



## Special Feature Article

Specials

Beach Master 6 June 1944

1:35 scale

with

Steve Noble

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A note from Geoff C...

Do take a look at Steve's individual build of the Tamiya Churchill Mk.VII AVRE Conversion in [Armour-Finished Now-Tamiya...](#)

Over to you Steve...

## Beach Master, 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944

### The Idea...

The following diorama was created to represent the activities of the Beach Party members who were so essential in marshalling materials, equipment and men off the crowded beaches of Normandy on D Day. Made up of teams Navy and Army personnel they played a vital row in the success of the day.

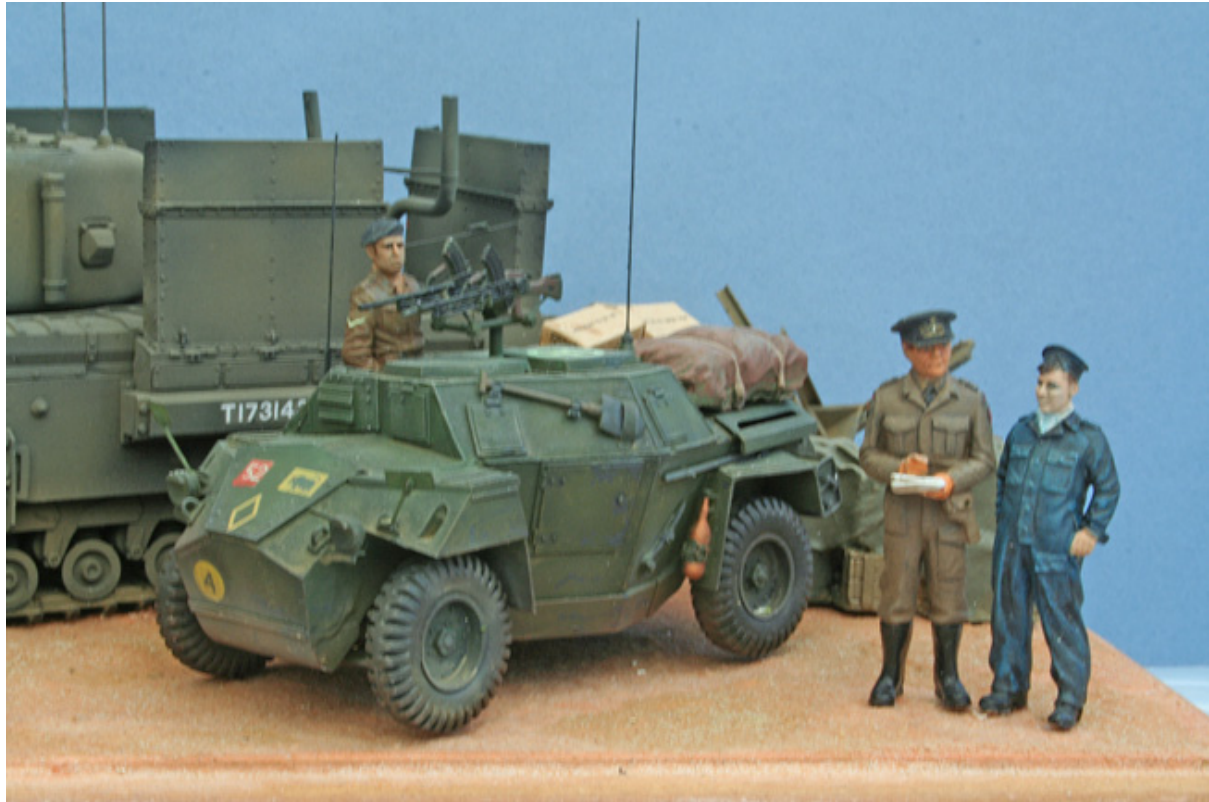
Set out on a simple base, the scene shows a Beach Party in the process of directing vehicles off the beach. The naval officer is a Cheshire Volunteers figure (out of production) along with two sovereign 2000 figures. The seaman is a conversion using a hornet head.

The Humber scout car is a SKP mode straight from the box while the Churchill AVRE is a fairly extensive conversion of a Tamiya Churchill using commercial parts and some scratch-building. Assembly of the AVRE is described in more detail at the end of the article.

Given the uncomplicated nature the description of the diorama is minimal.



The Seaman is in the process of receiving instructions from the Beach Master while the MP directs traffic (out of view).







### **AVRE Conversion...**

Borne out of the failure of the Dieppe raid, a number of key lessons were learnt. The raid had shown that to successfully land on a heavily defended shore, troops, tanks and support vehicles would need to overcome seawalls, tank traps and ditches, demolish strong points and beach obstacles, clear minefields as well as cross unsuitable ground if encountered.

The task of coming up with solutions and operating them fell to the 79<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division under the command of General Percy Hobart. A vehicle was needed that could not only carry the equipment needed but also protect the teams of engineers that would put it in place to overcome the above obstacles.

The solution was to modify a number of Churchill tanks fitted with attachment points capable of carrying mobile bridges, facines, a carpet-layer to cross soft ground and a mortar capable of firing demolition charges. Converting Mark III and IV Churchill tanks, the Armoured Vehicle, Royal Engineers (AVRE) was developed and proved highly successful.

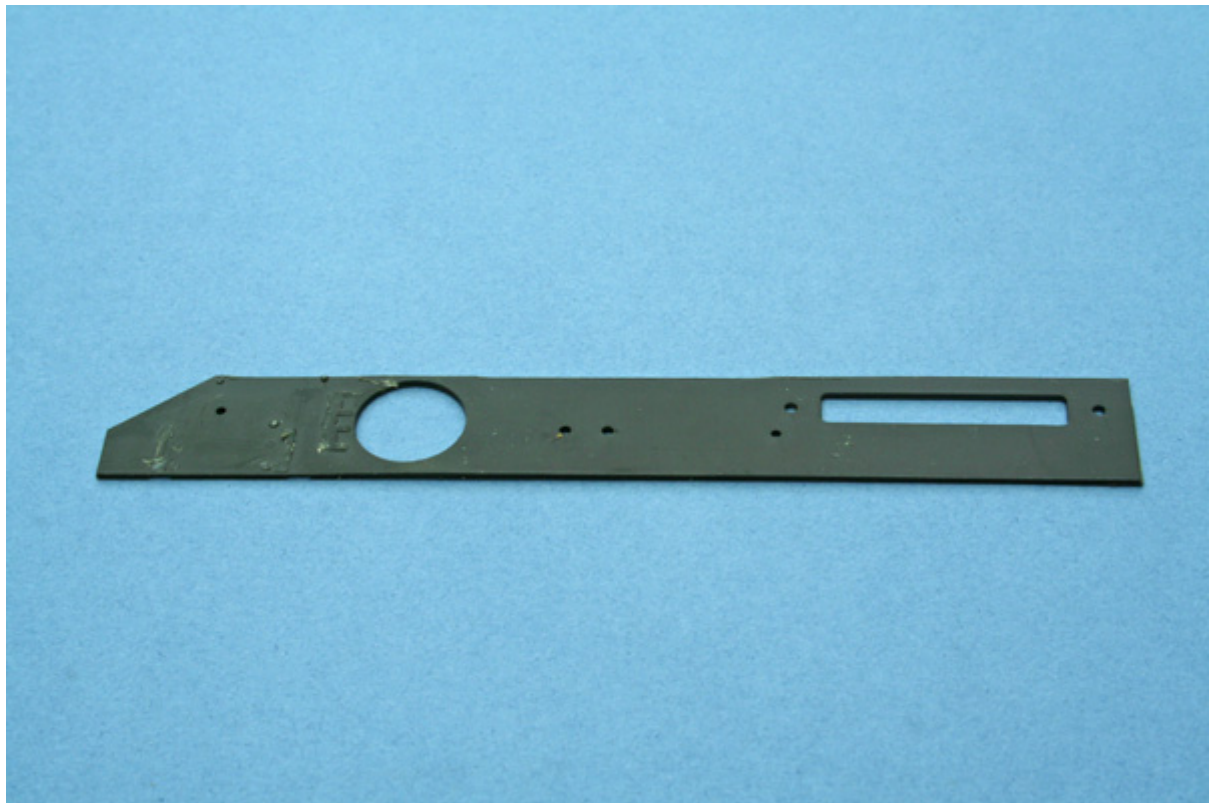
### **Choosing a Kit...**

A number of manufacturers have released kits of the Churchill AVRE recently. Instead I opted for a conversion having picked up the parts needed for £25 at a

Bring and Buy sale to backdate Tamiya's Mark VII gun tank taken from my existing stock. The parts included Resicast's wading set, IMA Mark III conversion set and KK Casting's turret. Attachment brackets, a key feature were scratch-built.

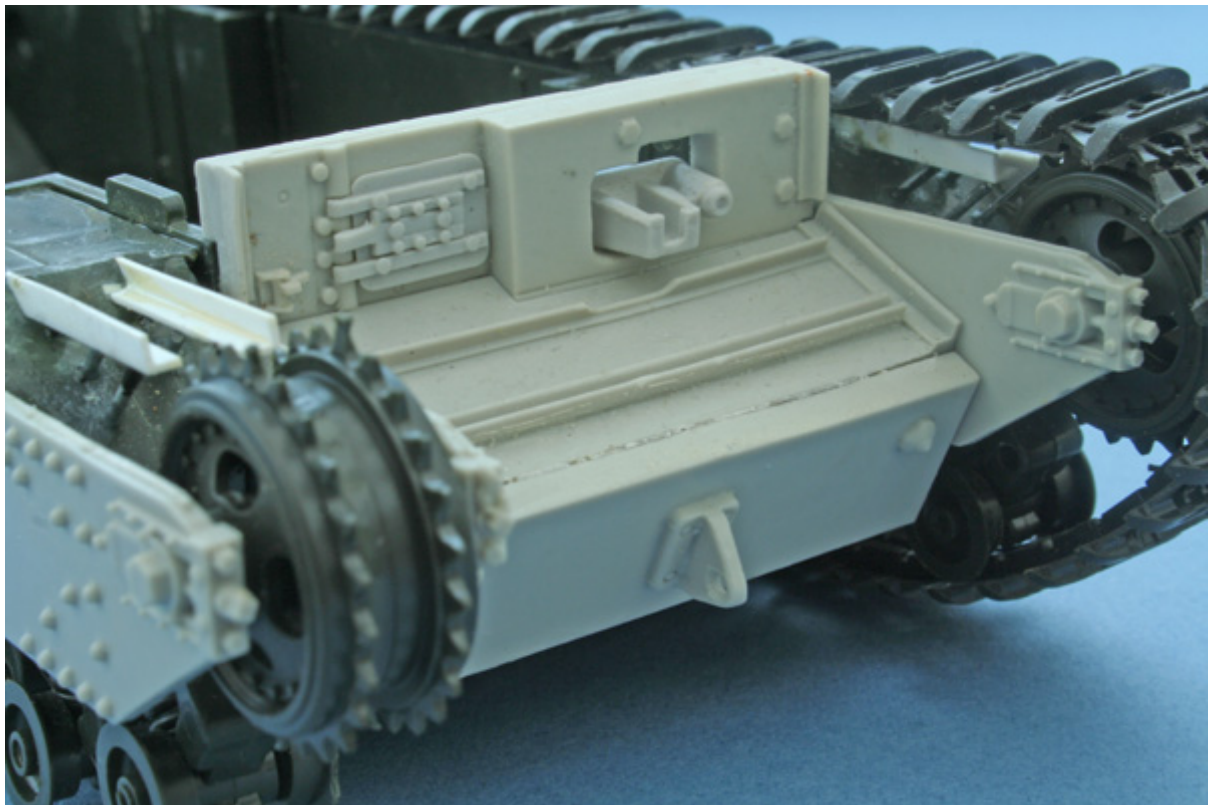
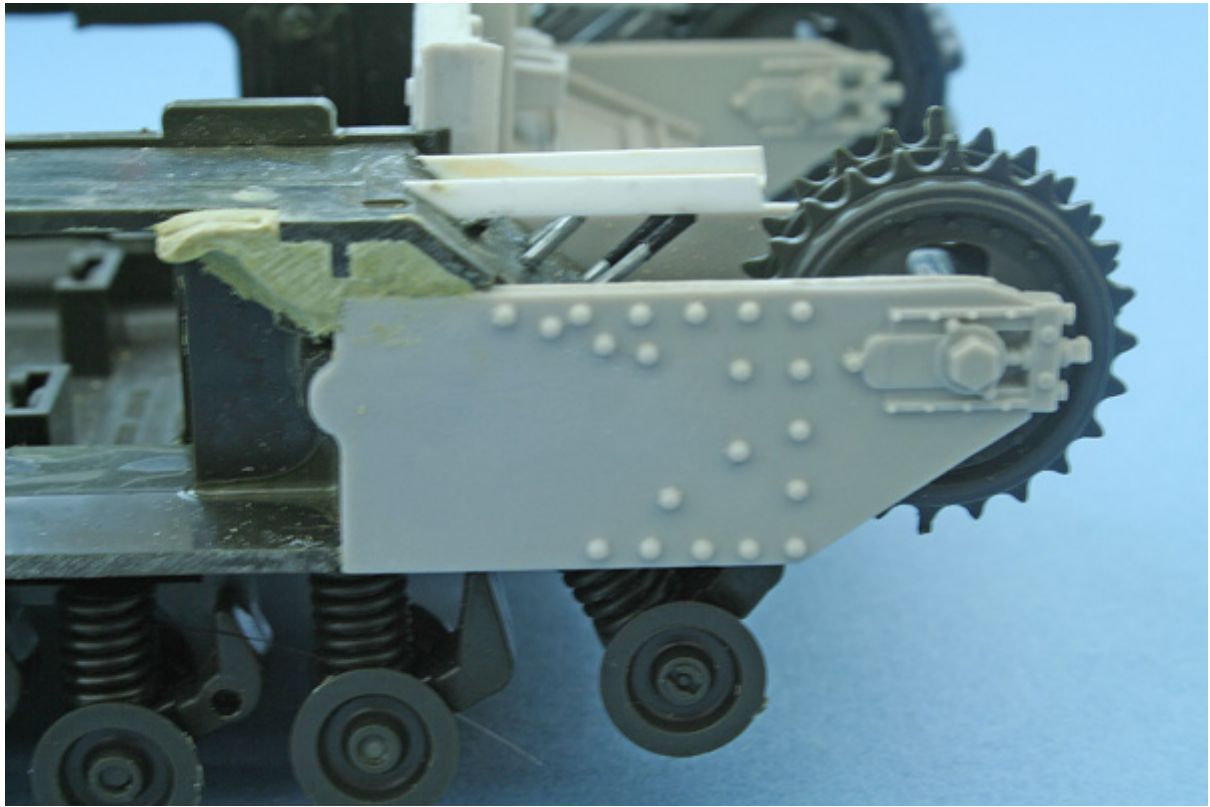


The base kit chosen was the Tamiya kit shown above.

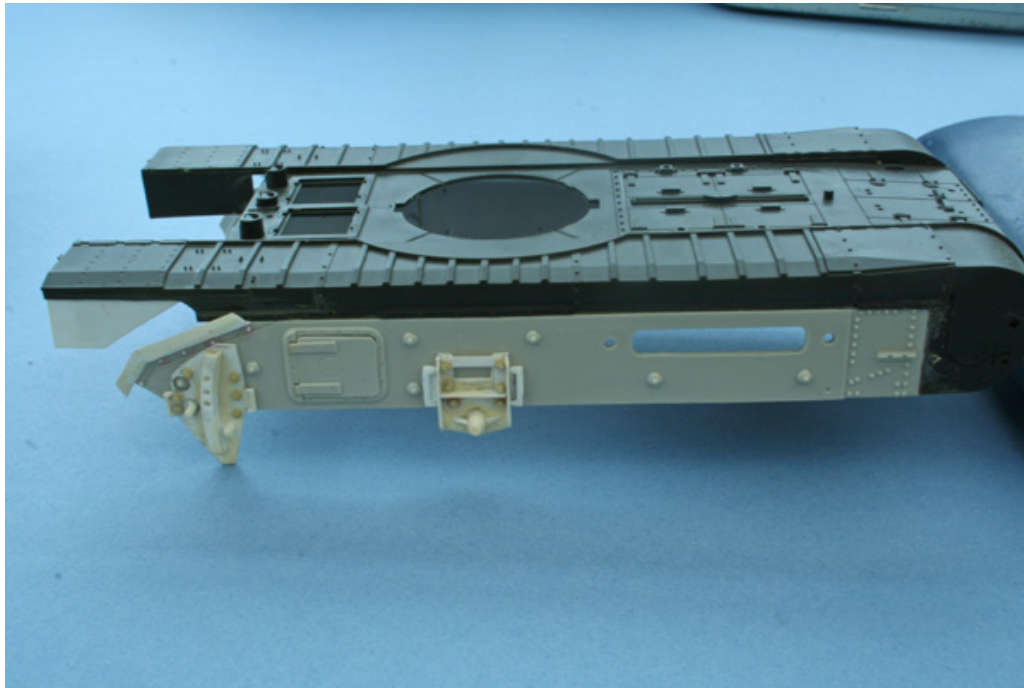




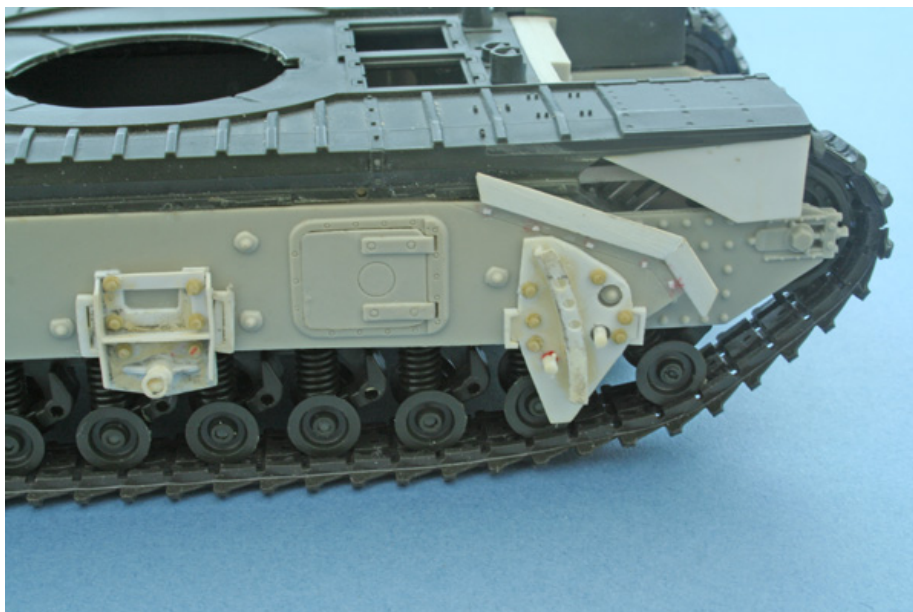
The first step was to backdate the hull. Using the IMA parts as a guide, the hull had the side armour removed by repeatedly scoring along convenient joint lines with a craft knife until the section came free.



The IMA “horns” for the sprocket wheel shown in place with scratch-built parts for the mud chutes

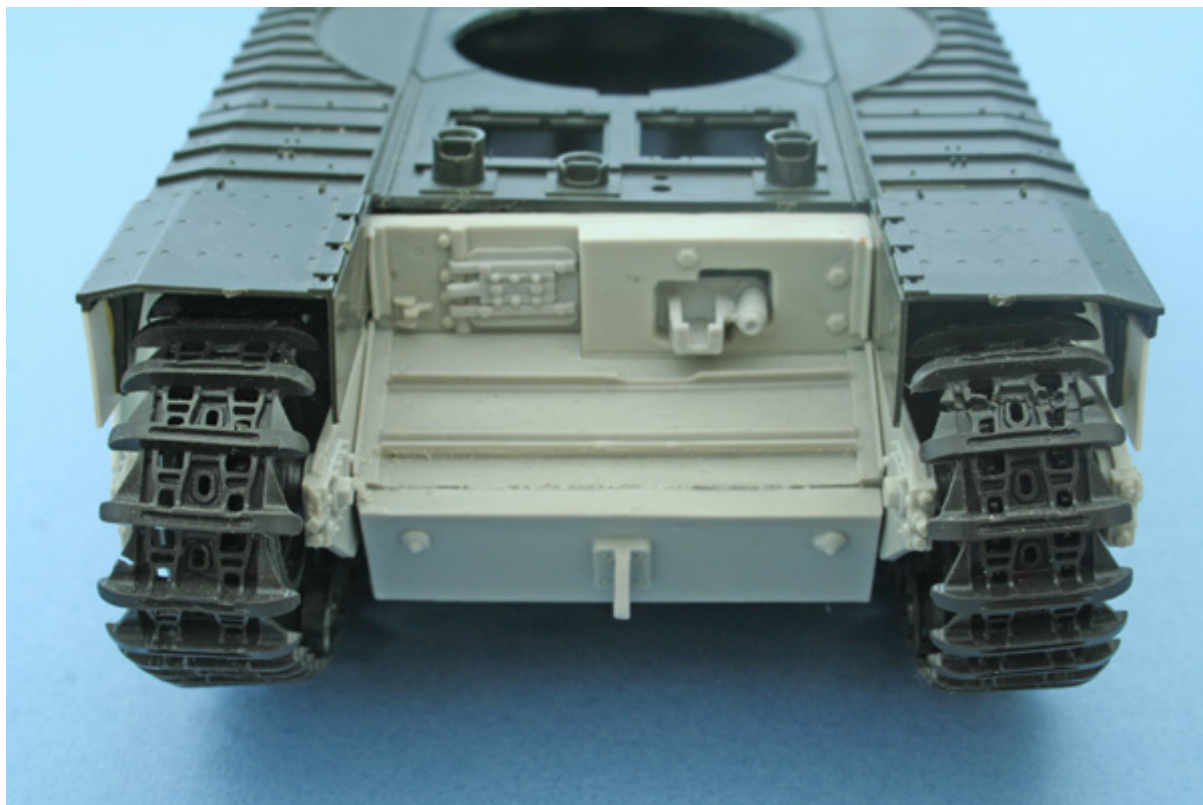


The IMA side armour in place shows the key differences with square escape hatch and large conical bolts along the side. The attachment brackets were scratch-built from plans and detailed with bolt heads from Verlinden. Note the 3 periscopes, one to be removed later.

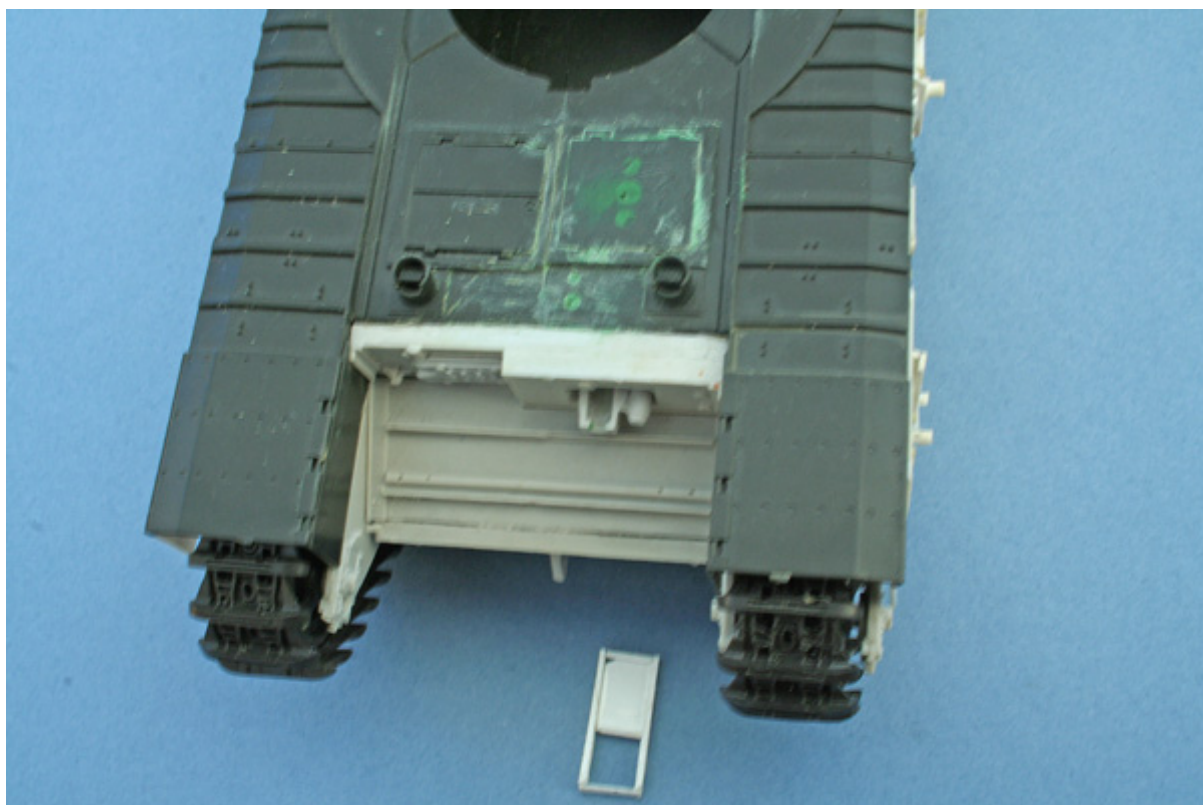


The attachment brackets in detail with changes to the mudguard profile and mud chute



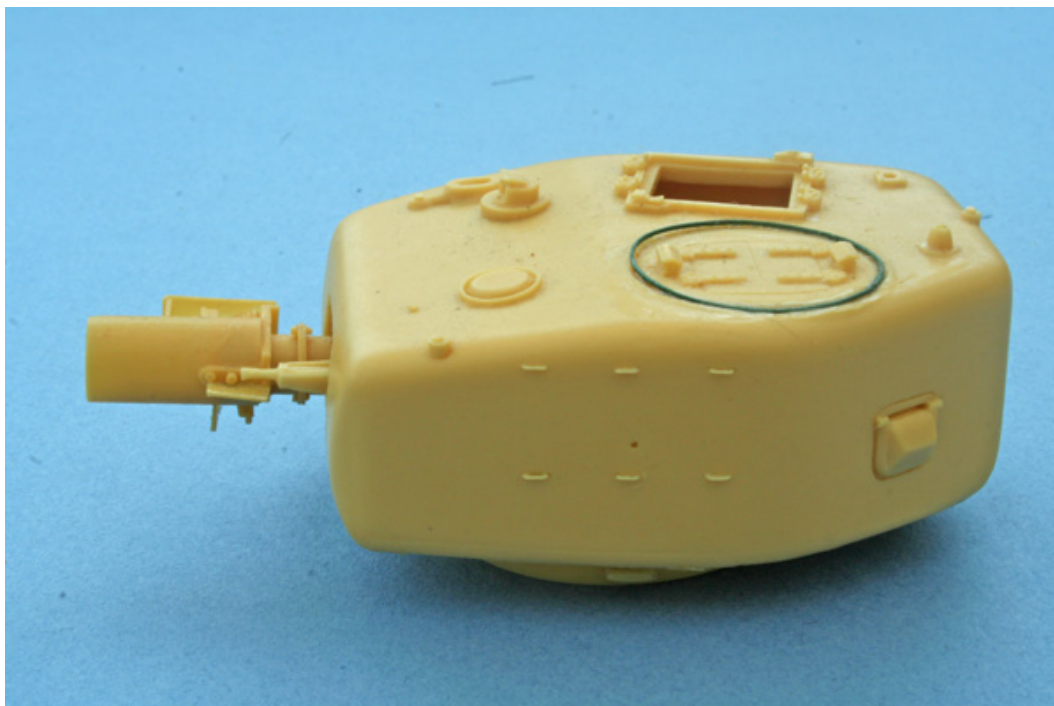


The front hull parts are straight replacements for the kit parts

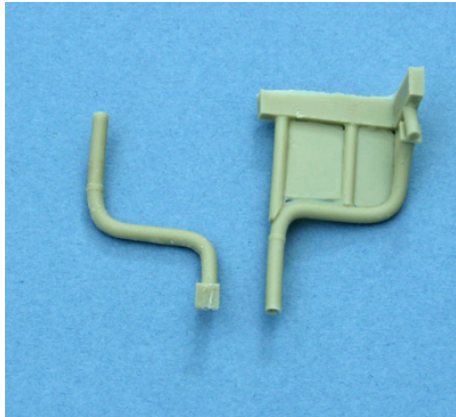




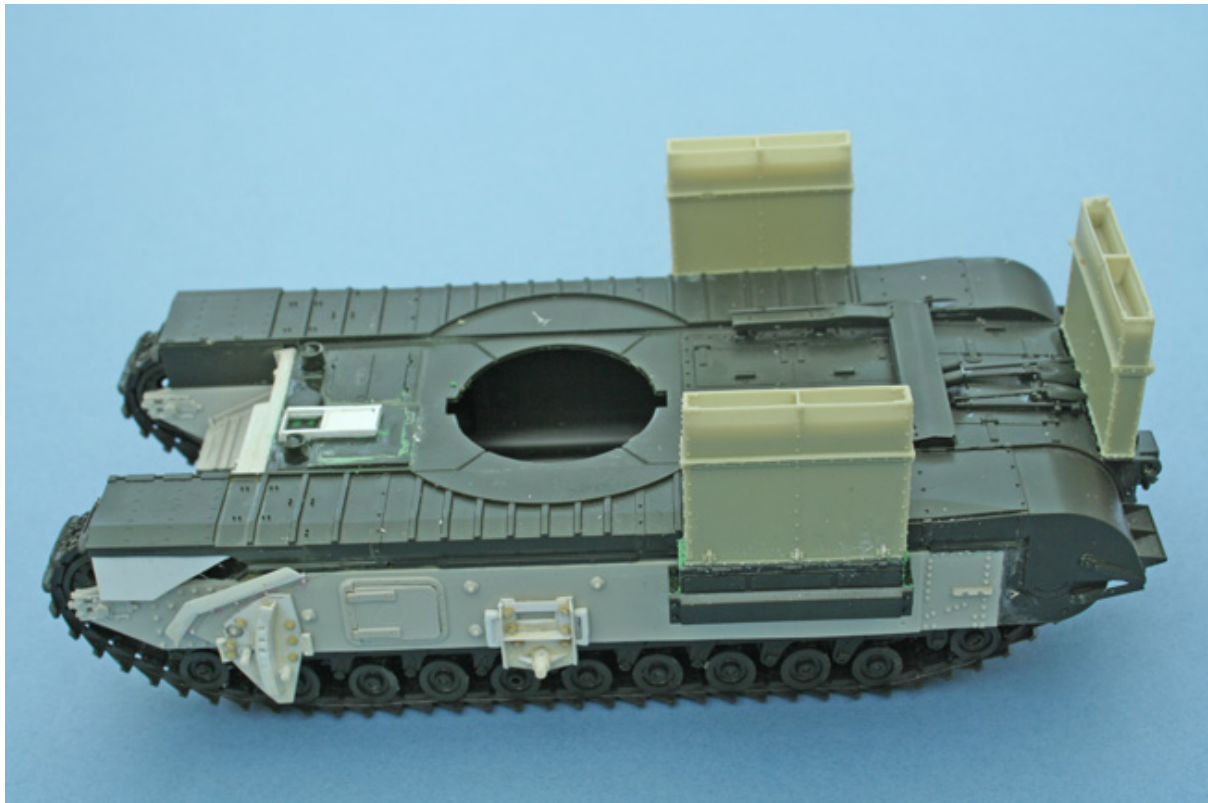
The middle periscope was removed and the driver's hatch put in place. The tank was armed with a Spigot mortar firing a demolition charge which was loaded from inside the tank via a sliding hatch replacing the hatch for the hull gunner. The kit hatch was reversed to fill the gap and the new hatch glued into place.



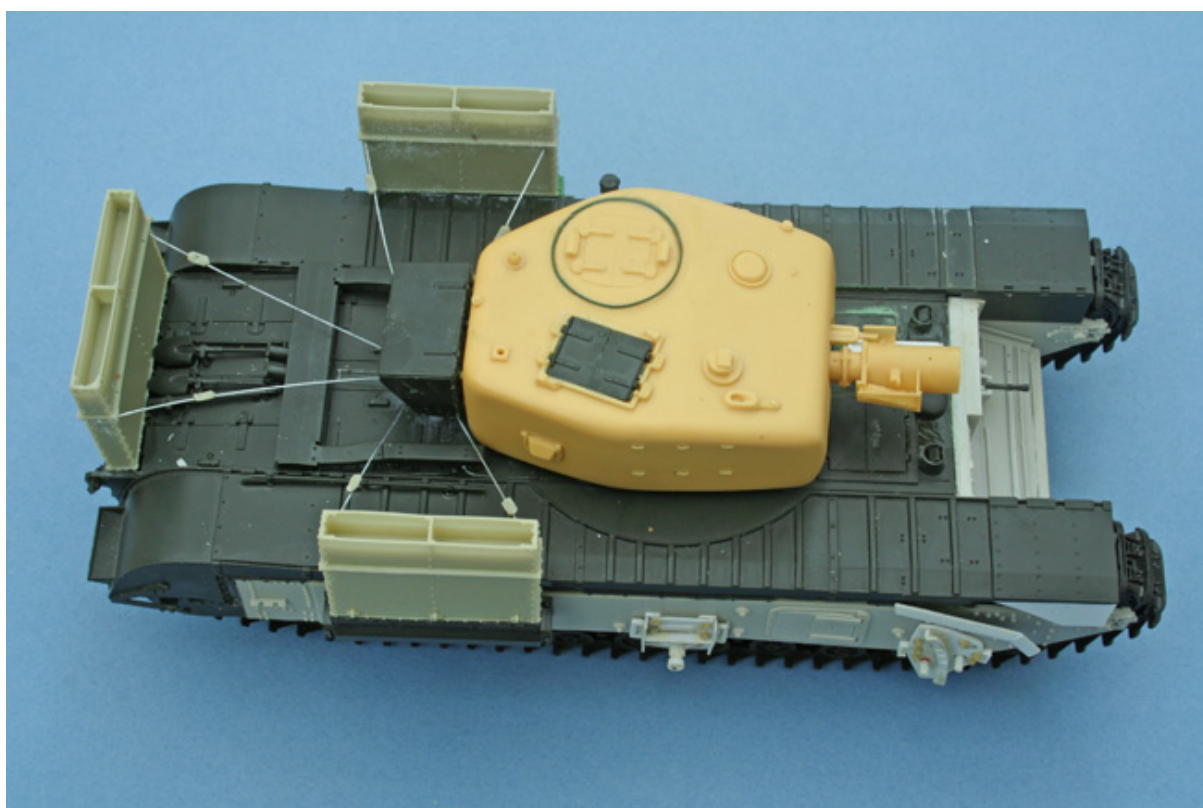
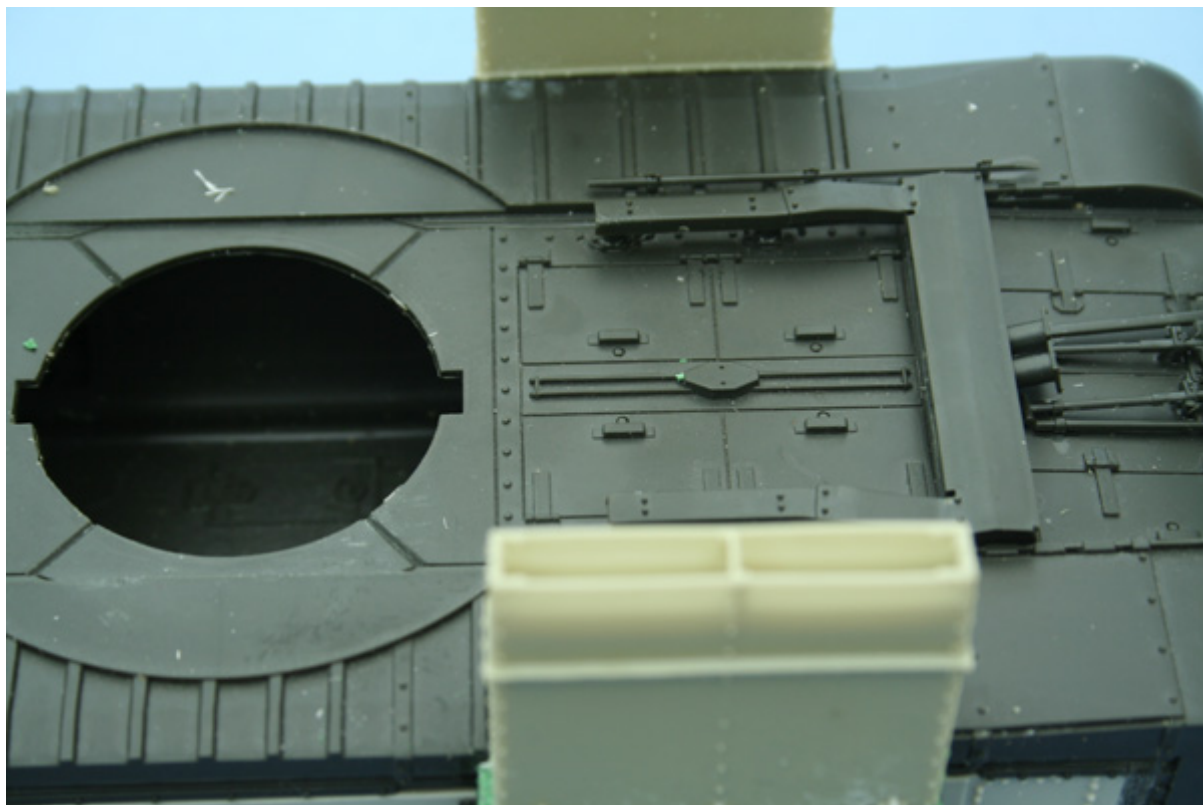
The KK Casting turret was a straightforward assembly. It is important to cut off the locating lugs as with the deep wading vents in place the turret cannot be fitted.



As with all resin parts the casting blocks and supports must be carefully removed to leave the casting on the left.

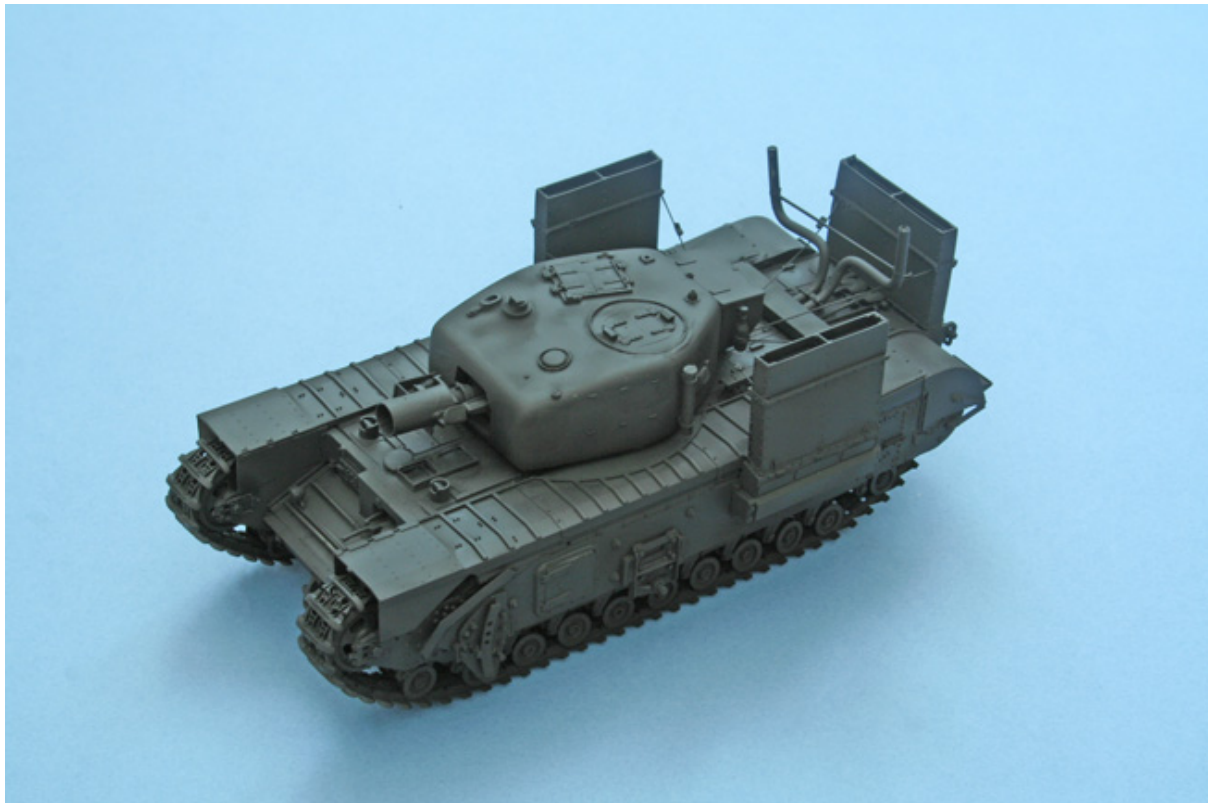
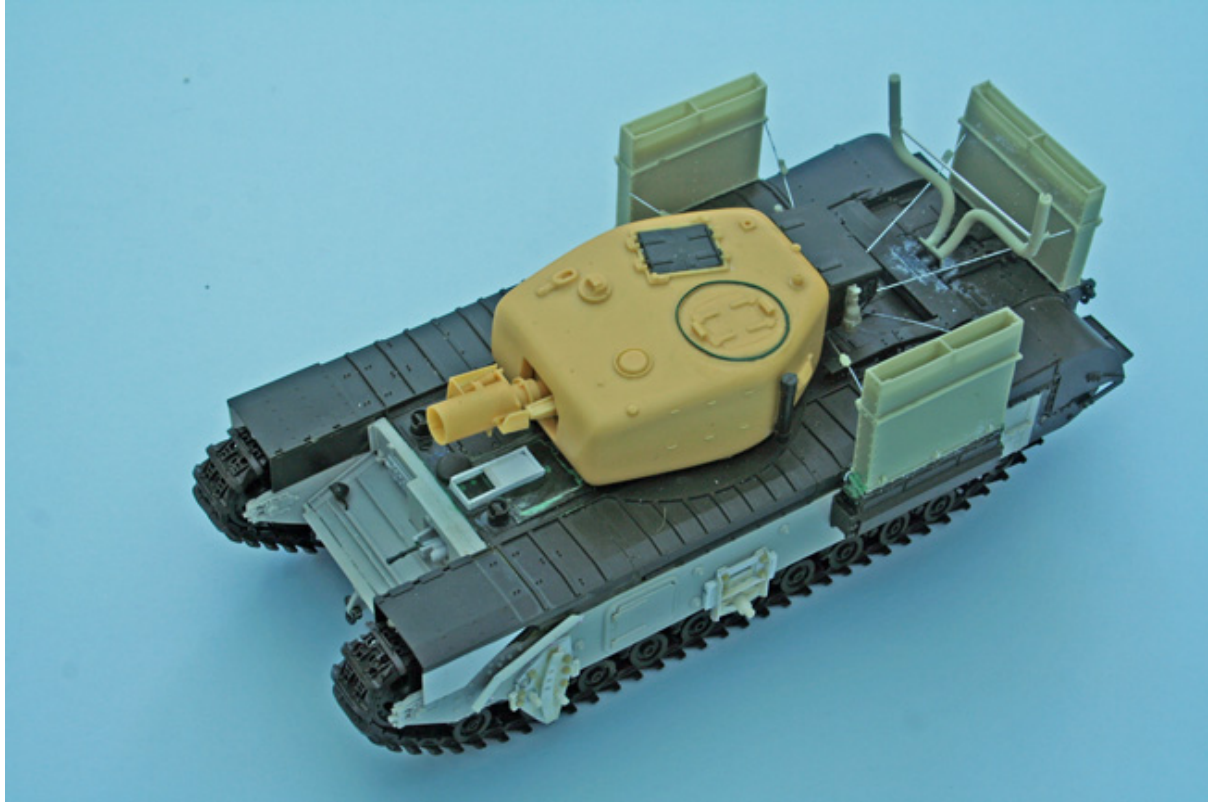


Fitting the Resicast deep wading equipment aligned well with the kit parts.





The exhaust and intake pipes and vents need braces which were cut from garden wire. This was the most difficult part of the build as if not straight the brace does not look convincing..



The whole vehicle was undercoated black. A light overspray of Humbrol American Dark Green was followed by a shade lightened with 25% Khaki then khaki in a cloud pattern always leaving behind some of the previous colours.





Decals applied, the model awaits being mounted on a simple base.





Steve N.