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Step-by-Step Finishing German Armor

Panzer II Ausf A

6th Panzer Division
France, 1940

By Glenn Bartolotti

A complete Step-by-Step guide to Painting and Finishing Armor Models and Figures

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Materials Used

The materials I use are very easy to obtain and simple to use. Most are inexpensive and found in most all art supply stores. Over the years I have learned to used these basic materials to obtain finishes that look very realistic. **Consistency** is very important and following each steps is also very important to obtain the desired finish.

You will notice that in none of the steps will you see the method of dry-brushing. I do not like to use this method as some armor modelers do. I prefer a more subtle look in which I feel represents the look of a full scale armor vehicle.

Note: Just a few of the materials used for painting and weathering only.

Panzer II Ausf A

The Panzer II was the common name for a family of German tanks used in World War II. The official German designation was Panzerkampfwagen II (abbreviated PzKpfw II). Although the vehicle had originally been designed as a stopgap while more advanced tanks were developed, it nonetheless went on to play an important role in the early years of World War II, during the Polish and French campaigns. By the end of 1942 it had been largely removed from front line service, and production of the tank itself ceased by 1943. Its chassis remained in use as the basis of several other armored vehicles.

In 1934, delays in the design and production of the Panzer III and Panzer IV tanks were becoming apparent. Designs for a stopgap tank were solicited from Krupp, MAN, Henschel, and Daimler-Benz. The final design was based on the Panzer I, but larger, and with a turret mounting a 20 mm anti-tank gun. Production began in 1935, but it took another eighteen months for the first combat-ready tank to be delivered.

The Panzer II was the most numerous tank in the German Panzer divisions beginning with the invasion of France, until it was supplemented by the Panzer III and IV in 1940/41. Afterwards, it was used to great effect as a reconnaissance tank.

The Panzer II was used in the German campaigns in Poland, France, the Low Countries, Denmark, Norway, North Africa and the Eastern Front. After being removed from front-line duty, it was used for training and on secondary fronts. The chassis was used for a number of self-propelled guns including the Wespe and Marder II.

The Panzer II was designed before the experience of the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39 showed that shell-proof armor was required for tanks to survive on a modern battlefield. Prior to that, armor was designed to stop machinegun fire and High Explosive shell fragments.
Panzer II and Panzer I on western front (May 1940)

The Panzer II A, B, and C had 14 mm of slightly sloped homogenous steel armor on the sides, front, and back, with 10 mm of armor on the top and bottom. Many IIC were given increased armor in the front.[clarification needed] Starting with the D model, the front armor was increased to 30 mm. The Model F had 35 mm front armour and 20 mm side armor.

This armor could be penetrated by towed antitank weapons such as the Soviet 45mm and French canon de 25 and canon de 47.

Most tank versions of the Panzer II were armed with a 2 cm KwK 30 55 calibers long cannon. Some later versions used the 2 cm KwK 38 L/55 which was similar. This cannon was based on the 2 cm FlaK 30 anti-aircraft gun, and was capable of firing at a rate of 280 rounds per minute, a very high rate for a tank. The Panzer II also had a 7.92 mm Maschinengewehr 34 machine gun mounted coaxially with the main gun.

The 2 cm cannon proved to be ineffective against many Allied tanks, and experiments were made towards replacing it with a 37 mm cannon, but nothing came of this. Prototypes were built with a 50 mm tank gun, but by then the Panzer II had outlived its usefulness as a tank regardless of armament. Greater

success was had by replacing the standard armor-piercing explosive ammunition with tungsten cored solid ammunition, but due to material shortages this ammunition was in chronically short supply.

Later development into a self-propelled gun carriage saw the mounting of a 5 cm PaK 38 antitank gun, but this was seen as insufficient for the time, and the larger 7.62 cm PaK 36(r) was installed as an effective stop-gap. The main production antitank version was fitted with a 7.5 cm PaK 40 which was very effective. Artillery mounting began with a few 15 cm sIG 33 heavy infantry guns, but most effective was the 10.5 cm leFH 18, for which the Panzer II chassis became the primary carriage for the war. Most of these versions retained a pintle mounted 7.92 mm MG34 machine gun for defense against infantry and air attack.

All production versions of the Panzer II were fitted with a 140 PS, gasoline-fuelled six-cylinder Maybach HL 62 TRM engine and ZF transmissions. Models A, B, and C had a top speed of 40 km/h (25 mph). Models D and E had a Christie suspension and a better transmission, giving a top road speed of 55 km/h (33 mph) but the cross country speed was much lower than previous models, so the Model F reverted back to the previous leaf spring type suspension. All versions had a range of 200 km (125 miles).

The Panzer II had a crew of three men. The driver sat in the forward hull. The commander sat in a seat in the turret, and was responsible for aiming and firing the guns, while a loader/radio operator stood on the floor of the tank under the turret.

1

*1. The **kit** used is German PzKw II - Ausf. A/B/C (Sd. Kfz.121) Item #35292*

About the Model

1/35 model of the German Panzerkampfwagen II tank.
Supplemental armor plate parts can be installed in the same manner as the actual tank.
Various hatches throughout the tank are separately-molded, and armor panels are included to accurately recreate the different variants.
Assembly-type tracks feature single-piece sections for effortless construction.
Comes with a commander figure and three kinds of markings for the French campaign.

http://www.tamiyausa.com/product/item.php?product-id=35292

*The **paint** that will be used to airbrush this model will be Testors Model Master enamel paint: Flat White and Flat Black.*

Flat paint is very important to my Step-by-Step Finishing.

2

*2. The first step in the painting process is the **pre-shade**. This is the darkest shadow color. I used Testors Flat Black. Spray the entire model.*

The Panzer II used in France 1940 were newer tanks. I did not want to show this model as a veteran like some in Russia where the gray paint was faded from years in the field. This is why I choose a Flat Black base for the Panzer Gray.

3

*3. Next step in the painting process is the **base coat.** This is the main color. Testors Flat White was mixed with Flat Black to create the Panzer gray base color. I visuallt mixed the paint till I had a very dark gray. What you are trying to achieve in this step is to make sure you cover the areas that were not painted in the pre-shade painting.*
As you can see you don't have to worry about being perfect just make sure you can see the shadow for the most part and a blending effect is achieved.
Contrast is important!

4

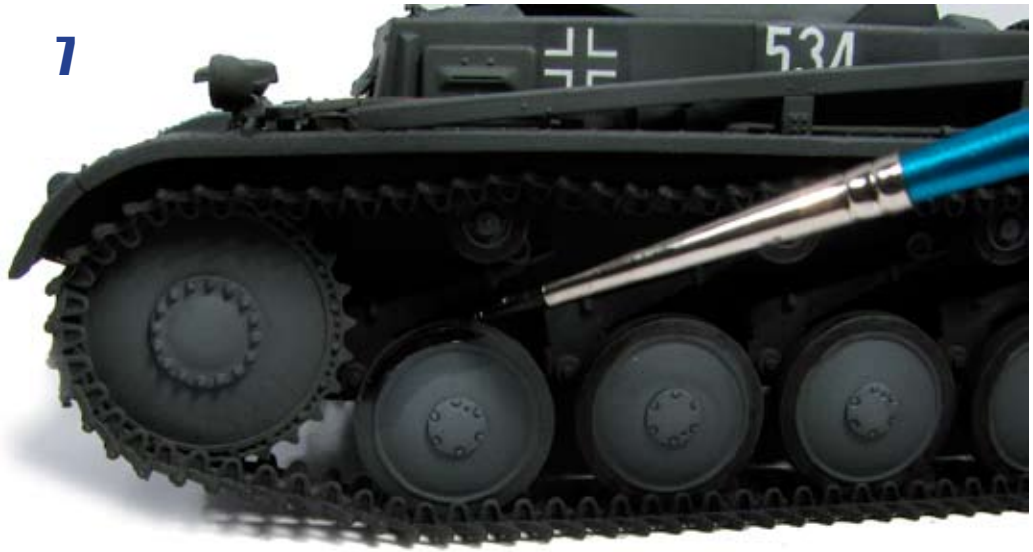
*4. Next step in the painting process is the **high-light.** To make this color more Flat White was added to the base gray color already mixed. You want to add enough white to alter the base color and contrast is important in this step. What you are trying to achieve is to make sure any areas of your light source can hit is painted.*
Paint all the high spots, centers of any panels and the tops of objects that stand off the tank. Once again contrast is important!

5

*5. The model is now given a Testors clear gloss coat only in the areas that the **decals** will be applied. Micro Sol was used to flatten the decals down. I used the decals from various decal sheets from other kits. When dry, spray the tank with Testors clear flat and allow to dry for about 2 days. A flat finish is very important to my Step-by-Step finishing.*

6

*6. Next step in the painting process are the **tools and equipment.** I paint all tools and equipment on the tank before final weathering. In painting these items study the way metal and wood looks in real life and add the colors into your paint to really get a good contrasting look and make sure you use various colors and shade as you can in each item. Most important don't paint items just one color or shade. I use acrylic paint but any paint you are comfortable with will work. The metal items are painted in shades of black, they will be treated with a metallic and rust finish later.*



7. Next the **tires/road wheels** are given a very thin wash of black oil paint thinned with turpentine. The wash works well because stark black rubber is not realistic. Let wash flow all around the road wheels in the same manner.
It is impossible to add the wash behind the road wheels but if you can't see it, no one else will see it is not painted there.

8 Next step is the **wash.**
First I brush the model with clean turpentine.

I put a dab of raw umber and black oil paint on a pallet, the oil paint is thinned and mixed with turpentine on the pallet and then applied to the model with a small brush. I do not want the wash to coat the entire model, it is controlled just where I want it. This is called a pin wash, apply to all of the surface details to create false shadows around each one, and any excess wash is blended into the surrounding surface once dry. I streak raw umber only down the sides like it would naturally, but care should be taken not to overdo this...be subtle. Note the difference in the left side without the wash and right side with wash.

Once the body of the tank's wash has dried it is turned on its side and the road wheels are given a wash. It is put on its side so the wash stays around the bolts and details not allowing the wash to drain down to the bottom of the wheels only. This gives all the wheels a even effect all around. Make sure you add the wash to the lower body and leaf springs.

9

*9. Next step is the **effects.** I use heavily thinned white artist oil paint to give flat areas of the Panzer II a look as though water that has mixed with dust and dried on the surface.*
I paint the area with clean turpentine as before. I put a dab of oil paint on a pallet, the oil paint is thinned with turpentine on the pallet and then applied to the model with a small brush. Blend in with clean turpentine being very subtle as you go over the model.
Other earth shade oil colors can be used in this step to add other transparent glaze weathering effects.

10

As you can see here you don't see much pastel pigment color, but when it dries you will.

*10. Next step is **pastel pigment weathering.** I use pastels in the same way you use pigments, but I make my own powder. The pastels are $1.00 a stick at the art store and come in a large variety of shades. I use a file to grind them into powder. I mix them with turpentine on a pallet and apply them with a brush. **Make sure you thin the powder heavily because if not it will dry and cover to much, a little goes a long way!***

Apply this mixture to the road wheels and lower part of tank. Also apply to the tracks..

11

*11. Next step are **metal accents***
I use a no. 2 graphite pencil to add the metal accents to the raised parts of the tracks. I also add this to the areas you can see on the drive sprocket teeth.

*The pencil is also used on the **metal tools**. Just highlight the edges of the tools and not the entire metal area.*

Finished Model

Finished Model

Excellent figure produced by Alpine®

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Stay Tuned!

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