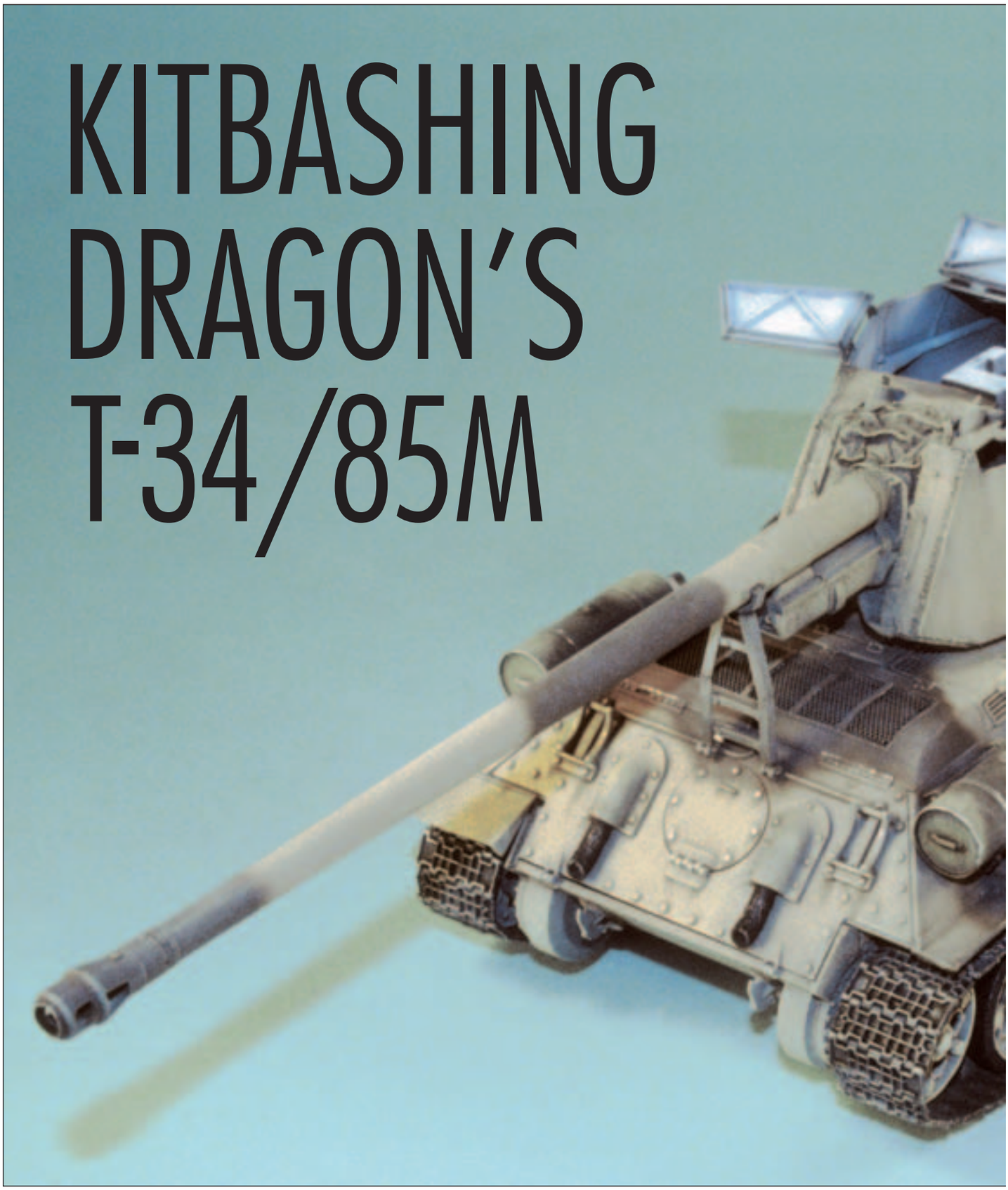
KITBASHING DRAGON'S T-34/85M





Story and photos by Peter Rasmussen

A scratchbuilt turret turns a T-34 into a modern-era tank killer

Combining ICM's 1/35 scale Soviet 100mm anti-tank gun kit (No. 35141) with one of several T-34 kits makes it easy to model a 1970s-vintage Egyptian T-34 (see page 61). I chose a turret from a Tamiya T-34 kit (No. 35149) to top off the hull of a Dragon T-34/85m kit (No. 3318).

Gun and Tamiya turret. I built the ICM anti-tank gun without the wheels and carriage. Then a hobby knife with a saw blade took the roof off the Tamiya turret along the weld seam. I also cut a rectangular hole in the back of the turret and installed the gun, **1**. To avoid damage, I left off the gun barrel until the turret was finished.

Scratchbuilt section. Having made a paper pattern, **2**, for the new turret sections, I cut out the individual parts, and attached them to a sheet of gray .040" styrene with white glue. I scored a line around each piece with a ruler and knife, then immersed the styrene in water to release the patterns. The outlines of the pieces were etched on the sheet, ready to be cut.

Diagonal lines scored down the sides and below the pistol port opening allowed the turret to angle in toward the front, and down to meet the bottom piece of the new turret.

The side, back, and front pieces went together first, with .040" styrene reinforcing strips on the inside of the joints. The roof sections were added next. Sanding the sides of the Tamiya turret improved the adhesion of the scratchbuilt pieces, and I glued the assemblies together, **3**.

The front of the new turret connects where the gun shield would have been attached to the gun cradle. I aligned the bottom edges of the new side pieces with the weld seam of the T-34 turret. The pistol port on each side of the T-34 turret should be at the rearmost position of the pistol port opening of the new turret sides. After adding the front and rear bottom pieces of the new turret, and after the glue had set, I filed the joints at a 45-degree angle.

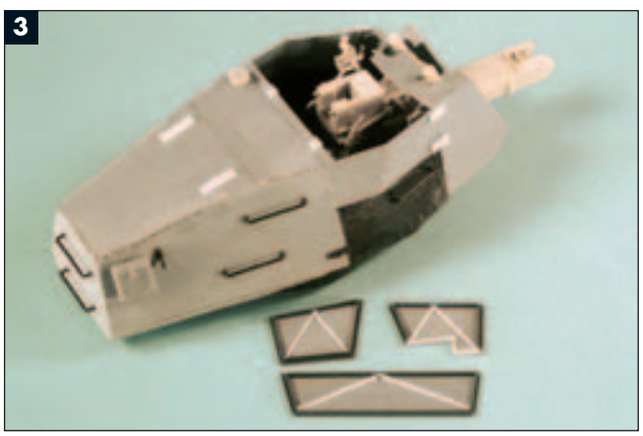
Details. I didn't have any interior photos of a T-34, so I just added seats from my spares box. I filled the two holes in the turret ring with styrene strips, since they would be visible from the top of the tank.

The rearmost turret hatch has hinges made from styrene strips and stretched sprue, **4**. The eight grab handles and lifting

Ready to roll: Peter Rasmussen's T-34 has its turret facing to the rear for travel. He combined parts from three kits with some sheet and strip styrene to create the version used by Egypt during the 1970s.



The carriage for the 100mm gun was installed after the Tamiya kit's turret roof and rear were removed.



Peter made hinges from stretched sprue and styrene. He simulated weld beads with an etching iron.



Grab handles and lifting hooks come from the Tamiya kit; the antenna is stretched sprue cemented to the square styrene plate.

hooks came from the Tamiya kit. The periscope is from the spares box, although one can be salvaged from the turret roof. It was mounted on a square piece of sheet styrene. Two sets of hinges were added to the turret sides.

To simulate weld beads, I used an etching iron (similar to a soldering iron, but smaller) that I purchased at an art store. A light tapping motion made weld beads at all of the seams.

On the right side of the turret there is a box with a lid and a hinge. I used part A-6 from the Dragon kit; part A-35 from the ICM kit will also work.

I cut the hatches from sheet styrene and framed them with Plastruct L beams and strips. It was time to glue in the gun barrel; while it was drying, I made the gun dust cover, **5**, from facial tissue with paper strips fitted around the ends. After the cover was glued in place I used a toothpick to "work" the tissue to proper shape. The nuts that secure the dust cover are made from stretched sprue.

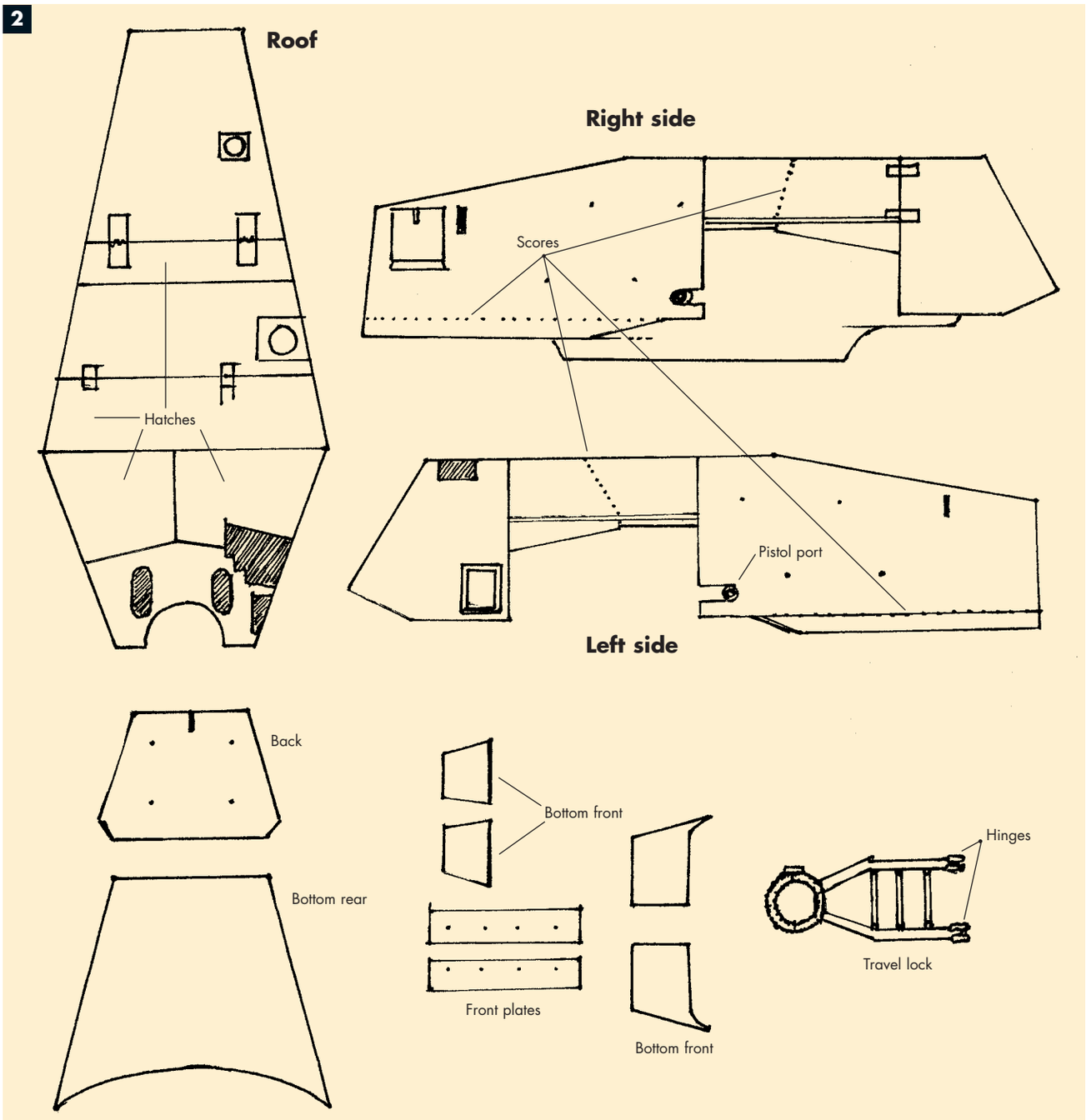
A small lifting hook, made from stretched sprue formed around wire, was attached to the turret rear above the grab handles. The small square attachment on the right front side of the turret was made from styrene strips.

Hull modifications. The only changes I made to the hull were to replace the screen on the engine deck and to add a locking arm for the barrel.

I replaced the plastic engine screen (Dragon part B-15) with a diamond-shaped metal screen cut from a sheet purchased from the railroad section of a hobby shop. It was super glued in place and reinforced with styrene strips.

I made the locking arm from 1/16" L-beam strips and 1/16" T-beam strips glued together, using the pattern, **2**, to ensure accurate construction. The circular clamp was made from a gun-travel lock I found in the spare parts box.

Finish. Flat medium gray Tamiya acrylic paint was my primer, followed by white for the turret's interior. I sprayed Tamiya dark brown into the corners and edges of the super-



Meet Peter Rasmussen

Peter began modeling at age 7 with a Matchbox 1/72 scale Panther tank. "I was hooked!" he says. The Thunder Bay, Ontario teacher returned to modeling about 10 years ago following a hiatus for high school and college.

Peter's modeling interests include military vehicles, 1/32 scale aircraft, and an occasional car. He's married with two young daughters; the eldest accompanies him on trips to the hobby shop.

About the T-34

The Russian T-34 has served various armies for more than 60 years. Its reliable chassis has been used on specialized applications such as self-propelled guns, armored recovery, and air-defense vehicles.

The Egyptian T-34/100 tank destroyer is probably the most impressive-looking version. It was built in the 1970s to extend the service life of Egypt's aging T-34s and to add mobility to its artillery and anti-tank guns.

– Peter Rasmussen



Note that the recoil cylinders pass through the turret roof. The dust cover is facial tissue shaped with a toothpick.



Peter used pastels to add fuel stains to the tanks, as well as rust and dirt streaks to the vehicle. The T-34 was dry-brushed with Humbrol enamels.

structure and on the hull bottom, tracks, and road wheels.

Allowing some of the dark brown paint to show through an overall spray of sand yellow (Tamiya XF-59 plus XF-57) added dimension. Then I applied a camouflage pattern of Tamiya khaki drab, sprayed in large swatches, **6**. A light coat of the sand yellow mixed with a small amount of white gave the paint the faded effect I wanted. I applied a wash, left it to dry, and dry-brushed the vehicle with Humbrol enamels, **7**.

I didn't need any fancy equipment to complete this conversion – just careful measuring and cutting. I used basic techniques but still came up with something that's a bit different. If you can cut a straight line using a ruler and hobby knife, this project is for you. **FSM**

REFERENCES

Armour of the Middle East Wars 1948-78 Steven Zaloga, Osprey Publishing, London, 1989

T-34/85 Medium Tank 1944-94 Steven Zaloga, Osprey Publishing, London, 1996

Tank Magazine (now **Ground Power**) Vol. 18 No. 2

SOURCES

Styrene sheet and strip Plastruct, 1020 S. Wallace Place, City of Industry, CA 91748, 818-912-7016

Dragon T-34/85m kit (No. 3318) distributed by Marco Polo Imports, 532 S. Coralridge Place, City of Industry, CA 91746, 626-333-2328, www.marcopoloimport.com

Tamiya T-34 kit (No. 35149), paint Tamiya, 2 Orion, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656-4200, 800-826-9422, www.tamiyausa.com

ICM 100mm anti-tank gun kit (No. 35141), Humbrol enamels Squadron Mail Order, 1115 Crowley Dr., Carrollton, TX 75011-5010, 972-242-8663, www.squadron.com



The tracks are black, lightened with an overspray of sand yellow and dry-brushed with silver. The exhaust pipes were textured by adding flour to the dark brown paint and dry-brushing with aluminum.