

Flakpanzer Ostwind (East Wind)



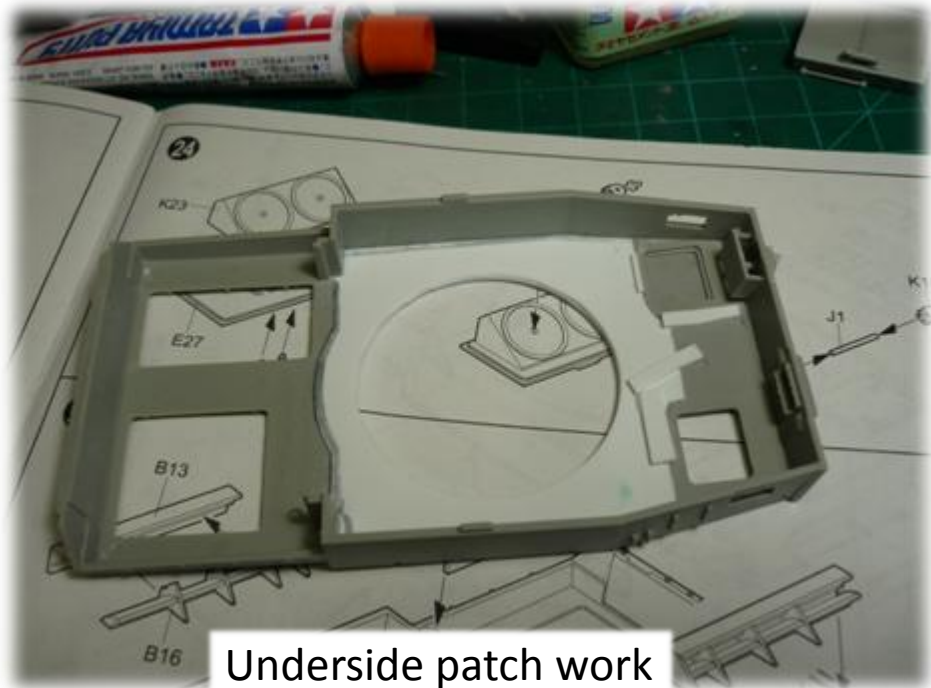
The “Ostwind” was the last of a series of Flakpanzers (anti-aircraft tanks) based on the Panzer IV chassis to enter production, albeit in very small numbers. The “Ostwind” carried a single 3.7cm FlaK43 gun, which was rather more effective than the less powerful 2cm guns of the “Wirbelwind”, and also needed less space in the turret, as well as only needing a crew of two (gunner and loader) in place of the gunner and two loaders of the quadruple guns. Like the “Wirbelwind” the “Ostwind” had a distinctive angular turret, this time six sided, and with the gun emerging from a slot in the pointed front of the turret. After trials in July, on 18 August 1944 Ostbau were given a contract to produce 100 “Ostwind”. Less than half of these vehicles would be produced – the first fifteen of the eventual total of forty-three were completed in December 1944, far too late to have any impact on the war.

The Trumpeter 1/35 kit has received some brutal reviews. As you’ve probably guessed they are related to the accuracy of the subject. The kit is basically the prototype version, but what I think has been missed by many is that this kit is a steal for what you get, and in the end it’s not that hard to convert it into the production version. The kit also includes a full interior and engine details.

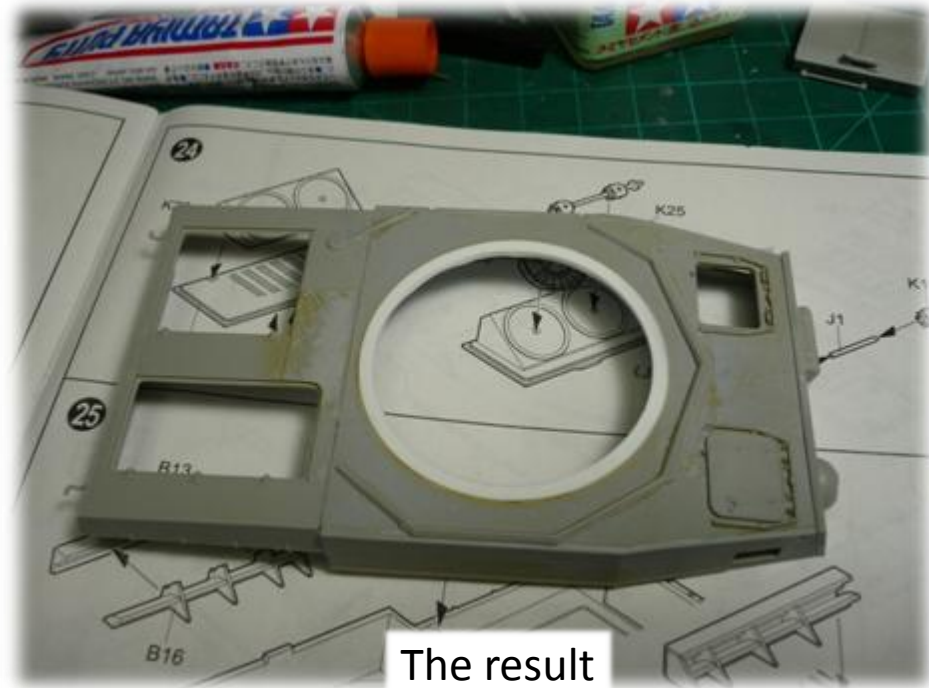
So although this isn’t a full build article I’ll show you what I did to convert it to the production variant. I used the Nuts & Bolts volume 25 (Flakpanzer IV) as my reference source. The book covers the Wirbelwind (Funnel wind/tornado), Ostwind and the Kugelblitz (Spherical/ball lighting). It does however not cover the Möbelwagen (Moving truck).

Let's start off with one of the biggest inaccuracies, the upper hull. The hull appears to be accurate if it were to build a Wirbelwind, not an Ostwind. There are 2 things that need to be corrected, the location of the turret ring and the location of the right hand side front hatch (machine gunners location). Although by no means do I consider myself accomplished at conversions, both of these things were simple to fix.

For the turret ring location I used some thick card and cut out a circle with an Olfa circle cutter. The top hull was cut away and the new turret ring was glued in place 5mm forward of its' original location. I then joined the drivers hatch back in place and then located the right hatch in-line with the drivers hatch. Mr. Surfacer dabbed on with an old paint brush blended everything back in and created a nice surface texture. The shot deflector also needed to be carefully cut away from the original hull top and glued back.



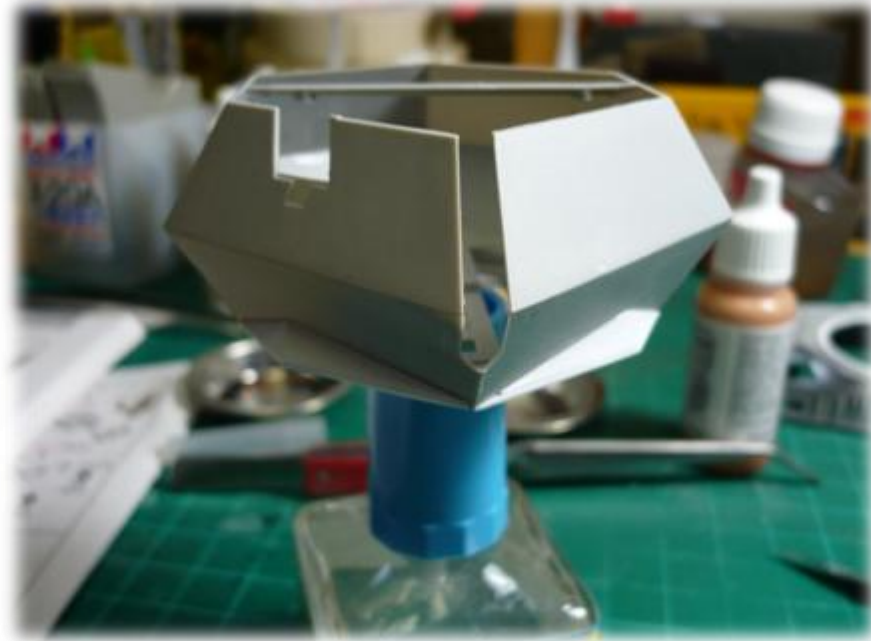
Underside patch work



The result

On the turret Trumpeter also supplies the prototype version, however there's another easy fix required. I used plastic card to build shot deflectors at the front of the turret. This won't take any time to fabricate.

Missing shot deflector



Individual track links are included and the tracks were fully assembled in preparation for painting. Although you could probably make a decent looking barrel from the plastic item Trumpeter supplies, I chose to replace it with a Lion Roar item. Note the interior has been painted at this point.



And here's the final product (minus the radio antenna which I just noticed missing). As I don't build much armour I tried a number of new techniques. Filters, oils, pigments, etc. Generally I'm pleased with the outcome and will hopefully improve my results on my next armour subject.



Near the end of the build I also decided to add a wire basket which caught/deflected the spent shells. I scratch built this item with plastic rod and fine wire mesh. The gun was painted steam power black and then coated with MIG gun metal pigment which was then fixed in place with their setting product. Some aluminum dry brushing finished everything off.



Some interior shots.





MIG pigments mixed with plaster of Paris were utilised for the mud on the lower hull.

