



British Infantry Tank Mk. III Valentine Mk.II/IV

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Box Art

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Scale: 1/35

Company: Tamiya

Price: \$52.00

Product / Stock #: 35352

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Background

During the 1930's and the early period of the Second World War, British tank tactics involved having two types of tanks: the faster Cruiser tanks that would act as mechanized cavalry or break out vehicles, and the slower, more heavily armored Infantry tanks that would lumber into battle at a speed commensurate with supporting infantry maneuvers. Of the Infantry tanks produced, the Valentine series was the most numerous, accounting for 30% of the entire British tank production of the Second World War: 7,315. Production took place in Canada as well as the United Kingdom. Nearly 4,650 Valentine tanks were provided to the Soviet Union under the Allied Lend-Lease program. A total of 12 variants of the Valentine were produced, the majority being the Mk.II/IV vehicle produced here by Tamiya.

Given its significance to the British, it isn't surprising that a lot of Valentine kits have been produced over the last 30 or 35 years. Starting in the 1990's, Accurate Armour of Scotland produced a couple of Valentine kits in the hobby's most popular armor scale, 1/35th, and these were fashioned mainly from cast metal and resin. Starting in the mid 1990's and continuing into the 2000's, a series of injection plastic kits appeared from various Eastern European firms such as VM, Toga, Alanger, Maquette, Ark Models etc. Some of these were reboxings of one another, and the VM kit was reboxed by Dragon Models. Then using the latest state of the art molding technology, more recently we have seen a raft of Valentine kits from MiniArt of the Ukraine (as many as 10 kits?), as well as Far Eastern producers such as Bronco and AFV Club. Looking over the latter, some of these appear to my eye anyway as sharing molds with MiniArt's kits? These latter kits all come with lots of parts, including photo etched brass. Enter Tamiya with their new Valentine kit, without any photo etched brass (which many modelers dislike as a medium), and legendary Tamiya parts fit.

What's in the Tamiya Box

- 7 sprues of tan plastic parts
- 1 sheet of water slide decals with 3 different marking options
- 6 vinyl poly caps
- 1 black and white instruction booklet, 12 pages, with 23 assembly steps and incorporating a markings and



painting guide, plus a 4 page "historical" sheet, including a line drawing schematic and short English historical section (the rest is in Japanese, German and French).

To start with, the parts presented by Tamiya in this kit are what we have come to expect from this company over the last many years: made of very good quality plastic, with the detailing to a high standard. There is zero flash, and I spotted no sink marks, though there are ejector pin marks on some parts, especially the track links, though all were dealt with easily. Finally, where other firms might provide the modeler with ten parts to make a sub assembly, Tamiya gives the modeler three. Some find this great, others not so. I am of the former variety.

Historically Tamiya has provided the modeler with a one piece main hull tub, to which other parts are attached. Of late I have noticed that Tamiya has moved away from this concept, and has been providing the modeler with a separate hull floor part, two main hull side plates, together with a front and rear hull plate. This was true in their recently released SU-76M (kit 35248), Sherman M4A3E8 (kit 35346) and M40 SPG (kit 35351). This continues with this new Valentine kit. Initially this had me concerned about potential alignment issues, but this has not proved the case, with everything lining up nicely provided the instructions are studied carefully, and parts are test fitted prior to the application of model cement/glue.

Tamiya's Valentine instructions cover a scant 24 assembly stages. Start by going through and checking to see which sections/parts apply to the vehicle you are building, as there are a number of alternative parts throughout the construction stages, Russian vs British North Africa, including the vehicle's use or non-use of fender side skirts. The modeler then starts construction with the vehicle main hull parts, of which there are remarkably few, Assembly Stages 1 through 5. Tamiya cautions the modeler in Section 2 to make sure they follow the recommended sequence of assembling the two lower hull side plates, and the front and rear plates. In Section 5, there are two vision ports to be installed, parts A4, which have ejection pin marks that need carefully scraping with a hobby knife, and sanding with some sandpaper.

Assembly Stages 6 through 10 cover the construction of the vehicle running gear, including the suspension arms, plus the road wheels, idler wheels and drive sprockets. In Stage 7 comes the first decision to make for alternative parts, Russian vs British idler wheels. Stage 9 covers the assembly of the drive sprockets, which utilize a vinyl poly cap. Make sure that when this is installed in Stage 10, no glue is allowed to interfere with the free movement of this subassembly on its mounting post. This is because a free moving sprocket is important for the proper alignment of the tracks in Assembly Stage 11. Tamiya utilizes a link and length approach, with lengths of track for the upper and lower sections, while individual links are used to wrap around the idler and sprocket. Make sure you have the track pieces aligned facing the right direction, and follow Tamiya's recommended assembly order, as clearly documented in the instructions.

Stage 13 covers the one-piece fenders for the vehicle, and these align nicely into their hull side slots. Make sure to utilize the Mk.1 eyeballs to assure proper sit from front to rear. Next comes the vehicle stowage boxes (2), Stage 14, again alternative parts are involved here for Russian vs British boxes, though the difference is almost imperceptible! Still, Tamiya goes to the trouble of molding this apparent, small, difference, so good for them. Stages 15 through 17 cover the attachment of various small parts to the fenders, such as the on board tools, engine exhaust muffler and pipe, exhaust shield, plus two part headlights. I left off the muffler unit, the muffler/exhaust shield and the headlights so that they could be painted separately, and also to protect the fragile headlights during assembly handling.

Stage 18 in the instructions covers the British North Africa schemed vehicle (so skip if doing one of the two Russian options), and its side skirts. Again, follow Tamiya's specifically laid out assembly scheme, in order to get the skirts on straight. Stage 19 is for the Russian vehicles and their front and rear mud flaps.

Moving on, we come to the turret. The turret is a small affair, holding as it did a two-man crew. There is excellent cast detail on the appropriate parts, and the fit of the parts is exquisite. In Stage 21, you will see again some ejection pin marks that need carefully removing with hobby knife and sand paper, parts A5. Also in Stage 21, you will see that Tamiya chose to mold the main 2 pounder gun in two parts. NOT, as is traditional, in two halves, but instead one main length, and an end cap. One would have hoped Tamiya could have accomplished this in one piece, but for whatever reason, not. You will need to prep the two parts, D3 and D15, and then test fit carefully, and glue, monitoring the glue process to make sure there is no part movement before the two parts set up firmly.



Tamiya provides the modeler with a choice of open or closed turret main hatches, and if they are left open, the kit comes with two well detailed, multi part, half figures (waist up). The commander figure comes with a mike, to which some wiring should be added, and is nicely animated. The gunner is less animated. However, with there being no turret interior, if someone looks closely they will notice a void, which perhaps should be filled with some rudimentary scratch building of the gun breech etc??

Color and Markings

Tamiya provides a small decal sheet for this kit. The decals are well printed, the colors opaque. If you have used Tamiya decals before, these will offer no surprises. The schemes are as follows:

1. British Army, Unit unknown, North Africa, 1941-42, overall "Sand"
2. Red Army, Unit unknown, Sothern sector of Eastern Front, 1942, Overall 4BO Green
3. Red Army, Unit unknown, Overall 4BO Green

Having already built a Russian vehicle when I built one of the MiniArt Valentine kits a few years ago, I decided to build the Tamiya one as a British North African version. This has a large number "3" on the right fender side-skirt. Unfortunately, Tamiya only provides a paint listing from their rattle can range, TS-46 "Light Sand". I MUCH prefer to use my airbrush, as it allows for superior paint application control. I also like to do post shading, which to me seems impossible with a rattle can. I would have appreciated if Tamiya had gone to the trouble of giving us a mixing formula using their bottle paint range as well as the rattle can color? Instead, my research indicated that a vehicle in this theater of operations, and at this time period would have been painted overall green in the factory, and then over sprayed upon arrival in North Africa at a local workshop in "61 Light Stone". I found the following formula for this color utilizing Tamiya acrylic paints:

- 7 pts XF2 White + 2 pts XF59 Desert Yellow + 2 pts XF3 Yellow
- Or using Vallejo acrylics, 70976 Buff

The model was initially primed with my favorite primer, Tamiya rattle can Light Gray Fine Surface Primer in the 180ml can. This product goes on great, dries to the touch quickly, and after being allowed to cure for a few days, sucks down onto the plastic parts like a limpet, and thus does not obscure any of the fine detail of the kit. I then sprayed the model with Vallejo acrylic primer Russian Green. Why Russian Green? Because I wanted to replicate the green paint applied to the Valentine at the factory, but didn't have the precise British Green. "Close enough" works here. This was allowed to cure for two or three days.

I then sprayed the model with hairspray. This could have been done via a rattle can of hairspray, but I wanted more control, so bought some hairspray in a pump container. I added a small amount of Vallejo airbrush thinner to my Iwata gravity feed airbrush, and then "pumped" some hairspray into the cup, and thoroughly stirred it and the thinner with a paint brush. This was then evenly airbrushed over the entire model. Once the hairspray had been allowed to dry about a half hour, I mixed up some Light Stone 61, utilizing the Tamiya mixture mentioned above. This paint was then airbrushed over the entire model, and allowed to air dry for a half hour. I then got a small container of luke-warm water, a small chisel paint brush, and a "soft" toothbrush. I dipped the paint brush into the warm water, and applied it to a small section of the model, and started to agitate the paintbrush back and forth. After a short time, the Light Stone 61 paint began to "wear" off. I also used the toothbrush to likewise softly scrub the Light Stone paint. The surface "foams" a bit as the paint is worn away. Take a paper towel and cut it into small sections, and use the paper towel to dab up the foamy liquid, a mixture of water, Light Stone paint, and hairspray. Work away in small sections, scrubbing/rubbing away the paint until you get the amount of wear and tear that you are looking for. Period photographs of British Valentines in North Africa clearly show substantial paint wear in many instances. Start off with the underside of the model, to make sure you are happy with the results you are after. You can also practice this technique by getting a sheet of Evergreen white plastic, suitably primed, painted, hair sprayed and then painted again. Practice and practice again!



Once I was happy with the "worn paint" effect, I let the model sit for a couple of days, before airbrushing a few light coats of Tamiya X-22 Clear Gloss to seal the model, and prepare it for decaling.

The marking scheme for my North African Valentine couldn't have been simpler: a large "3" on the right side of the vehicle, on the fender skirt, together with two small vehicle ID numbers either side of the turret. Six smaller decals were employed on the front of each fender to depict the rubber areas. I utilized Gunze Sangyo's Mr Mark Softer and Mr Mark Setter decal setting solutions for this project. Once dry (24 hours), the decalced areas were over sprayed with some thin coats of Tamiya X-22 Clear Gloss.

I then applied some dark brown "wash" to the model, utilizing oil paint and odorless mineral spirits. Once allowed to dry for a few hours, the excess wash was mopped up with Qtips dipped in a little thinner. The oil wash was then permitted to dry out for a couple of days. Once dry, some coats of AK Interactive's Ultra Matte Varnish AK183 were applied via an airbrush. I use this unthinned, straight out of the bottle, and it provides the "matt-est" finish in the business. This was allowed to dry for 24 hours, before a couple of rust oil paint colors were utilized. Small amounts of the oil paint were mixed with odorless mineral spirits in a mixing palette to produce a "wash", and with a pointed brush, I set about "rusting" the vehicle. Hinges, rivets etc. Contrary to some peoples' views, rust DOES form in the desert, especially where parts are worn down to the bare metal, thanks to sand abrasion. Again, the oil paint was allowed to dry for a few days, and another light coat of AK183 Ultra Matte Varnish was applied. I then took a Buff colored oil paint, and put various "dots" about the model, and blended these into the matt surface utilizing a soft paint brush and odorless mineral spirits. This gave the vehicle's surface a suitably "dusty" appearance. Once dry for a couple of days, another thin coat of AK183 Varnish was applied.

Finally, the tracks. These were very carefully painted with Vallejo's Track Primer 70304 with a brush. After a 24-hour curing period, a light rust oil color was chosen, mixed into a "wash" utilizing odorless mineral spirits, and applied to the tracks. This helps break up the monotone color of the Vallejo track color.

To conclude: this is a superb new kit from Tamiya, being well detailed, easily constructed from relatively few parts, with excellent fit and overall engineering. If you want to include this very important British Infantry tank in your collection, and shy away from mega part kits, or kits with photo etched parts, then THIS is the kit for YOU!

My sincere thanks to TamiyaUSA for providing the review kit.

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