

Trumpeter 1/35th Scale German Schwere Plattformwagen Type SSyms 80

by Eric Christianson

During WWII, railroads were often used to bring military hardware and resupply closer to the front because of the vast distances involved. This mode of transportation was preferable to moving them by road which was more expensive and a lot harder on the equipment and men. The SSyms 80 Ton flatbed rail car was used to carry the German heavy tanks, such as the Panther and Tiger tanks, and accompanying resupply.

As with previous Trumpeter offerings, there is considerable effort put into the roadbed, railroad ties, track, and base. These are designed in such a way as to be able to be added to other tracks for possible additional rolling stock - a real potential for diorama enthusiasts. This particular offering includes extended sections of track (35 ties vs. 26 in earlier kits). The wood-texture of the ties is beautiful, and the ties are ingeniously molded and connected in such a way that they are removed from the sprue and attached as a single piece.

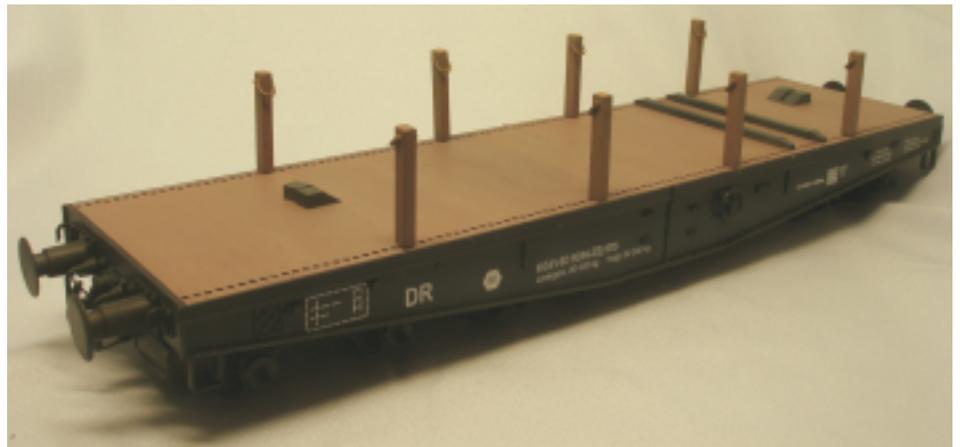
I started with the road bed. This is a multi-step (yet separate) process so I kept coming back to it as I built up the rest of the kit. Trumpeter gives you an option to add this track to another set of track so (normally) the first thing to do is to remove a section of one of the end pieces so the base would be the right length for just this kit. There are deep scribed marks on the inside of each side for doing this and after 20 seconds with a razor saw the job would be done. On this build however, I decided to mate up all of the 1/35th scale roadbeds I own so I could display a whole set of cars that I have built. As a consequence, the roadbed I now have consists of two four-foot sections!



The rest of the base is snapped together and then glued. To give the assembled pieces more strength I glued Evergreen sheet plastic on the inside of the roadbed, across each vertical seam. Once that was dry, I sanded some of the rough edges down a little. These seams are significant when viewed up close. With more time I would have sanded and filled the seams on the base, but I felt they looked OK after painting them black. The seams on the roadbed itself disappeared after painting and weathering.

modeling friends. I was pleasantly surprised by the strength and solid feel of the completed car – there are very few little parts in the kit, everything else are solid chunks of plastic. Refreshing!

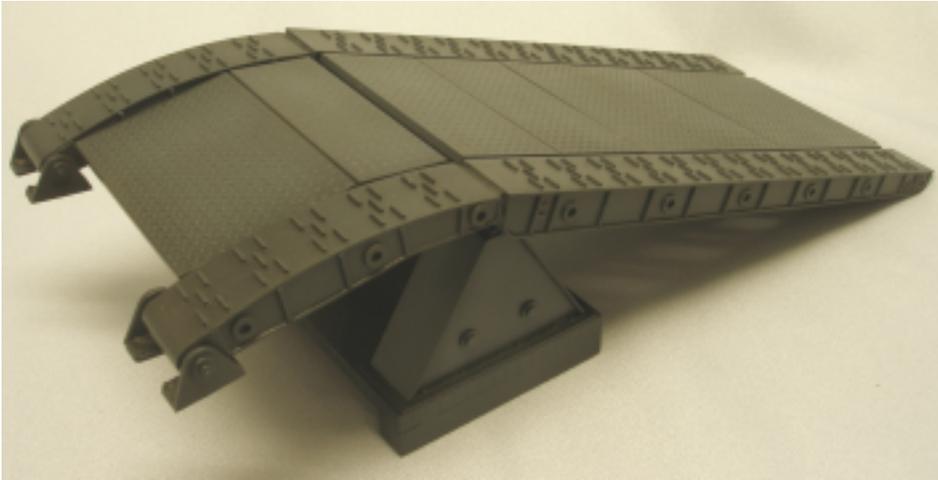
The flatcar has two large wheel trucks, each consisting of six wheels on three axles. Everything is symmetrical so after you've built one section; all of the other sections fall together very easily. I used Testors (black squeeze bottle) liquid cement. I feel that Testors makes the only



When I build a model I detach, clean and bag all of the parts into separate plastic bags according to the steps in the instructions. I find this an easy task to do during my downtime, such as in front of the TV or on business trips. Having done this with the Trumpeter kit before-hand, I ended up assembling this entire kit in a single evening during a get-together with other

glue that will tame these big heavy pieces into submission since it actually melts the plastic surfaces together instead of merely attaching them.

The surface of the flatcar is finely detailed with wood grain and has eight significant holes that must be drilled and shaped to accommodate the tie-down posts, if you



want to use them. I opened the holes and found that even if I don't use the posts, the openings tend to disappear when the car is painted and finished.

When completed, the entire car is made up of two large, heavy halves that must be glued together. This creates a large and noticeable seam, so after everything was dry I 'troweled' in Tamiya (tube) putty and wiped the excess off with Gunze Mr. Color Thinner, my favorite seam filler combination. Seam gone!

The assembly of the loading ramp and fulcrum base was just as trouble-free and enjoyable as the flatcar. Big, heavy pieces of plastic, perfect fit. The only issue might come where the curving portion of the ramp attaches to the run-up part. There are two shallow tabs that mate these two heavy sections together. While this might have been designed better, I simply turned to Testors again and created a bond strong enough to withstand the handling required to assemble, paint, move, and photograph the completed model.

For painting the base and road bed, I airbrushed the railroad ties using Model Master Enamel Burnt Umber. The ties are linked together so they were easy to paint as one piece. I then painted the base using Gunze Mr. Color Black, a lacquer, which produced the satin finish I was looking for.

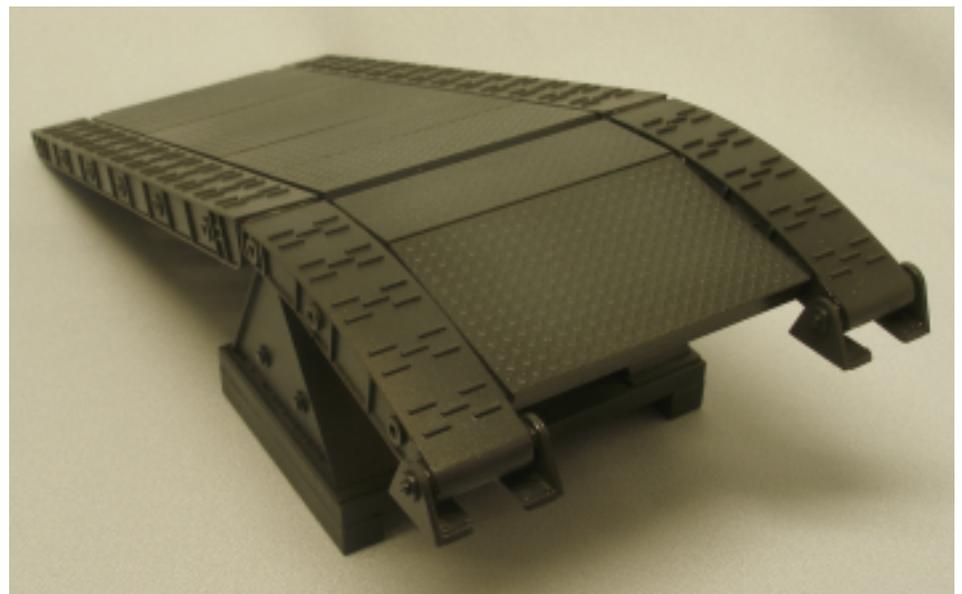
Next I painted the rails with a base coat of Tamiya NATO Black and highlighted them with some Rub&Buff Silver to bring out the worn areas. Once the base was dry, I masked off the edges with blue tape to leave just the road bed exposed, and painted that with Tamiya NATO Black.

Once dry, I used a spray bottle to wet the surface with a mixture of white glue, diluted dishwashing soap and warm water. I then sprinkled on a coat of ash from my fireplace and let it dry. A quick brush off and blast from some compressed air and the base was complete. I then slipped the ties up into the base from below and glued them so that just the wooden upper

surfaces were exposed when viewed from above – very handy. Finally I slid the rails through the ties and attached the four rail connectors provided. With more time I would have added several other colors for highlighting and grime, followed by a dusting of various Mig powders.

I started by airbrushing the entire flatcar and ramp Tamiya NATO Black. I then lightly dusted the sides and ends with Model Master Enamel Intermediate Blue to bring out a 'cold steel' look I was after (and what I used in the other Trumpeter railroad cars I've built). Next I masked off the thin edge surrounding the top surface of the flatcar and sprayed the surface a mixture of Tamiya Flat Earth, Tamiya Flat Brown, and Tamiya Sky Grey. This gave the surface the color of old wood, a good base for the weathering to come. I then airbrushed a coat of undiluted Future acrylic and waited two days for it to dry.

Once the Future was dry I went about applying the decals. The decals included in the kit are beautiful, but also very thin - and once they hit the surface of the model they are very difficult to move, period. After destroying the first two decals, I switched from the Gunze blue and green bottle solvents to the MicroScale Red and Blue system without any luck. I finally just went very slowly and, using water only,



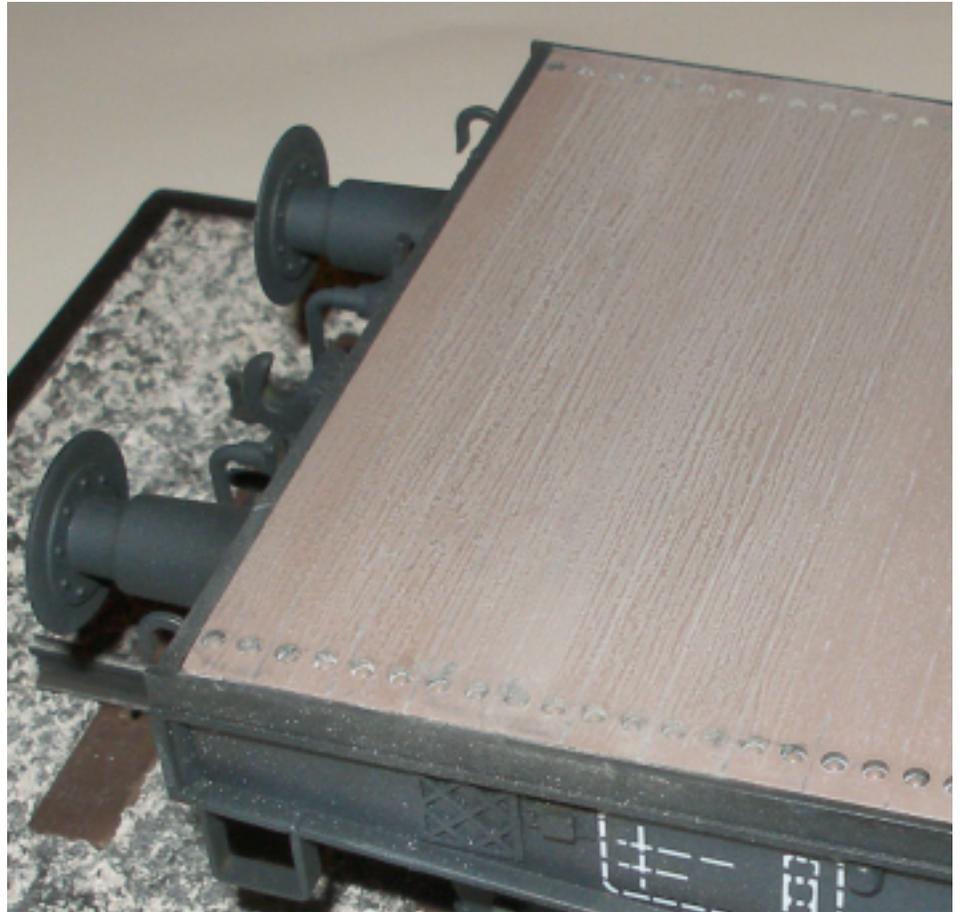
carefully slid the decals off the backing paper to exactly where they should go. Some responded to touches with a toothpick or cotton swab, some didn't. Fortunately, Trumpeter provides enough stenciling to finish the sides satisfactorily, if not perfectly accurate.

Finishing: I was looking for an old-wood brown surface that 'hinted' a weathered 'grey' feel, like the one pictured in the three-view drawing provided in the kit. I first tried giving the glossy (top) surface two filter coats of MIG German Grey Highlight (a light gray oil-based paint) highly diluted with Mona Lisa paint thinner. I found, however, that the filter just disappeared into the light brown background. A thicker wash produced similar results, so after airbrushing everything with a layer of Testor's Dullcoat to kill the gloss, I applied a dry, streaked-dusting of MIG Panzer Grey (Fading) pigment. This color is also a light grey shade and when applied with the grain provided the look I was going for. To bring out the grain underneath, I drew my index finger along my forehead and the side of my nose and worked the oil across the grain – it's amazing how 'icky skin-oil' works with MIG pigments!

Building this kit was a most enjoyable experience for me. The two modules (train car and ramp) felt solid and stood up to a lot of abuse while they were being painted and handled. Even the few small pieces are well designed and firmly attached. I just cannot say enough good things about the feeling I got from gluing all of these chunks of heavy plastic together – reminiscent of a time gone by. If I had the money, I'd buy enough of these kits to build an entire train. Trumpeter really nailed this one.

I recommend this kit to anyone who likes to build and finish train cars and/or 1/35th diorama enthusiasts. I plan to place a large AFV on mine and add it to my already growing German armored train.

I would like to thank Stevens International for providing this kit for review, and to



Internet Modeler for giving me the opportunity to build it.

[Thanks to Chris Banyai-Riepl and www.internetmodeler.com for permission to use his, Gerry's, and Eric's articles. - ED]

