

TABLE TOP BATTLES

Semi-Tracked Carrier Conversion by H.L.D.



THE FIRST part of this feature appeared last May in the previous Meccano Magazine, and dealt with the basic vehicle of the Panzer Grenadier Units Sd Kfz, the 251/1 medium Semi-Tracked Carrier. The May issue also described a quick conversion of the ROCO Minitanks model of the Schwerer Wehrmacht Schlepper (S.W.S.) or in English, Heavy Military Carrier, ROCO Nos. 129, 130 or 131, to the German Sd Kfz 251/1. The Special vehicle number allotted by the Ordnance Department was 251/1 not 25/1 which, unfortunately, appeared in the last feature.

Twenty-two separate versions of this basic vehicle were constructed, and this month we are about to construct the very last model—the Sd Kfz 251/22, a Panzerjaeger (Antitank vehicle) mounting the 7.5cm PAK 40 Antitank gun. Another version described here is the Sd Kfz 251/9 which carried a short 7.5cm Cannon, and was one of the first German self-propelled

guns. Both these vehicles were attached to Panzer Grenadier Companies during 1944, in a ratio of about one to every four standard Troop Carriers. The 251/9 served in a general support role and the 251/22 as the main Antitank defence vehicle of these companies.

The Sd Kfz 251/22

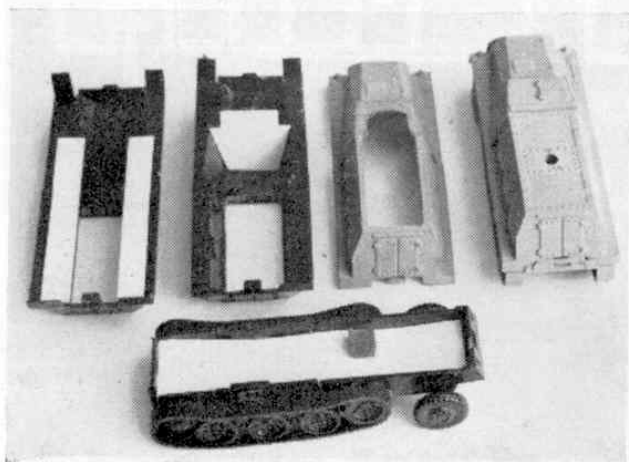
The first thing we need is the complete gun and floor assembly from the Airfix Sd Kfz 234 Armoured Car Kit (Part Nos. 1 to 6). Assemble these as instructed for the Airfix Armoured car. The floor is then carefully trimmed away, leaving just a 12mm base for the gun mounting.

This is exactly the same as for the standard Sd Kfz 251/1 described in the May issue of Meccano Magazine. Just to recap for those who may have forgotten: we discard the swivelling equipment from the basic ROCO model and cut away the roof plates to give an open-top compartment. The remainder of the work required is to fill any gaps in the hull and detail the model. For the 251/22 we cut a further section from the roof of the driver's cab—this can be patterned from the part No. 17 of the Airfix Armoured car kit. This cut-out, seen in our photograph, was necessary on the original vehicle to allow slight traverse of the gun. Having completed the top plate removals, turn the superstructure assembly upside down. A piece of card, 12mm wide, is now cemented in place 20mm from the back, so forming a bridge on to which we cement the gun and its mounting. The superstructure is now refitted on the chassis and final detailing and painting carried out.

The Sd Kfz 251/9

Again we prepare the basic vehicle as before. This time we look to the Airfix Assault Gun Kit, for the necessary additional parts. We use Part No. 55, the base of the gun and No. 56, the gun mounting. Carefully cut the pivot points from No. 56 and into these we clip No. 55 the gun. Now from the roof of the driver's cab on our semi-track, we cut a slot 7mm wide and 7mm deep. On either side of this slot we cement the pivot points of the gun. Front armour was extended upwards and we duplicate this with pieces of card 4mm high and 4mm wide, cemented on either side of the roof in front of the gun. This armour was tapered backwards on the sides.

Our prototype photograph shows a Sd Kfz 251/9 during action in Russia in the 1941 campaign. Our



Above top, the finished product, our ROCO model converted to an Sd Kfz 251/9. Airfix figures are used, those in snow capes being converted from Arabs. Centre, our Sd Kfz 251/22 in action during the winter. At left, the basic conversion steps. From right to left, we have the unmodified ROCO model; the superstructure with top plates removed; the bulkhead filled behind the engine; new track covers/seats and finally a new floor fitted to the chassis.

model, however, more closely resembles the version that appeared in 1943. The necessary performance figures for Battle-Gamers are: the road speed of the 251/9 was unaffected, so this can be taken as being about 30 m.p.h.; the 251/22 was somewhat overloaded thus reducing its speed to 25 m.p.h. The armour protection is only proof against small arms, machine gun fire and the blast and shrapnel caused by high explosive artillery fire.

Scoring and firepower

The 7.5cm PAK 40 is the same as the standard German 75mm guns used in the Assault guns; the short 7.5cm does not have the same penetration power when used against armoured vehicles, but serves as an equal weapon when used for the high explosive artillery.

As you will remember, the suggested battle rule is that a gun can only take three shots at any one target. Both these vehicles described here cannot traverse their guns fully, so they can only engage one target per move. Indicate your target before firing. The dice indicates a hit or miss—above the score of six a hit, and below a six a miss, when using two dice. All 75mm (7.5cm) guns and larger have a high explosive capability. Their damage circle diameter is similar to that of the 25 pounder or 105mm Howitzer, i.e. one inch. Again indicate your target, and let the dice decide the success of the shot. Above four, a complete hit; three, blast damage only; below three, a miss (one dice only for this). Unless otherwise specified, the range of such weapons, including that of our Sd Kfz 251/9, is 14 in.

Top right, the original basic Sd Kfz 251, described in May 1967 Meccano Magazine, which we simulate with the ROCO S.W.S. suitably modified. Centre, for the detail modeller—a view of the interior of an Sd Kfz 251. Below, an Sd Kfz 251/9 in action in Russia during 1941. Note the simple camouflage technique.

