

A Science Fiction Tank???

By Rob Morgan

Now, I must admit, with the ageing process and the old eyesight requiring glasses these days, my tendency is to avoid the more substantial modelling projects and also the more complex paint jobs which I relied as a youngster. As a matter of fact, my old (older than me!) wargaming comrade-in-arms Brian reckons the reason I own a large OstFront 'Winter War' scenario is because of the cheap price of matt white spray paint, and my interest in naval wargames is down to the ease with which an entire fleet can be sprayed matt dark earth (sailing ships) or grey (ironclads), and be ready for use in an evening, even if the flags painted upside down.

Well, yes there's something in that!

I certainly don't buy the multi-piece afv's I once did. The thought of assembling say an Airfix WWII 'Churchill' tank with all those road wheels... or the 'Panther', with the disappearing bogies! What I tend to do when adding to my OstFront forces, is look any less complex kits which turn up. This is one.

The 'Pegasus Hobbies' company of Montclair CA (presumably California, though the kits are made in China), produces some interesting late war Nazi armour in 1/72nd scale; some of the 'might-have-been' or single prototype tanks and SP guns which were part of the substantial late war programme which gave them the 'Maus' super-heavy, and super-useless tank. They are, apparently loosely based on surviving plans and drawings.

One, the "*Panzer E-25*" which is number 7602 in the series is a delightful advanced version, at least in looks and equipment, of the JgdPz IV (the old 'Matchbox' kit if you recall) and fits well with the Hetzers, Panthers and Hanomags, and is equipped with the very late war infra-red night-fighting gear which was mounted on some Panthers and Hanomags around Lake Balaton in Hungary in the late Winter of 1945. The *E-25* is low, sleek, looks armed with a 75mm and is ready for action. So, if you fight on the road to Berlin, do buy it. But this one.....

The box, it's No.7606 in the series, describes the contents as two models of the 'P-245-010' German tank design, and nicknames it the '*Jaguarundi*.' It looks remarkable. It looks bizarre! The models, which in the UK retail at around £5-£6, are astonishingly easy to build. Look at the instruction sheet, only 16 parts a tank, which suits me, and little or no preparation. All I had to do was snip them from the

sprue, decide which height I wanted the turret gun to point, and also remove the two 'securing lugs' from the turret bottom for ease of lifting on and off.

Having done that, I sat and looked at it. There's no description, no history given of this design, and the single gun doesn't even have a calibre suggested. Well, here goes. The '*Jaguarundi*' model is 70cm long, and 40 cm wide, it stands 35cm high. It looks to be covered in 'zimmerit' or maybe its hull outer layer's made out of concrete or something similar - don't laugh it's not impossible in the Reich in 1945! The suspension is heavily protected by side skirts and little shows of the roadwheels, there are a couple of small periscope hatches in the roof of the turret, which is conical, a single small vision port for the driver in the left front hull. That's it!

The model looks like an emergency production afv, and to be honest if I was going to use it in WWII, it would have to be with some 28mm German infantry, anything smaller wouldn't look right, sad to say. If you did that, then you'd need some extra-modelling, some spare track cemented across the bow plate, and a few jerricans or tools or bits of tarpaulin on the back. An unditching beam 50mm long cemented on one side would add something to the model's look. There are no decal markings provided either, by the way, though the box art shows the afv sprayed sand overall with wavy patches of dark green and red brown.

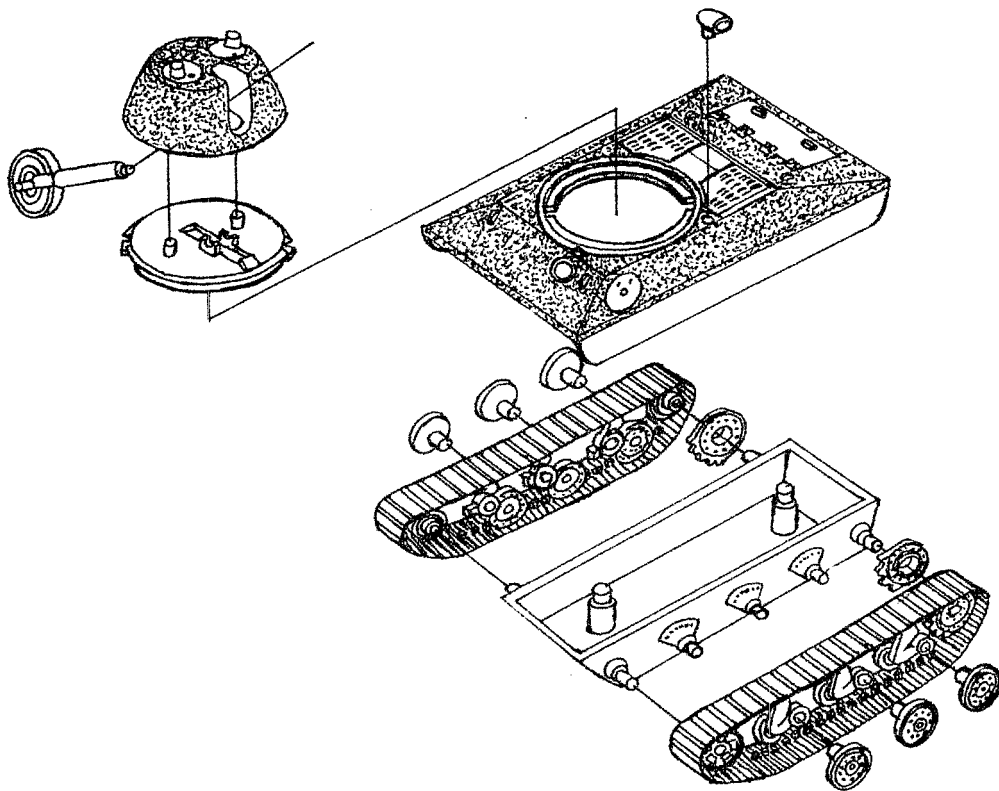
So, there I was, having built two remarkable '*Jaguarundi*' and set them unpainted alongside my *Wehrmacht* survivors, they just didn't fit in at all. A couple of ideas flashed across the 'little grey cells', one was remove the turrets and use them as a new and very rare type of concrete pill-box. Then turning to the hull assembly, plate over the 25mm diameter hull top opening, add a hatch and make this into a prototype fallen on sad times (well you can't get much sadder than losing everything you'd gained since 1939!) and used as an emergency armoured cargo carrier, or even an apc. I thought of mounting a *Nebelwerfer* on top, or a light a/a gun. All possibilities. A turret from another afv perhaps? Used to test the prototype's stability in firing?

Instead of this option, they became Science Fiction afv's, to add to my Dalek army and the other odd items which come out of the box all too rarely. I beefed up the gun by turning it into a much heavier piece with a muzzle-brake and a small ranging weapon a machine gun of sorts cemented above and to it. I could have turned it into anything really: a flamethrower, a 'death-ray,' a rocket launcher, what-ever! The 'gun's' the defining characteristic of the little tank, and what you arm it with really does matter.

Add a few accessories along the back plate. I toyed with a small rocket battery from old smoke launchers on the sloped engine cover. Painted a slightly gaudy green with a few black and light grey patches, it looked much happier in its new role.

A 'post-apocalypse' vehicle it looks, at least to me, and in this guise, given the small size of the two hatches, and the chunky mobile blockhouse appearance, it will fit in with several scales as an SF model, 20mm, 15mm even dare I say it 10mm would look appropriate alongside.

Actually, they look rather attractive in their new role defending the planet.



PEGASUS
HOBBIES

P-245-010 Tanks "Jaguarundi"

NO. 7606