

Review 1:144

Arrowhead Miniatures 88mm PaK43 Price per gun: £5.99

Hello everyone.

This review is on one of the miniatures in the 'Arrowhead Miniatures' 1/144 scale World War 2 range.

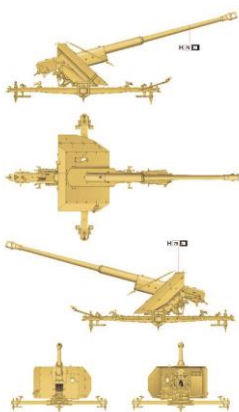
I must here admit that I have a very high regard for Arrowhead Miniatures, both as a company, and the products they make. The miniatures are 'true' 1/144 scale and the quality of the casting is excellent, and almost without exception, the amount of 'flash' is minimal. But... and it's worth mentioning that some of them are a bit 'fiddly' if you have fat fingers!

This model is a case in point...

You can make it as either 'limbered' or deployed. Parts for both are included, as well as a four man crew. The manufacturer expects you to do the research on how to put it together, something which might put some off, and, in my opinion, a minor element which would be better added than left out, when the quality of the model as a whole is taken into account. But let's face it, Google is your friend, and in this case it's just as well.



A quick search on the internet revealed this plan.



As this is a white metal model, I find the best adhesive is 'superglue'. You have probably discovered yourself that superglue comes in different strengths, (though you will not see it mentioned on the packaging), and really it's a case of... higher the price, quicker the stick. (I must say that I am quite happy with cheap glue for this, as it means if I make a mistake, I have at least a few moments to notice and rectify before an embarrassing trip to A&E and the explanations to bemused nurses that would follow.

Ok... so in this review I am going to make the model in its deployed mode. The wheels and axles, along with the tow bar will not be required initially.

The cruciform platform on which the gun is positioned was the obvious starting point. The modelling board with its centimetre squares aided the 'squaring up' of the platform. Make sure you do not glue the legs upside down here. Obviously, I didn't at first... ahem. (And let's face it, I should have known better!)





The gun and its mount were no problem, but the connecting holes for the gun carriage to slot into needed gently pushing outwards, and after, pushing back in place. Only then did I lightly glue the tabs in place. It is a bit fiddly, but worth your patience here. But with this done, the huge size of this weapon, even in this scale, starts to become clear.

At this point, I suggest you do NOT glue the gun to the platform... there is more 'fiddly' to be done!

The shield is the next part to be glued. Here, it is well worth looking closely at the plan, to see that the angle is about 50 degrees or more. It takes a bit of experimentation to see what it looks like before you commit yourself to applying (again, lightly) to the forward edge of the cradle of the gun. Still do not glue the gun to the platform yet.



The reason not to glue the gun to the base yet is that the mantlet still needs to be placed on the front of the shield. It takes a bit of careful placing, and it's a good idea to very lightly glue the mantlet before using tweezers to carefully slide it along the gun. It is a careful job... you do not want excess glue on the model now.



Now, if you wish, you may glue the gun to the platform.



The next task is to glue the limber wheels to the limber axles. There is a 'front' and 'back' to the wheels, so don't get caught out here! The smaller of the 'prong like fixings' is the gun retaining clamp when on the move, the second and larger is the tow bar. See the second diagram for how to affix them to the limber axles.



Now we are ready to undercoat the parts and crew. Until recently I often used either a rattle can or airbrush to apply matt black as the base. The problem with the rattle can is that the paint can 'spot', which is not such a problem with larger scale figures and vehicles, but with the fine detail on the

smaller scale models, can cause them to lose 'definition'. If you have a good airbrush (such as an Aztek) you can do small jobs such as this (relatively) painlessly, but in my experience, for these small jobs the good old paintbrush is probably your best friend.

But what colour to use for your base? It really is down to individual preference... some like matt white, some, matt black. I have recently been trying a black grey, (Valejo 168) lightly diluted which I find pleasing.



Before I go any further, you need to know that I have no pretensions towards being a great painter of figures and models. A friend of mine, ever diplomatic, referred to my painting of thousands of 15mm figures for a recreation of the Battle of Barnet at a Wargames Convention, as 'artistic'... by which he meant 'journeyman'. My back is broad. I can take it.

So, with the above in mind, let's move forward. OK... the undercoat is on (for that really is what it is) and dry, the choice is whether crew or gun next. I am going to do the first coat on the gun.

Valejo do a version of the base yellow of late war German equipment (German C. Beige, 103) but, and here I do claim bragging rights, I have a piece of a German halftrack, pulled from a hedge on Hill 112 in Normandy in the 1990s, (yes, if you looked hard, you could still find stuff even then) so I can, with some authority, say that the Valejo colour is close... but not quite there. The colour I use is Tamiya Dark Yellow. (xf-60) Neither is as dark as my original 'sample', but both being lighter, whichever you choose; give a good effect on the wargames table.



The first coat is diluted at about 90% paint, 10% water. It makes the paint flow better as otherwise Tamiya acrylics can be a bit 'claggy'. The paint covers the model well and sets things up well for the second, and final dark yellow coat.

So, while this coat is drying, why have I included the limber axles? The answer is that on the base that I will be making for the model, these two items will add a little 'colour', or so I hope!

The other thing to do while the model is drying is painting the crew.

This photo shows the crew after painting the helmets... Valejo Dark Grey, 166. Then a dry brushing of the uniform... Valejo Ger Fieldgrey WW2, 102 Hopefully, if you look carefully you can see the colour contrasts.



Next will be the ranging binoculars and hand held binoculars... Tamiya Dark yellow. Then for faces and hands Valejo medium flesh, 021. (Some people tint faces and hands. I don't, but I'm not stopping you!)

The last bits are the first, 88mm ammunition, Valejo Brass, 174 for the case, and Valejo glossy Black, 170 for the AP round itself. The glossy black is also used for boots and belts.



That's as far as you can go with that for a while now.

Back to the PaK43. Now that the second coat has been applied, diluted slightly again, and time given for it to dry, we are nearly there. The wheels now need their rubber wheels painted... Tamiya Rubber Black, xf-85.



Then it gets a bit interesting as there is a choice to be made. From a wargames point of view, on the table your model will look fine, but it is tempting to want to add a bit of contrast.

This means that you could use a wash... (I use AK wash for DAK vehicles), but if you do not have access to this then a VERY dilute acrylic black will do the job, but it really is a gamble as to how dilute you make it. (My advice, err on the side of caution... very dilute indeed!) You want it to look like oil and general grime has stained the exposed areas, and not 'factory fresh'.

Assuming the result is ok, you can get the finishing element done now. Dry brush – lightly, the gun and limber axles with Valejo Buff, 120.

Now to the base for the model. This is a very big anti tank gun. Usually the base size would be for 'The War on the Ground' rules, 4x3cm with the 4cm side being the frontage. But with this gun it's going to be 4cm frontage, and 6cm depth. The crew are placed in position using PVA... I suggest you just place the gun on the base loosely so that you can locate the crew without any future embarrassments of the gun not actually fitting on the base! And make sure you leave space at the back for the limber axles.





Once the figures are dry on the base, paint PVA on it, and then place it in the Base Medium, which will give a textured surface on which to work. If you wish the axles may be placed now, (as you can see) or wait until the base is completed, and glue them on then.



Nearly there now... the base needs to be painted, I use Valejo Green Brown, 114, after many experiments, but it depends on your own preference... and desert or winter bases would need to be different. I do advise that if you are going to experiment that you make a few bases with no figures on them, and work from there!



Then, when the paint is dry, dry brush with Valejo Off White, 004. The result you can see here.

The last 'embellishment' is to add static flock, and possibly a tuft of grass or other vegetation.



So there you have it. This, like all Arrowhead miniatures I have seen, and constructed, is a quality product. I can hardly wait to take on my first Sherman with this beast on the wargames table!

