke discharger mounting frames, lower (2) | 23. Hatch hinges (2) |
| 6. Co-axial .30 cal MG barrel | 16. Smoke discharger mounting frames, upper, left & right (L is marked on piece) | 24. Periscope guard, front |
| 7. Turret stowage bin, right | 17. Stowed jerrycan | 25. Periscope guard, rear |
| 8. Turret stowage bin, front left | | 26. Turret tie-downs |
| 9. Turret stowage bin rear left | | 27. BCF extinguishers (2) |
| 10. Commander's hatches, left/right | | |



Alternative guns from AFV Club Centurion kits

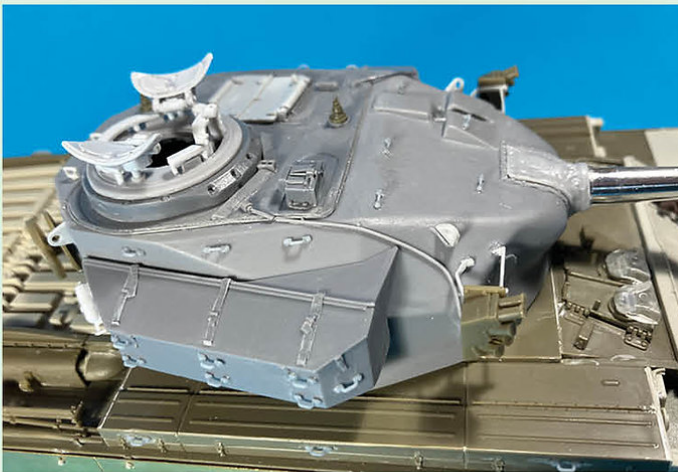
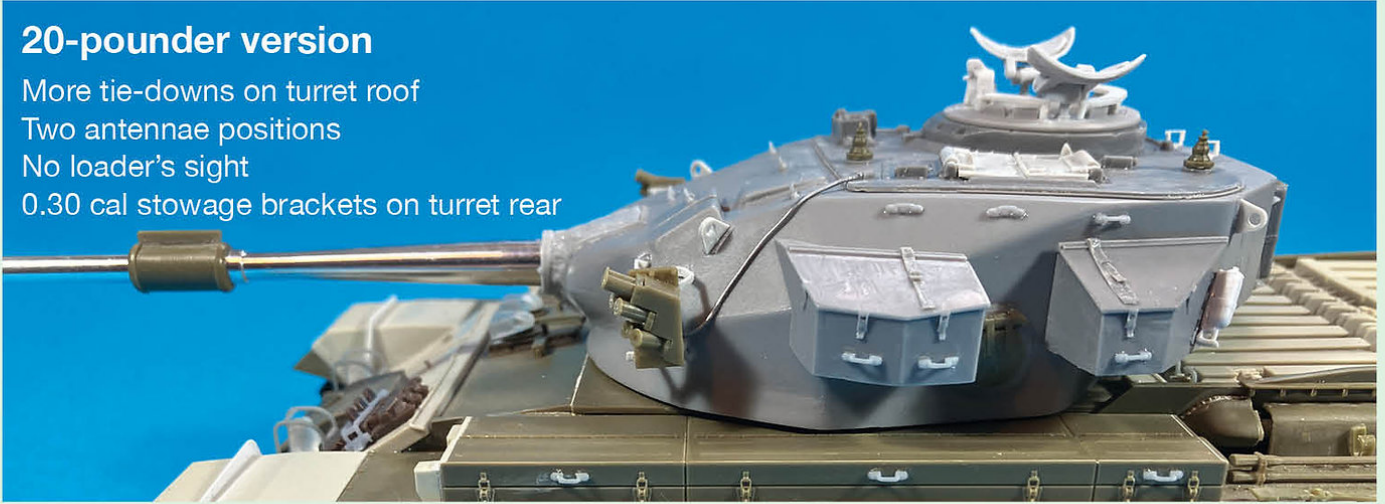
- A** 20-pounder Type B and 105 mm L7 (both in plastic) from **AFV35328 4 RTR Berlin Centurion Mk.5/1**. This kit is the only *AFV Club* kit with a choice of two guns.
- B** 20-pounder Type B in turned aluminium from **AFV35100 Royal Australian Armoured Corps Centurion Mk.5/1 (Vietnam)** or **AFV35159 IDF Shot Centurion Mk.5 and 5/1 1967 Early Type**.
- C** 105 mm L7 in turned aluminium from **AFV35122 Centurion Mk.5/2 and 6 (NATO)**.

Scorpion Miniature Models sets for Centurion Mk.7 hull

SMM3541C Centurion Late Skirts or **SMM3541D** Centurion Mid Skirts/**SMM3552F** Extended Rear Hull package with idlers, etc./**SMM3552K** 127 mm Glacis Applique//**SMM3552L** Engine Deck Pagoda/ **SMM3552V** Exhaust Fishtails/**SMM3552Z** Single brushguards and headlights

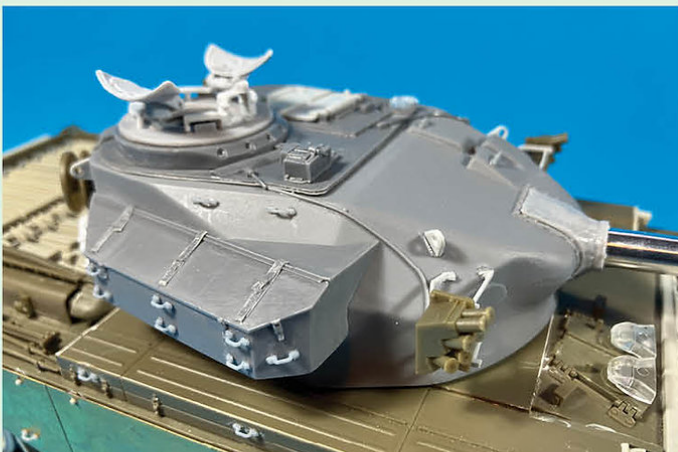
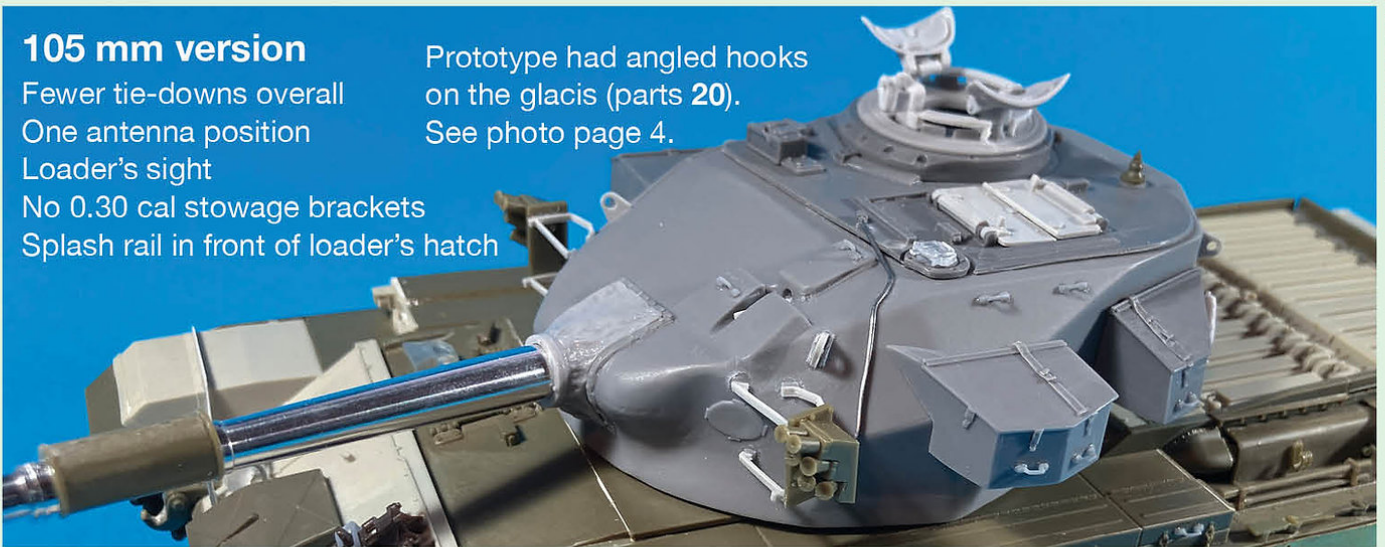
20-pounder version

- More tie-downs on turret roof
- Two antennae positions
- No loader's sight
- 0.30 cal stowage brackets on turret rear



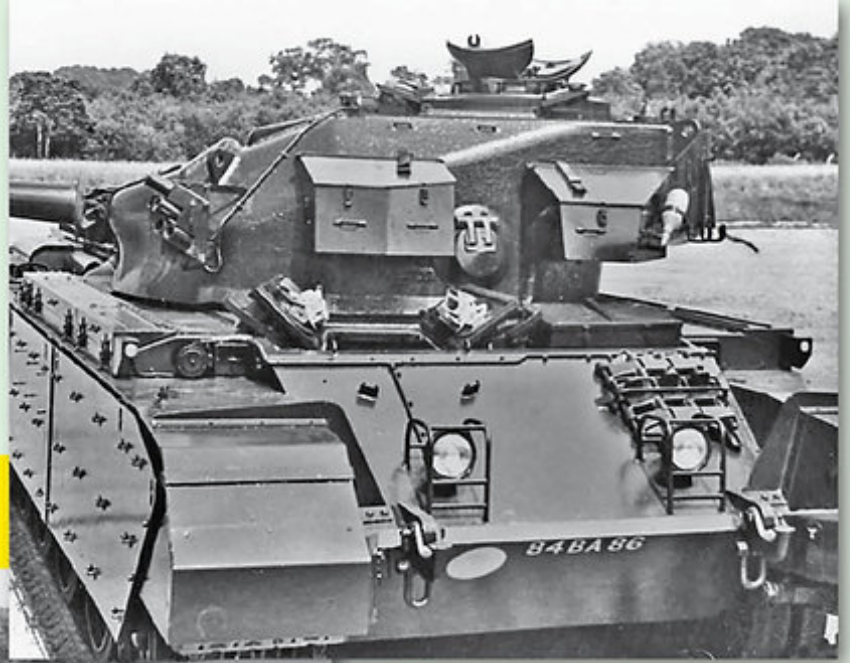
105 mm version

- Fewer tie-downs overall
 - One antenna position
 - Loader's sight
 - No 0.30 cal stowage brackets
 - Splash rail in front of loader's hatch
- Prototype had angled hooks on the glacis (parts 20). See photo page 4.



The only known clear photos of the two prototypes (*unattributed internet sources*)

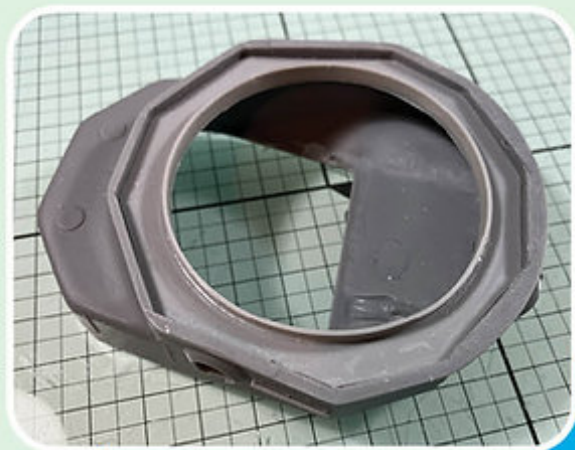
The 20-pounder armed SMC based on 84 BA 86, a Mk.7 Centurion hull



The 105 mm L7-armed vehicle

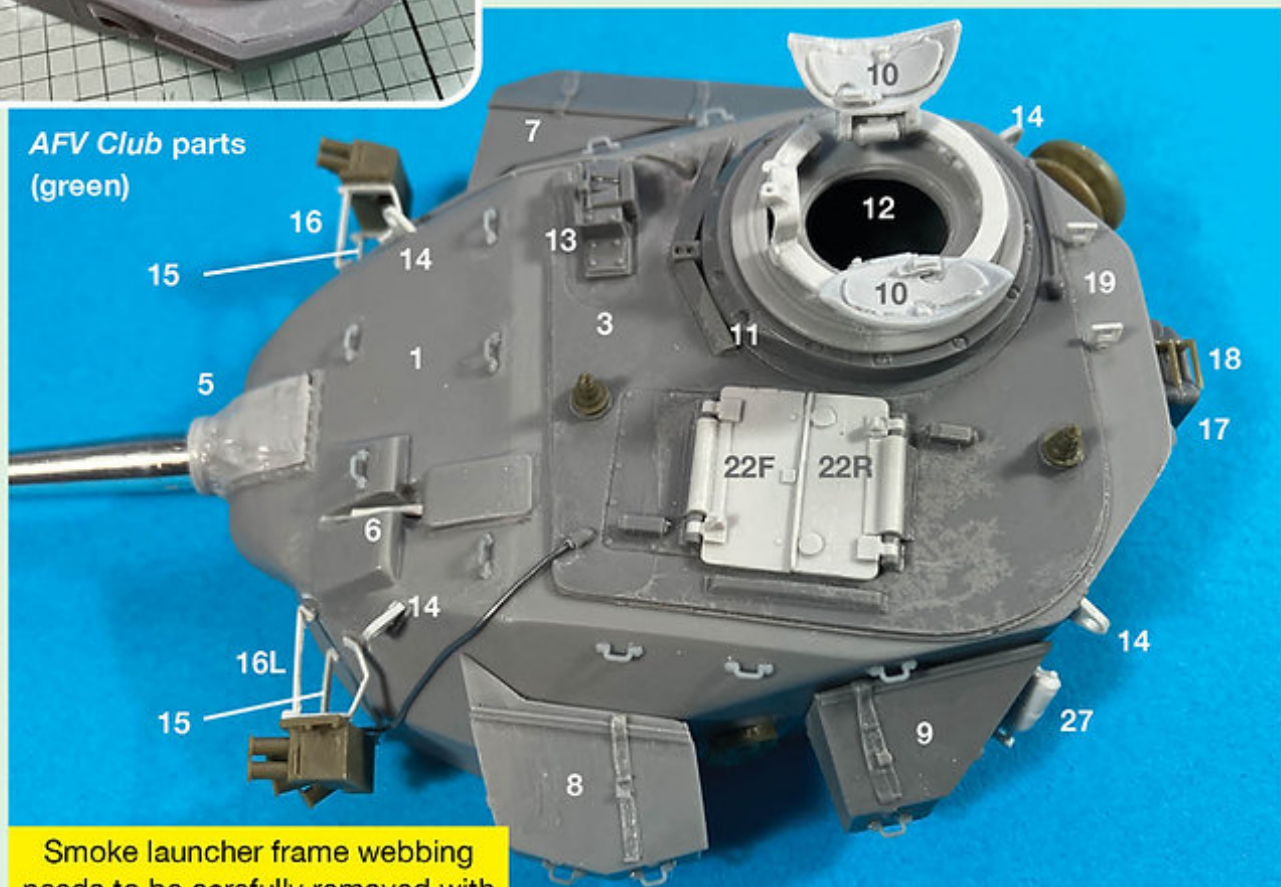
105 mm prototype (serial unknown) had angled hooks on the glacis (parts 20). Purpose unknown.





Ensure the turret ring (part 2) sits on the 'shelf' up inside the turret walls (part 1) – NOT flush on the bottom edge. It needs to sit over the kit's turret ring.

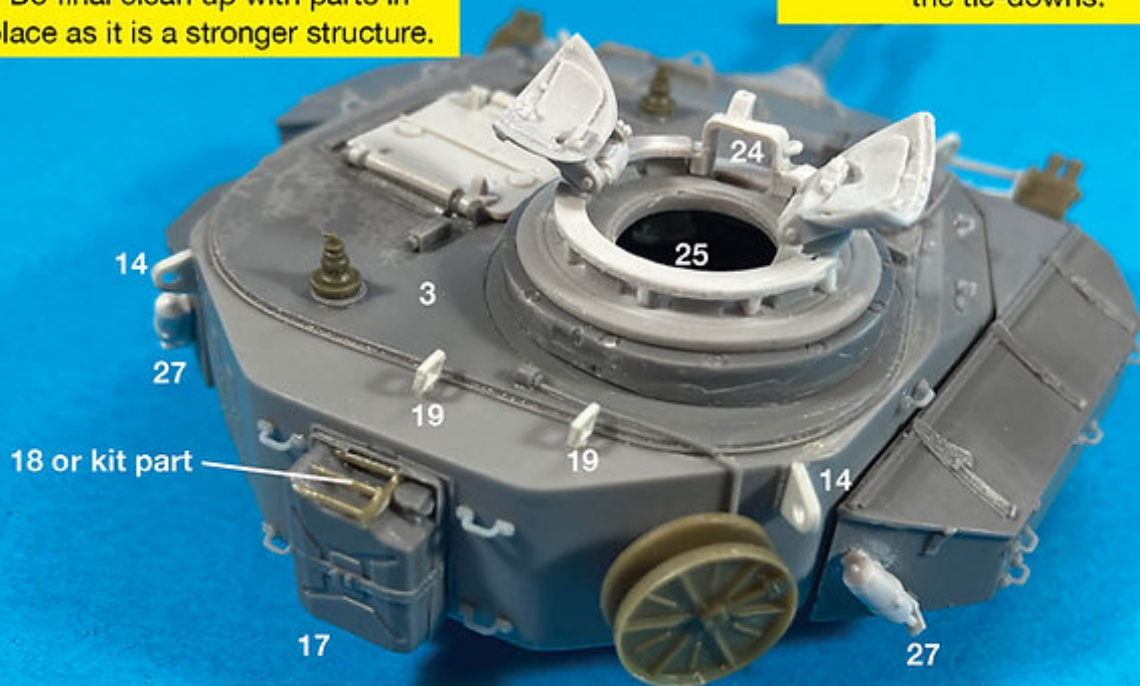
AFV Club parts
(green)



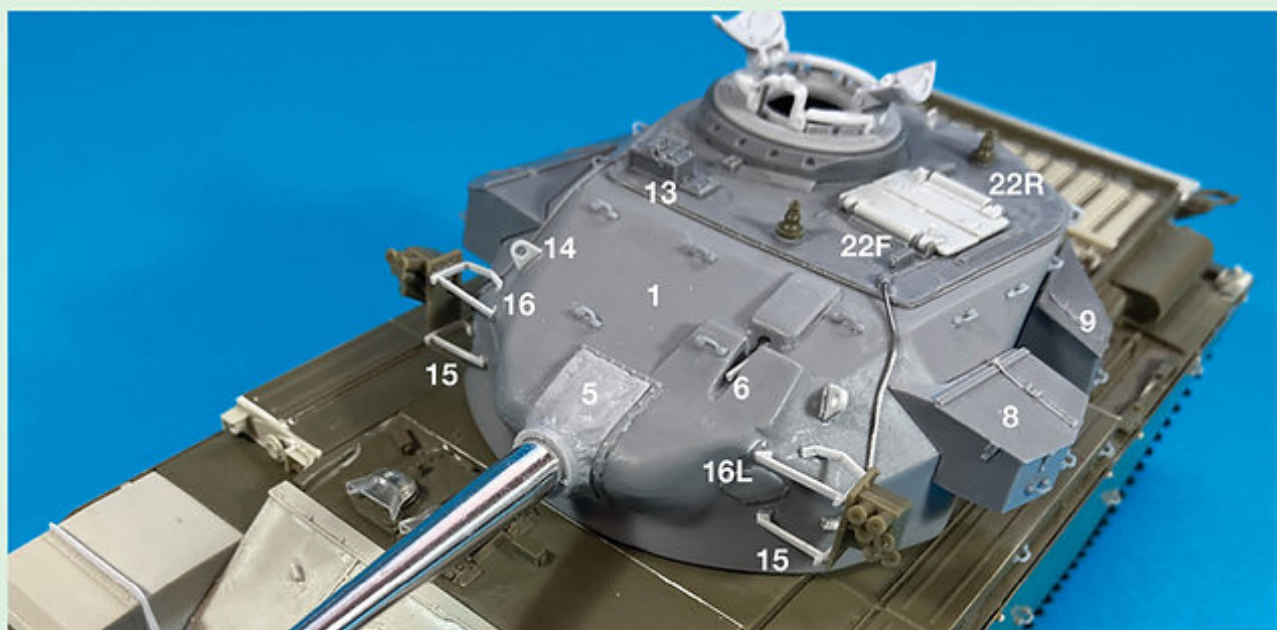
Smoke launcher frame webbing needs to be carefully removed with a new, sharp blade.

Do final clean up with parts in place as it is a stronger structure.

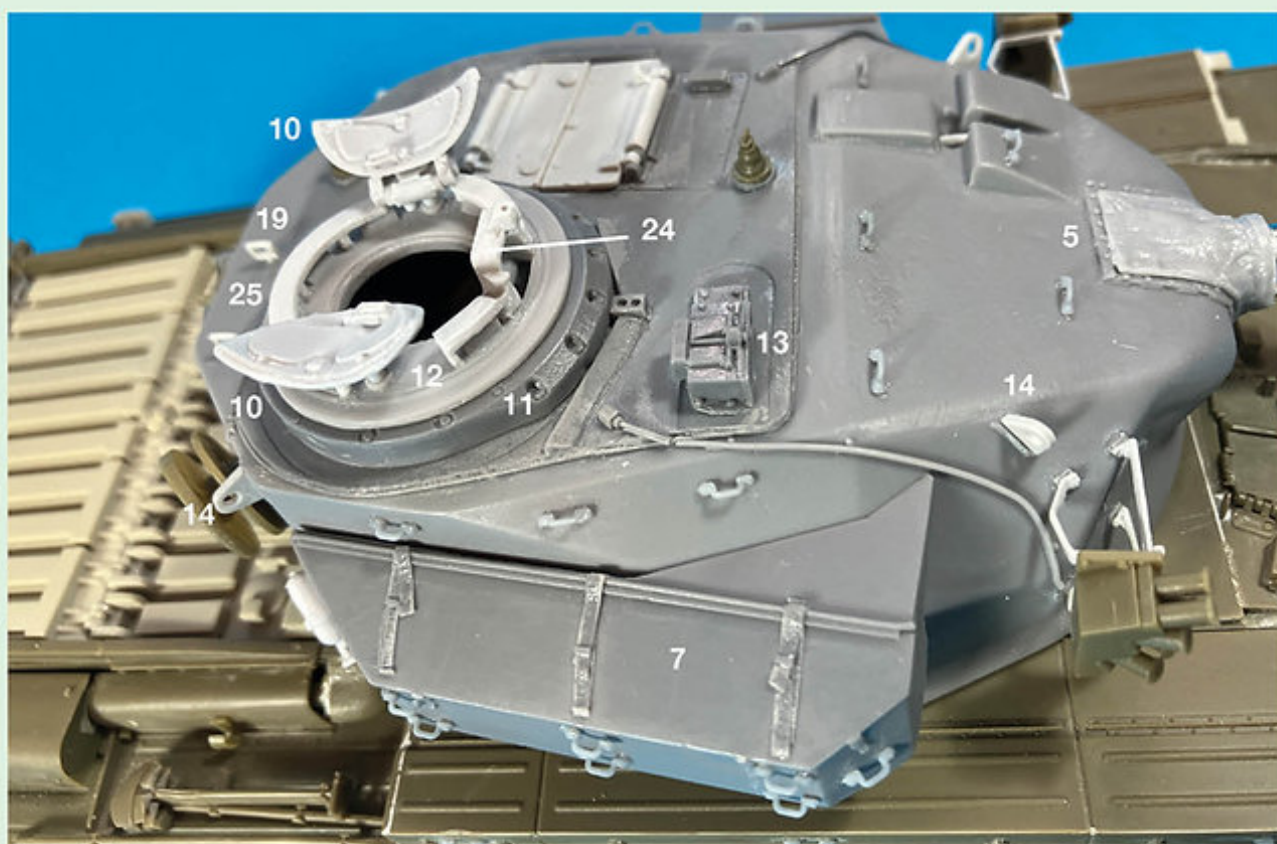
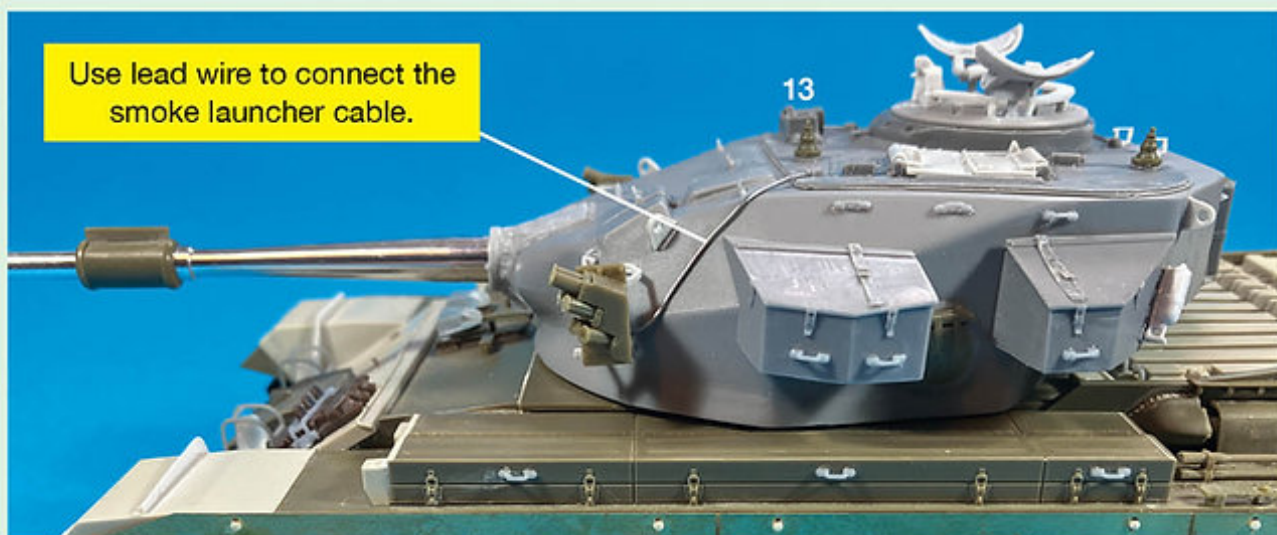
Use page 1 photos to position the tie-downs.



20-pounder version

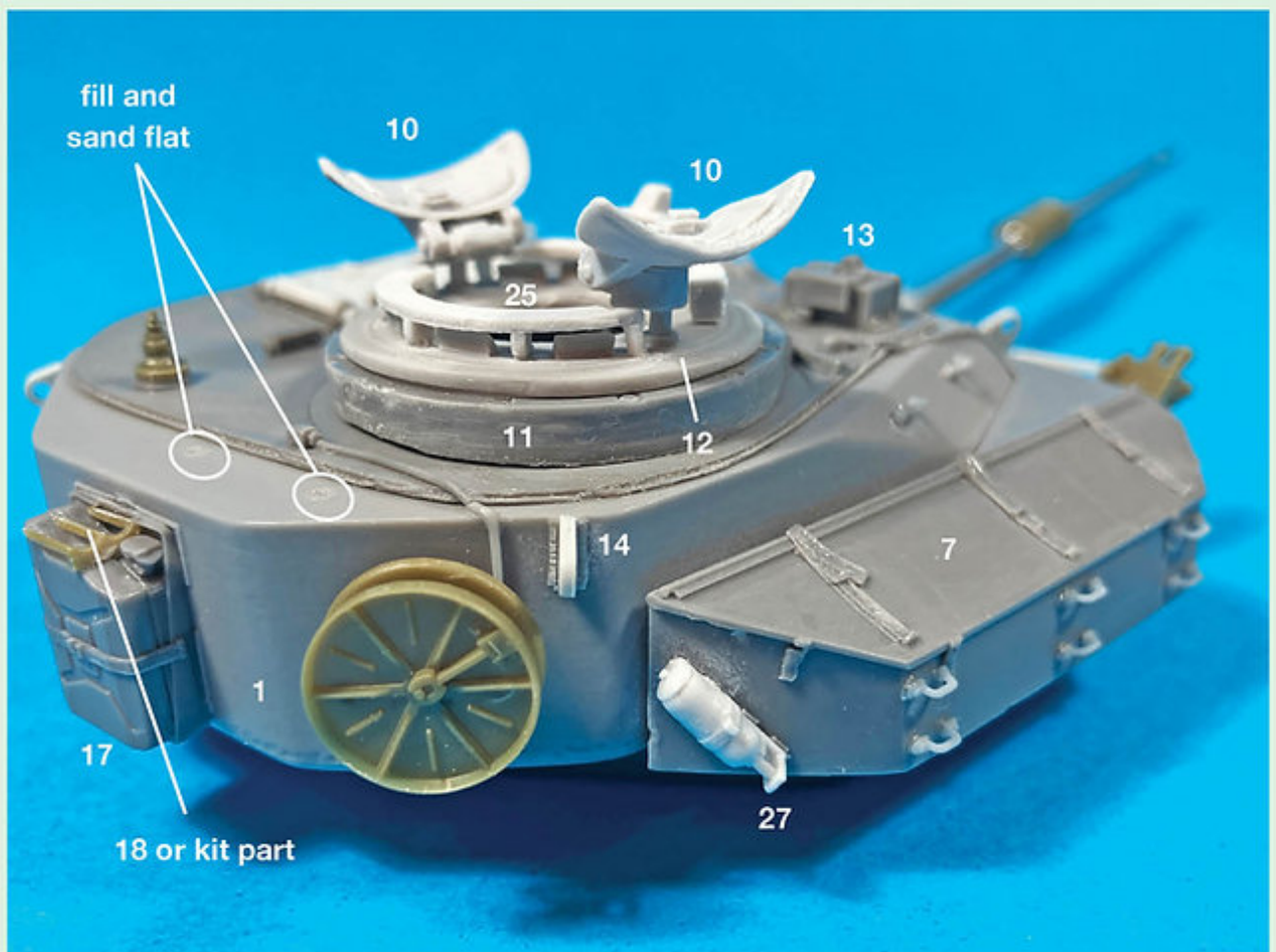
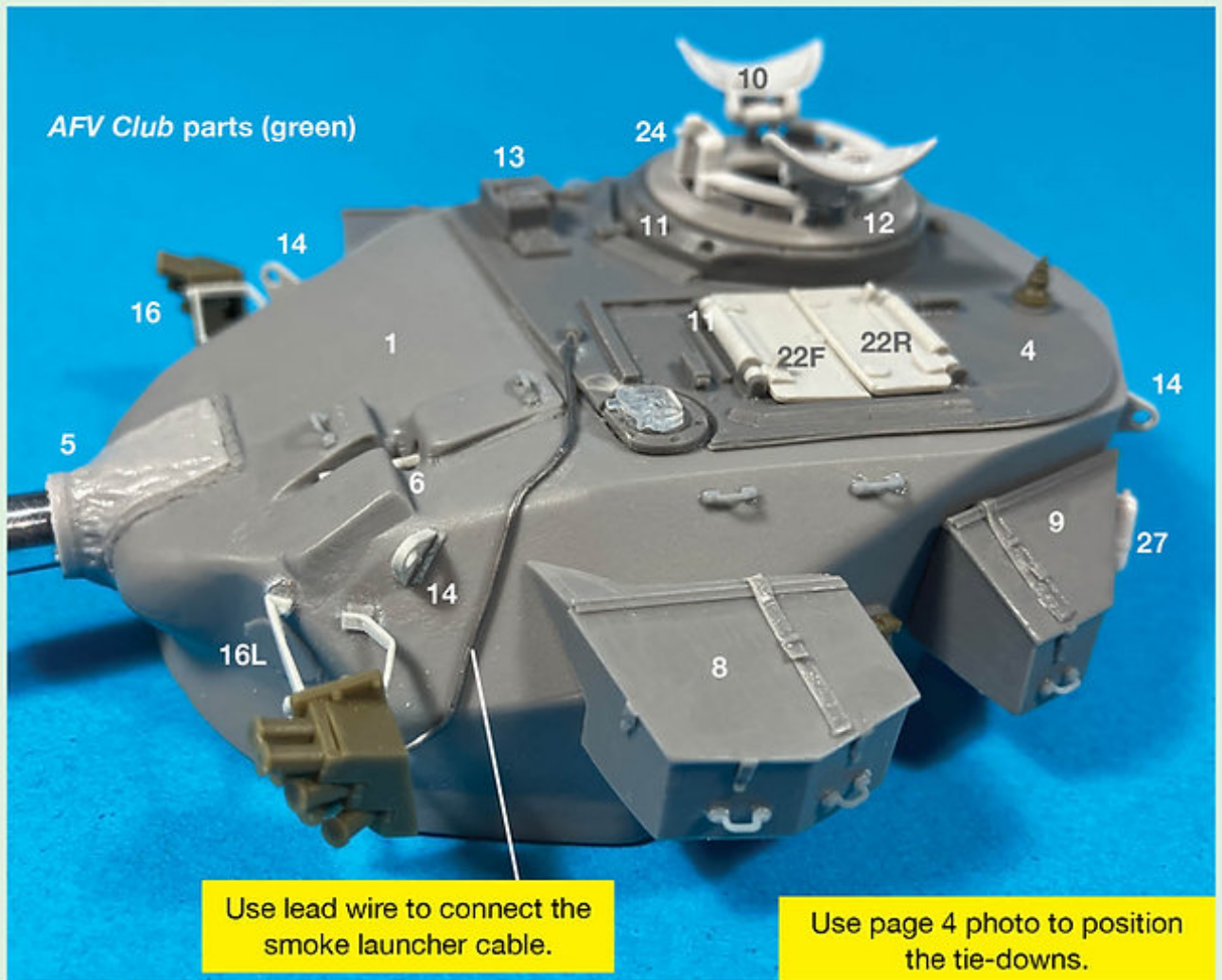


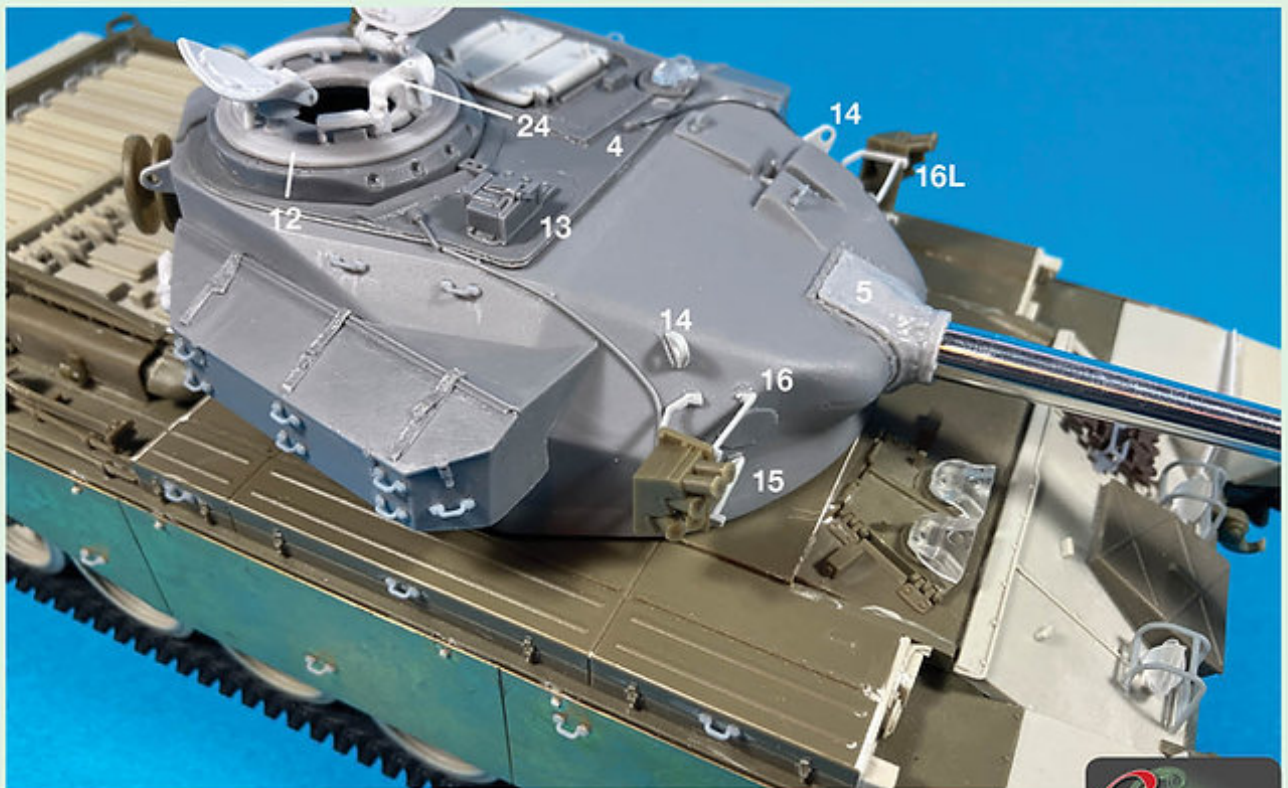
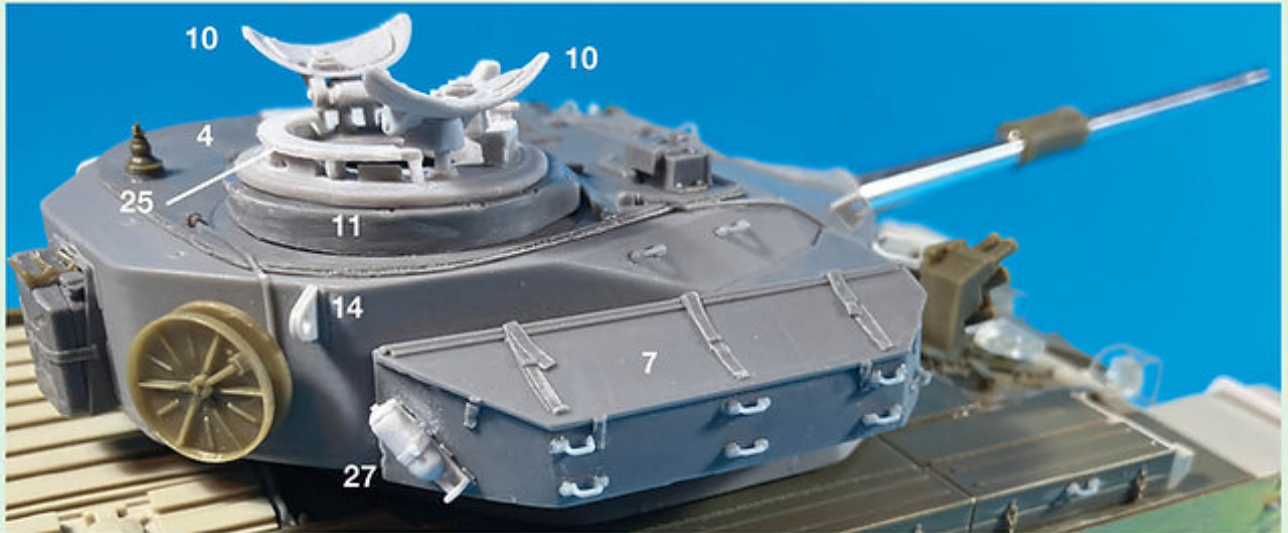
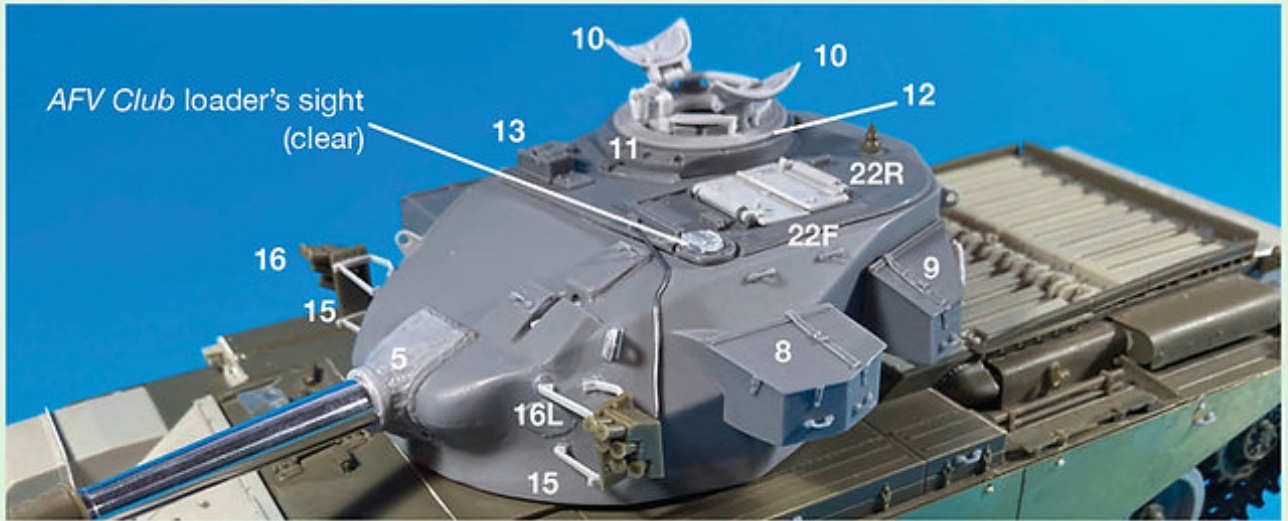
Use lead wire to connect the
smoke launcher cable.



20-pounder version

105 mm L7 version





105 mm L7 version

Happy modelling and keep on building!

Master parts built by Andrew Crutchley

<http://www.scorpion-miniature-models.co.uk>

Cast by LZ Models

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