

Scratchbuild: The Orange Pumpkin

by John DeRosia

Scale: 1/25

It all started with a sketch and seeing "sno-cat" pictures on line by accident at an Antarctic outpost. Lately, I've gotten away from modeling more or less out of the box to finally doing more modifications and scratch-building. Don't get me wrong - I still like out-of-the-box, but it does limit what you can build if a model doesn't exist of something you are interested in.

I have been modeling in the category of "loads" - in particular those things carried by trucks - whether through a fifth wheel trailer or a flat bed on the truck frame. I like both military and civilian loads, basically in 1/72nd, 1/35th, or 1/25th. One challenge is using different scales, and also making the conversion not look too much like its original form. This can be a good problem to solve.

The main cab-over was the easiest to build. The frame from the AMT kit was used. After stretching the frame, the rest was plastic Evergreen styrene sheet, or adapted from used styrene sheet. I use a lot of Evergreen plastic for most of my conversions. "For Sale" signs are also great for



sheets of styrene plastic. A new flat-bed with ramps was added.

My local department store had lots of fourwheel Monster type toy trucks to choose from,

where I would get my tundra tires. I bought three of the same trucks and ended up using all 12 tires. Two of the spare tires are mounted on a removable tire rack on the roof of the cab. I built a simple

crane that would be used to load or offload the tires should the crew need to change one. The engine is complete and the cab also pivots to expose the engine once the roof rack and crane are moved out of the way.

The M-55 chassis for the sno-cat was fun but a little challenging. The rear track section had the perfect down angle to make the sno-cat seem more of the type of snow vehicle people are used to seeing. It being 1/32nd scale - and I wanting to add a 1/25th truck cab to it - made my razor saw come out more than once. I cut the truck sleeper down below the cab roof and added two areas for storage with 'tread plate' plastic. The back of the M-55 was built up with more Evergreen plastic and



"For Sale" signs. I made many adjustments and cuts to get the cab to best fit the M- 55. I used lots of filler plastic to blend the truck body onto the chassis. The simple front grill was more plastic scrap.

Finally, I added a dozer blade. Why? Because they are doing a geological survey. I expect they may have to cut some roads for crews or such. The main part of the blade is a piece of 'For Sale' sign - the rest is Evergreen plastic pieces. The hydraulics also works for the blade. It



moves up and down freely. I use Evergreen round tubes and real aluminum tube for the hydraulic ram.

The orange paint was straightforward Ace Hardware brand enamel paint. It is their counterpart to the 'Rustoleum' brands. It brushes on beautifully and airbrushes easy as well. The whole rig uses both methods throughout - but most airbrushing is on the major big pieces.

Lastly, I made my own decals and had fun, especially with the "I Love Alaska" ones on both vehicles.

I spent the better part of a month's worth of evenings here and there building it. My goal was to have it for the IPMS Seattle Show held on April 7th - and lo and behold, I literally finished it at 11:57 pm on April 6th! I'm already on another creative imagination rig with another load!

