

Tamiya 1/48th Scale Russian Heavy Tank JS-2 Model 1944

by Andrew Birkbeck

The yearly new releases in Tamiya's 1/48th scale Military Vehicle range are getting fewer and fewer in number compared to when the range was launched seven or eight years ago, but when they do turn up, they are well worth the wait. The latest in the range is the massive Soviet JS-2 Heavy Tank, produced as a counter to the German military's Tiger 1 heavy tank. Heavily armored and with a potent 122mm main gun, this beast proved very effective both in battling the heavier German armored vehicles as well as being used in the "breakthrough" role in the mid- to late-war battles on the Eastern Front.

The kit is well molded in green plastic, with lots of crisply detailed parts which fit together brilliantly as we have come to expect from the Tamiya brand. Gone is the (to my mind poorly detailed) metal hull of earlier releases in this range; the hull on the JS-2 consists of a lower hull floor with separate side and front/rear plates. The suspension arms for the road wheels are separate parts, and care must be taken in



ensuring they all line up correctly. The road wheels themselves are two-part affairs, as is the idler wheel, while the drive sprockets are three-piece units with a polly cap sandwiched inside to allow movement for correct track alignment.

The tracks are the standard link and length injection molded parts that have been one of the finest features of this range of kits. The tracks do have shallow ejection pin marks on all the parts, but these can easily be removed by a little filler or by covering

in "mud," and most can't be seen on the completed model anyway. If one follows the Tamiya instructions carefully, the builder should have nothing but success in correctly assembling the tracks. I assembled the lower hull, Sections 1 through 6, then carefully painted the sub assembly Russian Tank Green 4B0 (see paint mix further below). The tracks were then separately painted Tamiya Red Brown XF-64, then attached to the lower hull.

The JS-2, like many Soviet WW2 tanks, carried auxiliary external fuel tanks. The four on the JS-2 kit come in four parts. The weak point of this four-piece unit is the two end caps, which have the handles molded as flat lumps. I ground off the lumps and replaced them with some photo etched parts I had left over from an earlier project, and they look **much** better than the kit representation. Moving on with the upper hull construction, I took the hull horn (part C13) and the hull headlight (part C9) and drilled them out to make them look more realistic. The headlight was painted silver in the area where I drilled it out, and a drop of two-part 5-Minute Epoxy was used to provide the "glass" effect. The two tow cables were constructed from the injection plastic parts and nylon "string" provided in the kit, and looks acceptable when assembled per the instructions and carefully painted.



Turning to the turret, the 122mm gun is provided in two parts, split down the middle. As with all such arrangements, the parts must be very carefully assembled, and when the glue sets up, the resulting seam must be carefully sanded to avoid any flat spots. The turret cupola can be set up to have the commander's split hatch open or closed, and the kit comes with a four-part commander figure, which has good detail for the scale.

The decals in the kit offer the modeler four choices – two Russian, one Czech, and one Polish. All are very late war, April/May 1945, and all in Russian Tank Green 4B0. They are standard Tamiya fare: well printed, a bit on the thick side, but respond very well to the Mr Color two-part decal setting solution that I use. I chose the Czech version. My mixture for 4B0 is as follows: 6 parts Tamiya XF-73 Dark Green, 3 parts XF-49 Khaki, 1 part XF-4 Yellow Green. This produced for me a very nice looking 4B0, which I thinned as always with Mr Color Self Leveling thinner for airbrushing.

Once the model had been painted, gloss coated, decals applied, then sealed, a couple of washes of suitably colored artist's oil paint were applied to pick out the details. Then I sprayed on a little Tamiya XF-57 Buff to dull things down a bit, followed by some Dullcote.

All in all, this is a very workmanlike kit of an important WW2 Russian tank. It was a breeze to build, and the detail was for the most part perfectly acceptable for the scale. It provided me with a number of very entertaining evenings-worth of modeling, and I can unreservedly recommend it to anyone with even basic modeling skills. It is, after all, a Tamiya kit!

My thanks to TamiyaUSA and IPMS USA for the opportunity to review this model kit.

