



Special Group-Build Edition to *The Wildcat*: DML, No. 6520, Sd. Kfz. 167, StuG. IV, Early Production

Our group-build project will be divided into several “Build-Blocks.” Each build block will be composed of one or more of the kit instruction steps plus other needed tasks.

A project moderator will guide the group build by completing each build-block ahead of all the other participants. Each month the project moderator will bring his partially completed model to the meeting and show and discuss his experiences with the build-block he just completed. He can point out the problems and pitfalls and explain his methods to work around them. This way, the participants can see the steps (build-block) completed before they will do those same steps. If they have questions, they can ask them ahead of the actual work.

Also, at each meeting, the participants will show their own work on that month’s build-block, and explain any problems they had and ask for help on any problems they couldn’t resolve. The participants can build ahead if they want, or drop behind the group’s pace. Participants can also modify the kit subject in any way they want (late, mid, or early version, battle damage, interiors, figures, added stowage, etc).

The moderator, however, will stick to the building sequence and timeline unless he identifies a reason to change them. If he does, he’ll point out those changes during the next meeting and provide some notes for everyone else.

The object of the exercise is to give everyone a common context (the selected kit) that can form the basis for a collective building experience. They can share and learn from each other more easily by having the exact same model in front of them when discussing problems, solutions, methods, and techniques.

For the StuG IV build, our basic construction sequence will be: assemble most of the large subassemblies (lower hull and superstructure; then add the Zimmerit; complete the interior; add all the outside details; complete the suspension (less the tracks); add the Schurtzen rails; do the exterior finish (base coats, cammo, markings; add the tracks; then add the Schurtzen. If you want to put your model on a landscaped base, you’ll do that before adding the Schurtzen.

The Atak Resin Zimmerit set or hand-made Zimmerit can be used (or none, of course, if that’s the way you want to go). Each requires a slightly different approach. I’ve tried to capture these differences, but there’s no doubt that during the build, we’ll have some changes in the sequence of things.

Build-Block Number 1 (September – October) “Research / Reference:” Pre-build work that everyone has done between the September and October meetings. During this block, everyone looked at the building and finishing options and selected a tentative final subject. In this way, you will be able to select between those building options provided in the kit and match your subject’s mechanical features to an historically correct camouflage and marking scheme. This will further allow you to set the scene with your model in an appropriately landscaped base should you chose to do so.

At the October meeting, the moderator will show and discuss Build-Block Number 2. Participants will discuss their results from Build-Block Number 1.

Build-Block Number 2 (October – November): Kit steps 1 through 4. See the accompanying notes with each step.

At the November meeting, the moderator will show and discuss Build-Block Number 3. Participants will Show & Tell their completed Build-Block Number 2.

Build-Block Number 3 (November – December): Kit steps 5 through 9. See the accompanying notes with each step.

At the December meeting, the moderator will show and discuss Build-Block Number 4. Participants will Show & Tell their Build-Block Number 3.

Build-Block Number 4 (December – January): Kit steps number 10-12. See the build notes accompanying each step.

At the January meeting, the moderator will show and discuss adding Zimmerit to the StuG IV using both the Atak Resin Zimmerit set and scratch-building the Zimmerit using acrylic modeling paste (Liquitex Stucco Texture) and Cambell Scale Models HO scale corrugated metal.

Participants will Show & Tell their Build-Block Number 4.

Build-Block Number 5 (January – February): Adding Zimmerit to the StuG IV.

At the January meeting, the moderator will show and discuss Build-Block Number 6. Participants will Show & Tell their Zimmerit applications.

Build-Block Number 6 (February – March): Kit steps 13 and 14 plus the Schurtzen rails from kit step 15.

At the February meeting, the moderator will show and discuss base finish, cammo, and weathering. Participants will Show & Tell their Build-Block Number 6.

Build-Block Number 7 (March – April): Final assembly and finishing.

At the March meeting, the moderator will show and discuss his finished StuG IV. Participants will Show & Tell their Build-Block 6.

Finale: At the April meeting, participants will Show & Tell their finished builds.

Of course, all of this is tentative. The build might go faster or slower than the plan, but that's OK. Alternatively, we could rearrange some steps or which steps are in a particular Build-Block. Again, that's OK. It's our project and we're under no deadlines to build it in any particular sequence or on any particular schedule.

The idea is to have fun, share our knowledge, and learn from each other!

Some variations that participants might want to consider are:

Out of the Box Build: This version really only requires Zimmerit for an accurate build.

Adding the Atak Resin Zimmerit set.

Adding hand-made Zimmerit.

Changing the variant to a mid, late, or very-late production vehicle. After September, 1944, Zimmerit was no longer applied to these vehicles, however, starting in April / May, 1944, the external features began to change.

Adding an after-market StK 40 / L 48 gun barrel. Check the correct muzzle break for your variant (early, mid, late, or very late / final).

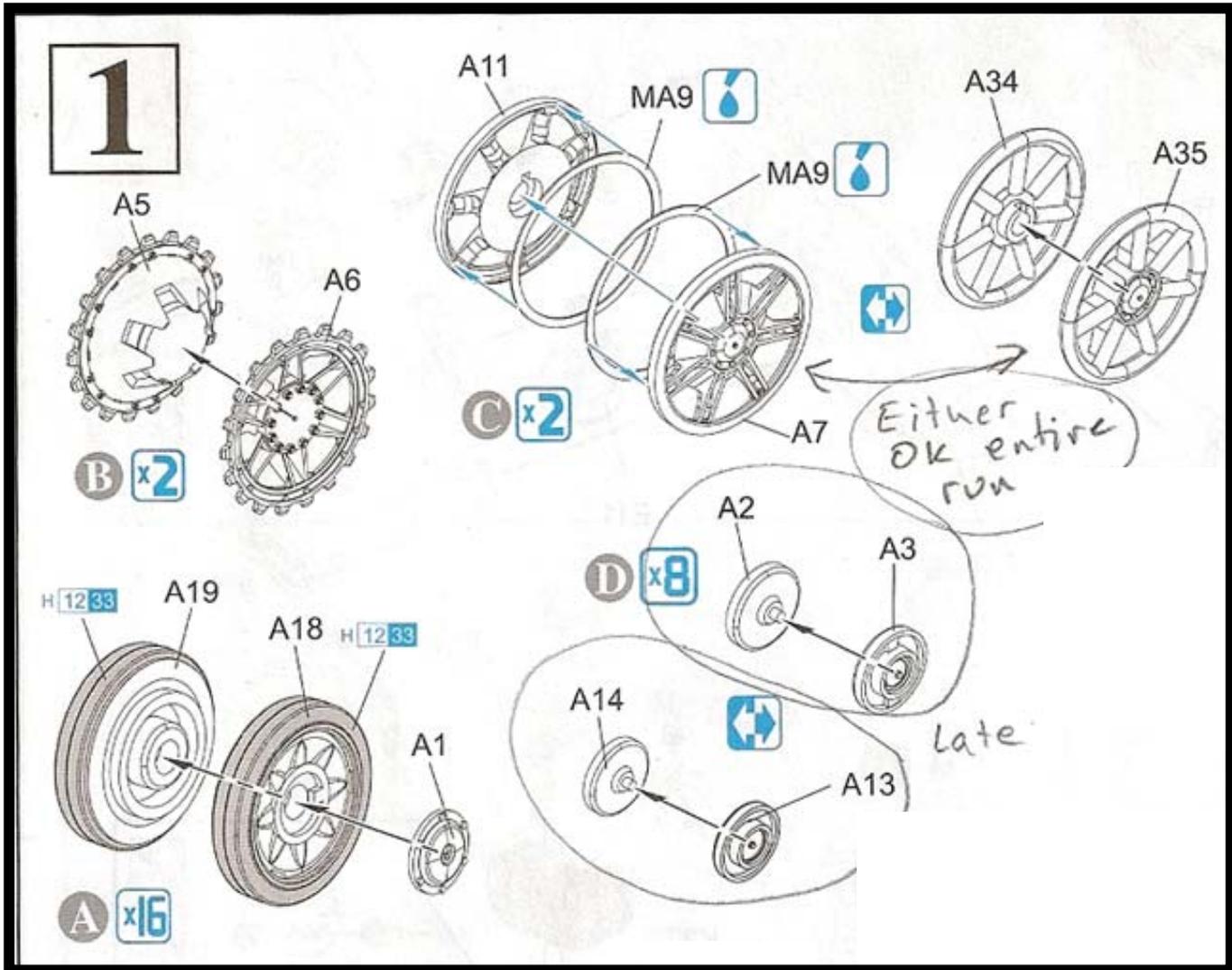
Adding after-market link-to-link tracks. There are metal Fruil track sets that are correct, as well as, plastic sets. (This is discussed more in part 2 of the build-plan.)

Adding an after-market Photo Etch part set.

Adding figures (check your references to be sure if your marking option is for an Arty branch or Panzer branch crewed vehicle, as well as regular Heer, Luftwaffe, or SS. There are some differences in the uniforms between each of these.

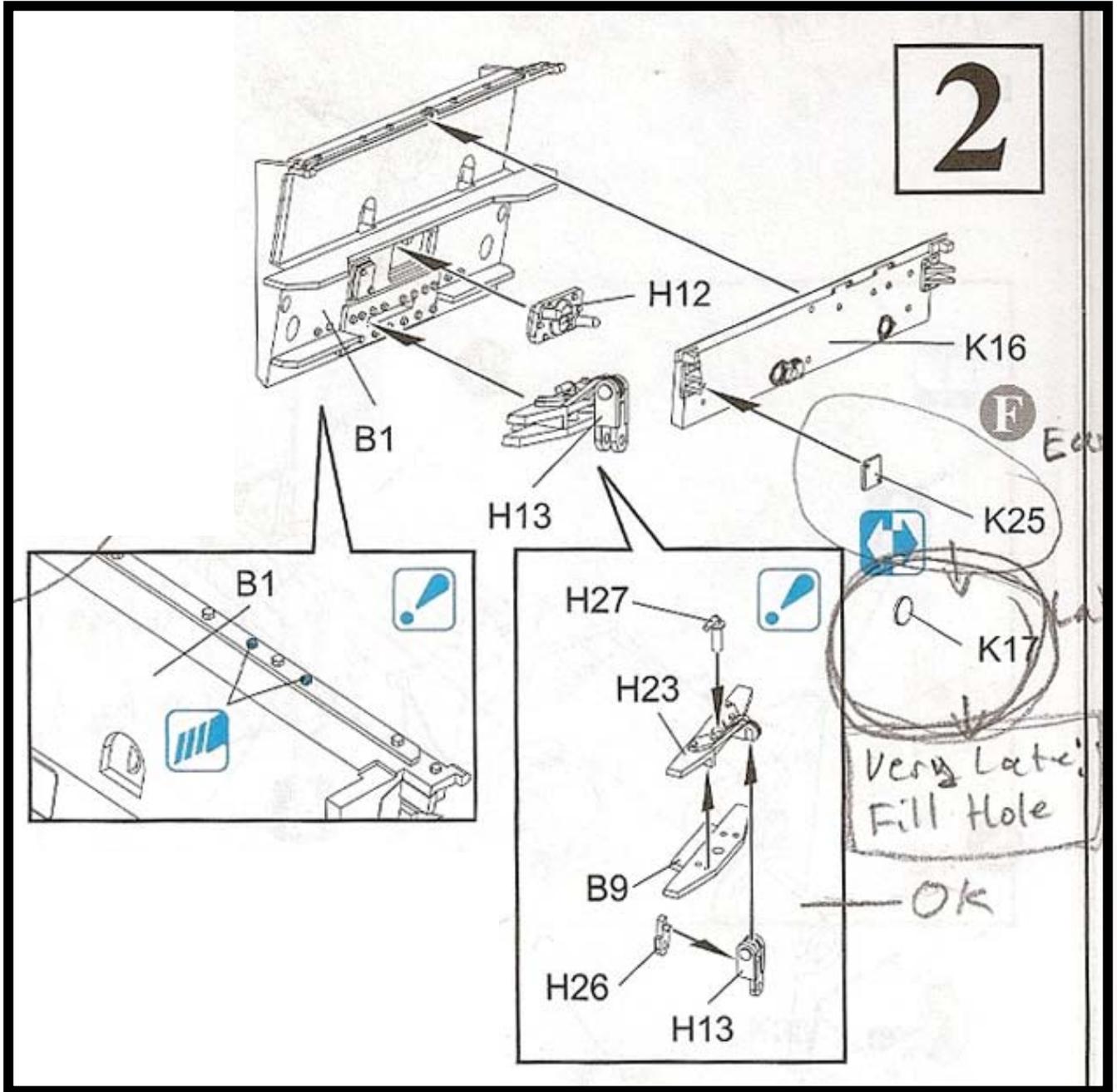
Creating a landscaped base to put your finished StuG IV on. Some thought should be given to any changes that might need to be made in the construction, finish, weathering, etc. to get your model to historically match the setting.

Following is a list of kit steps with building notes for each. Refer back to the "Build-Blocks" above to see which steps are planned for each month's block.



1. Idler Wheel Choice (A34/35 or A11/7+): Either should be correct. Out of the box (OOTB) uses A11/7+.

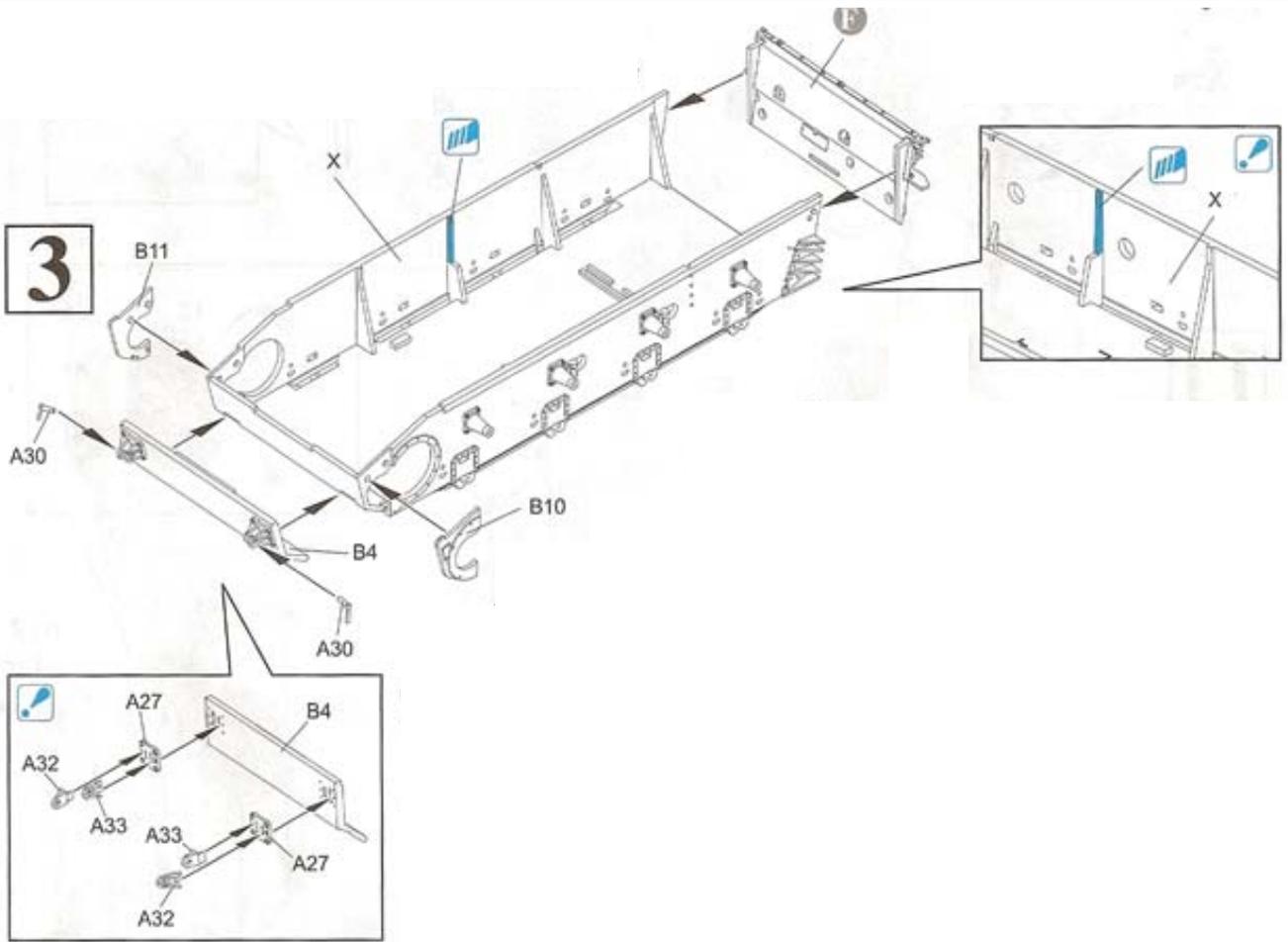
2. Return Rollers Choice (A2/3 or A14/13): My references only show the A13/14 configuration, and in fact, I cannot find a picture of any Pz IV variant with the A2/3 style return roller. (I'm beginning to think that the rollers with the little radial reinforcing ribs are a myth.)



1. Cover for Aux. Generator Exhaust (K25 or K17) (Aux. Gen. not installed in StuG IV): K25 is correct for OOTB and early StuG IV. Mid to Late use K17 (welded plug). Very late (Nov '44 and later) had no opening, so fill the mounting pin hole.

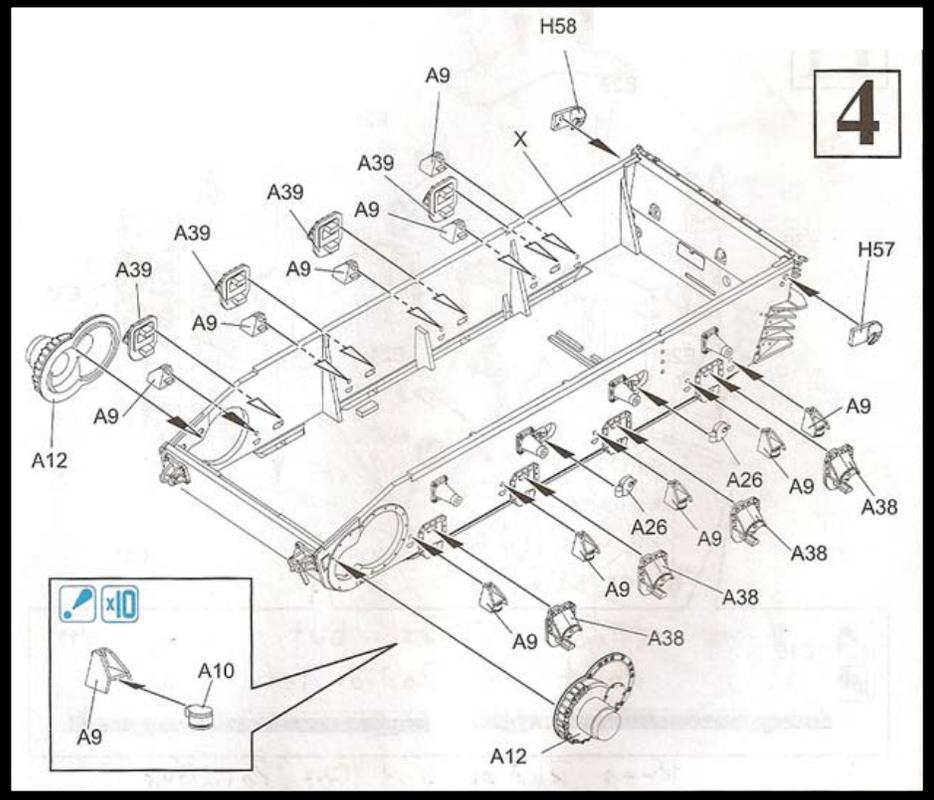
2. The towing clevis (H13/26) was not mounted in Mid to Late StuG IV. Omit and remove detail on top of part H23.

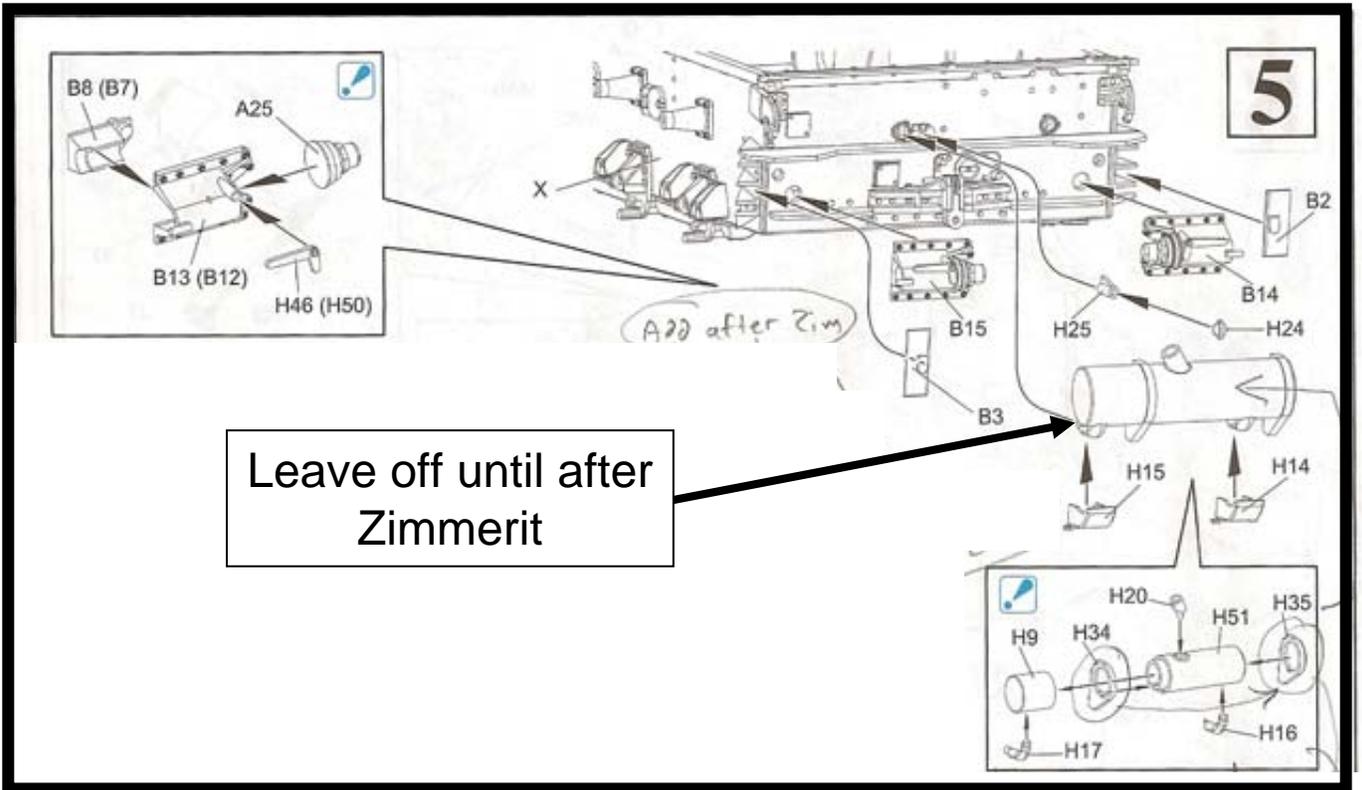
3



No Changes Here!

4



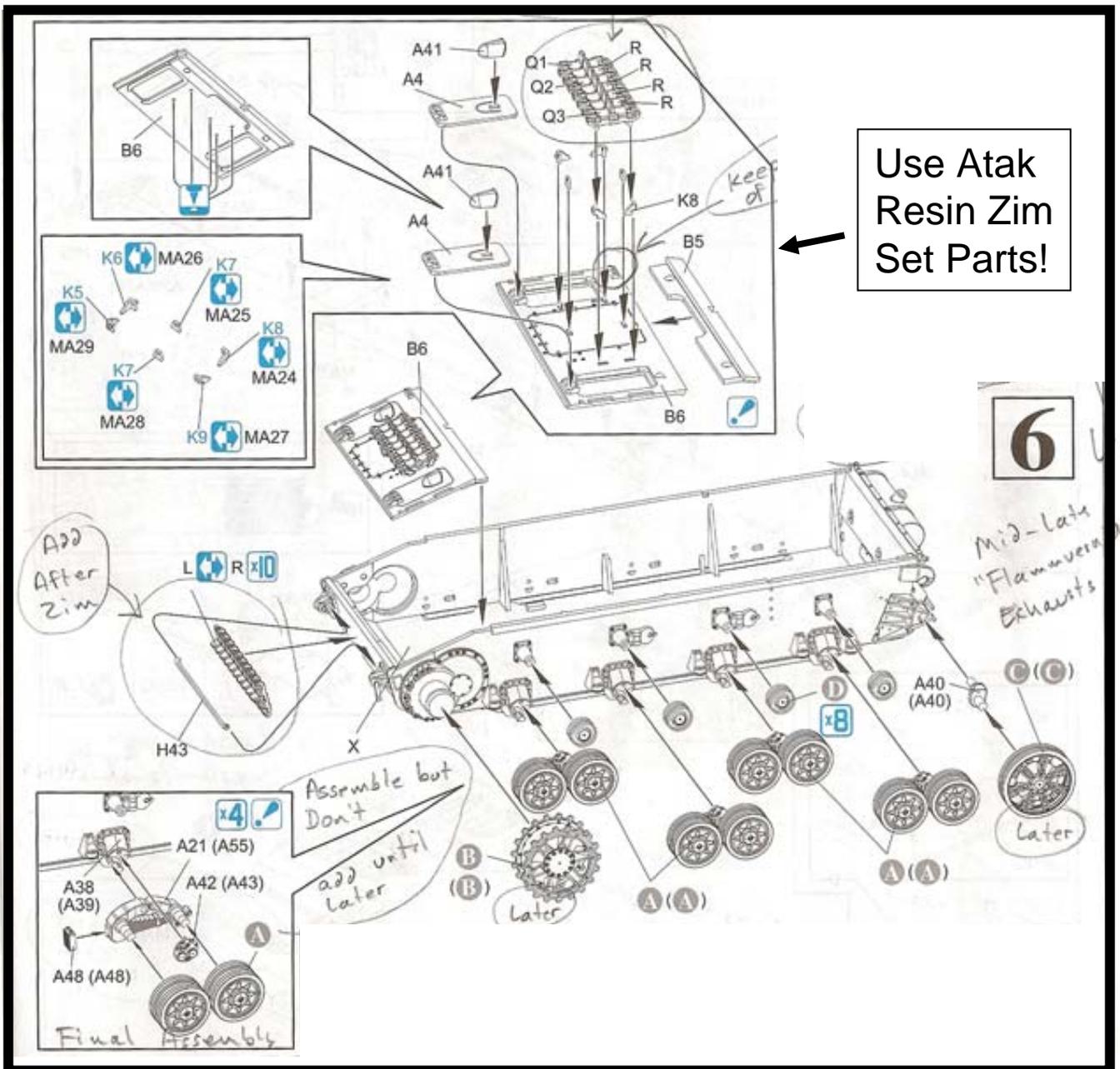


1. Leave off muffler assembly until after Zimmerit.

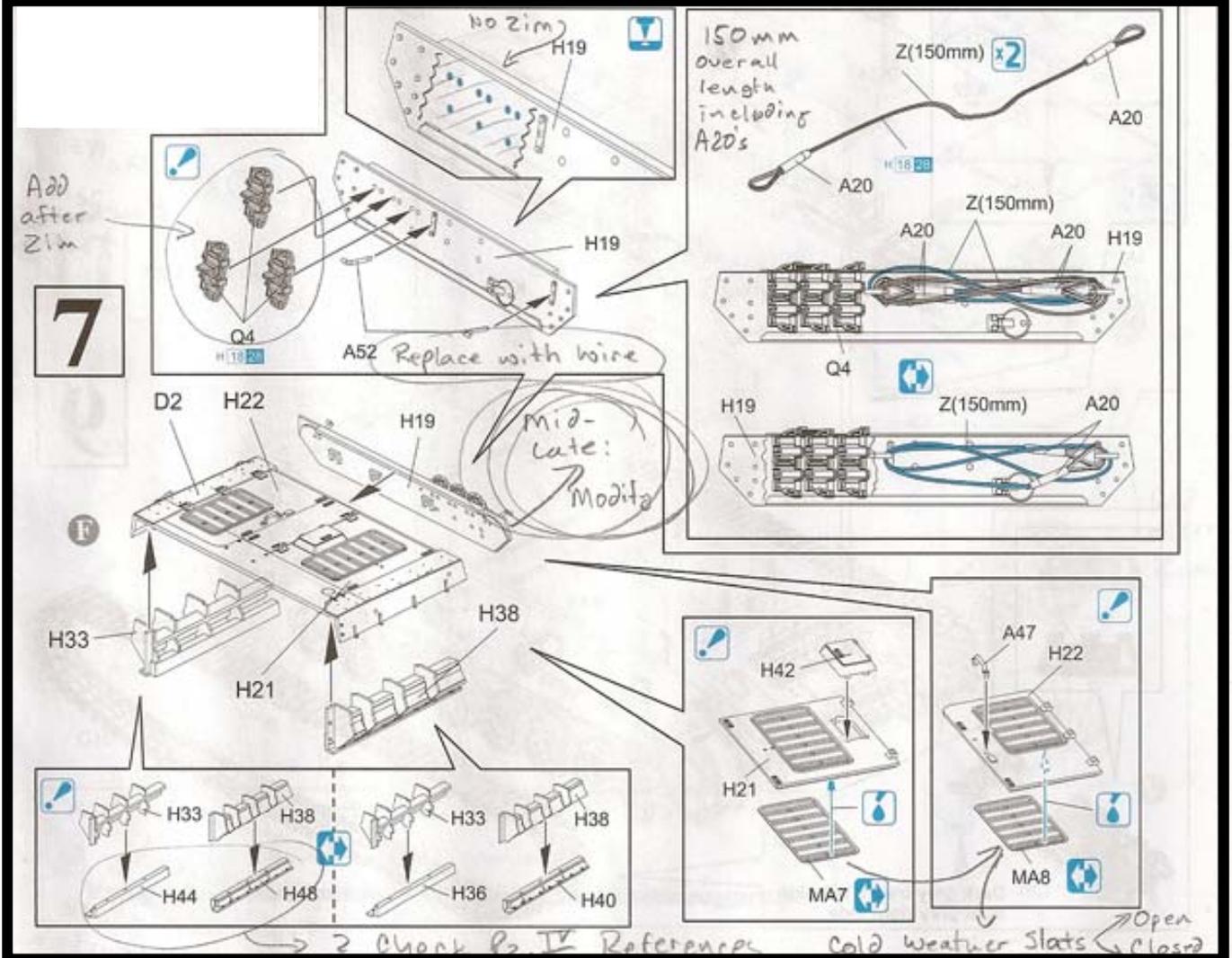
Note: If you're going to use the Atak Resin Zimmerit set, many of the kit's surface details should be added after the Atak Zimmerit "skin" has been glued on. This is because the Atak set has the openings for some details already molded. These openings lock-in the precise locations for those details that must be glued into those openings. The only practical way to be sure that the parts will fit is to add the Zimmerit first, then add the details. The locations for some details could be determined by dry-fitting Zimmerit first, then adding the parts, then adding the Zimmerit later. I don't know how well this will work, and if it will, for what parts.

2. Modify H34/35 for correct mounting strap detail.

3. ! Replace kit muffler with "Flammvernichter" Exhausts for Mid - Late



1. Complete bogie assemblies, but leave off until final assembly.
2. Leave off drive sprocket, idler wheels, and return rollers until final assembly.
3. Don't glue parts A40 (Idler wheel axels). Allow to remain loose to fit tracks then glue.
4. Don't add spare track on upper and lower hull front glacis until after adding Zimmerit.
5. ! If using the Atak Resin Zimmerit set, replace the B6 assembly with the resin parts.

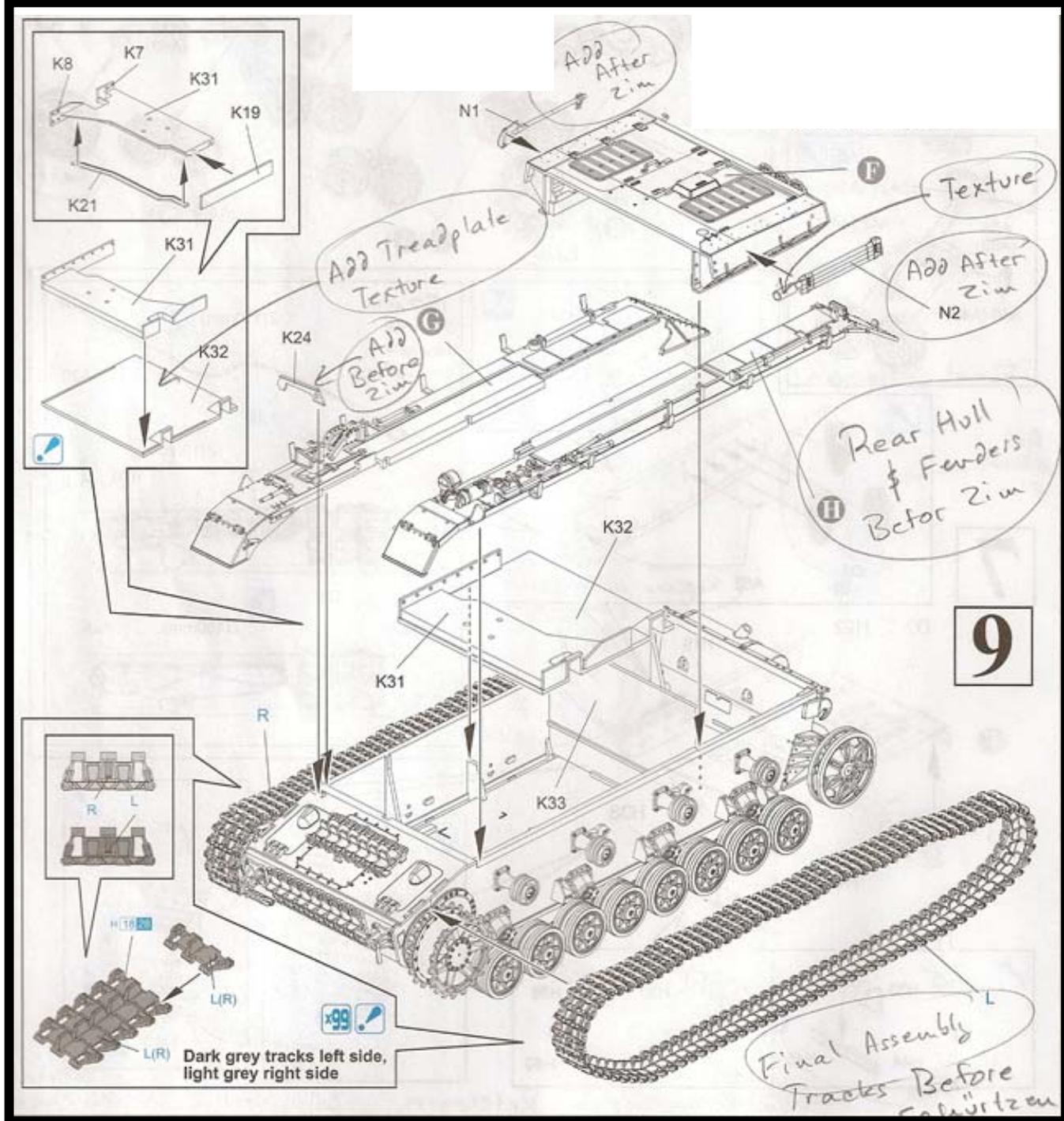


1. Leave off spare tracks Q4 until after Zimmerit. Add A56 wing nuts to brackets.
2. Note the bare space under the track links on part H19. No Zim here for OOTB version.
3. Tow cable length should be measured and adjusted according to the kit dimensions. 150 mm is overall length including eyelets A20.
4. Replace kit cable part "Z" with twisted solder wire or string. Kit wire is too stiff to use.
5. Replace tow cable hooks (A52) with bent brass wire for strength.
6. ! Rebuild rear upper hull plate (H19) for Mid- Late version. See: ref's.
7. For extreme cold weather setting or finish, close off cooling air intakes (H21/22) with PE parts (MA 7/8). Leave open for normal operation (but show edges of MA 7/8 for "coolness points.")
8. Recessed bolt heads on H36/40 for Early – Late versions. Proud bolt heads on H44/48 possible "austerity" modification on Mid – Late versions or possibly just a minor manufacturing variation.

Step 8 (cont.)

- 5. Use parts A58 (half-wing nuts) with PE parts MA1-6 and 19 and 21 (cooling air outlet flaps). Fix the flaps closed for extreme cold weather display or finish.**
- 6. Use parts A56 (small wing nuts) with tool clamps on parts J7 assembly (jack), H1 assembly (track tension lock nut wrenches), and part M11 (track tension adjuster wrench).**
- 7. Add wiring to headlight and tail light.**
- 8. Tail light options: Part K3 with PE flap MA 18 – flap up or down depending on day or night convoy operations // Part K4 with molded flap in night convoy position // Late model tail light, parts P9 and M7 is shown on instructions but parts are not included in the kit (scratch build for late version).**
- 9. Engine hand-starting crank handles (N5 or M13): M13 is late version with bent / curved corners (i.e. a single piece of formed tube. N5 is the early version built-up of several welded parts. The early / N5 part is the most common.**

Again, don't add tools and other details until final assembly with Step 14. Only add the fender mud flaps, reflector (H18), and spare wheel box supports.



1. Don't add tracks until final assembly just before the Schurtzen.
2. Choice between kit tracks and aftermarket. Kit tracks are correct for Mid-Late versions (solid guide horns). Early version should have hollow horn Tracks.
3. (Omitted)
4. Leave cleaning rods (N2) and shovel (N1) off until after Zimmerit. Texture cloth cover on end of bore brush on 2nd from top cleaning rod.
5. Add fender brace K24 or PE part MA12 (choice not shown in instructions).

10

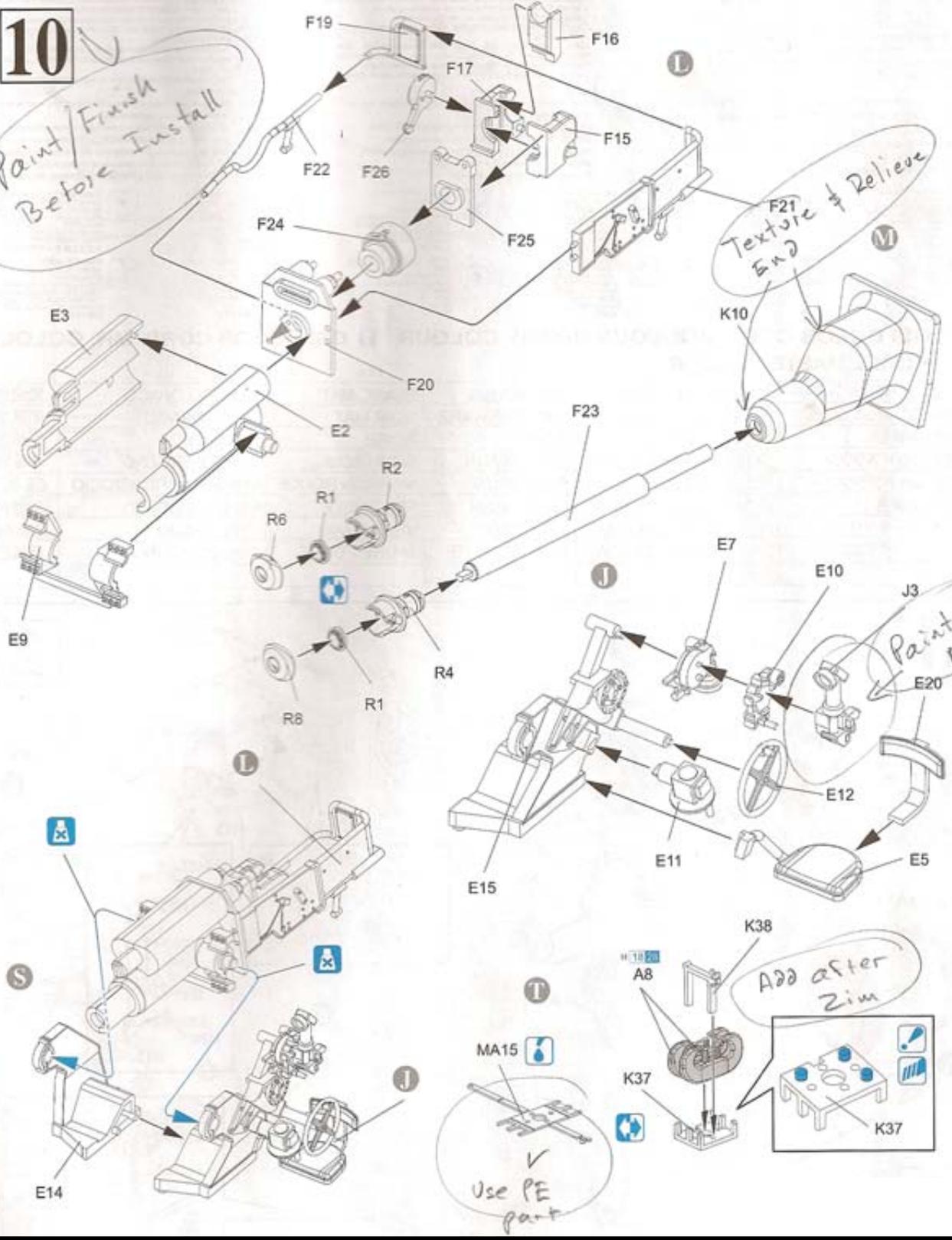
Paint/Finish Before Install

Texture & Relieve End

Paint & Mo

Add after 2im

Use PE part

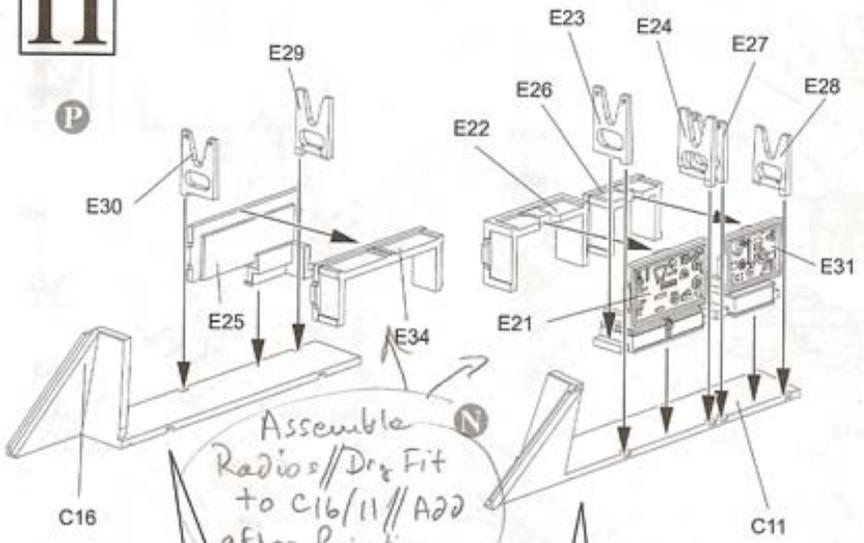


See next page for Step 10 Build Notes.

Step 10 Build Notes:

- 1. Paint and finish the main gun assembly as you go.**
- 2. Mask and paint the gun sight (J3) silver before installing.**
- 3. Enhance the cast iron texture of the gun mantlet (K10).**
- 4. Relieve the end of the mantlet where the gun barrel attaches. Simulate the appearance that the barrel slides (recoils) into the mantlet. (Kit part Give the appearance of a flush fit.)**
- 5. Use PE part MA 15 instead of plastic parts K37/38 for the “C” hook assembly. It looks better and is an easy PE part to use.**

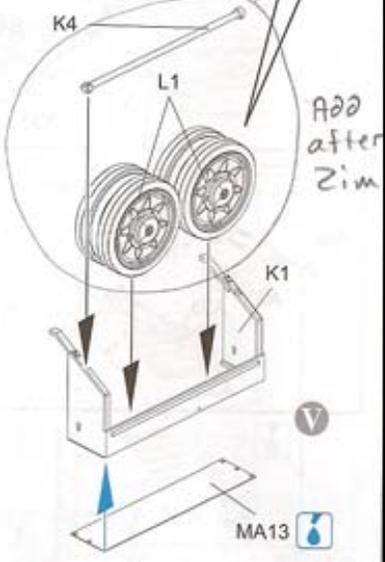
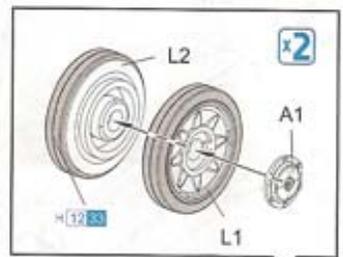
11



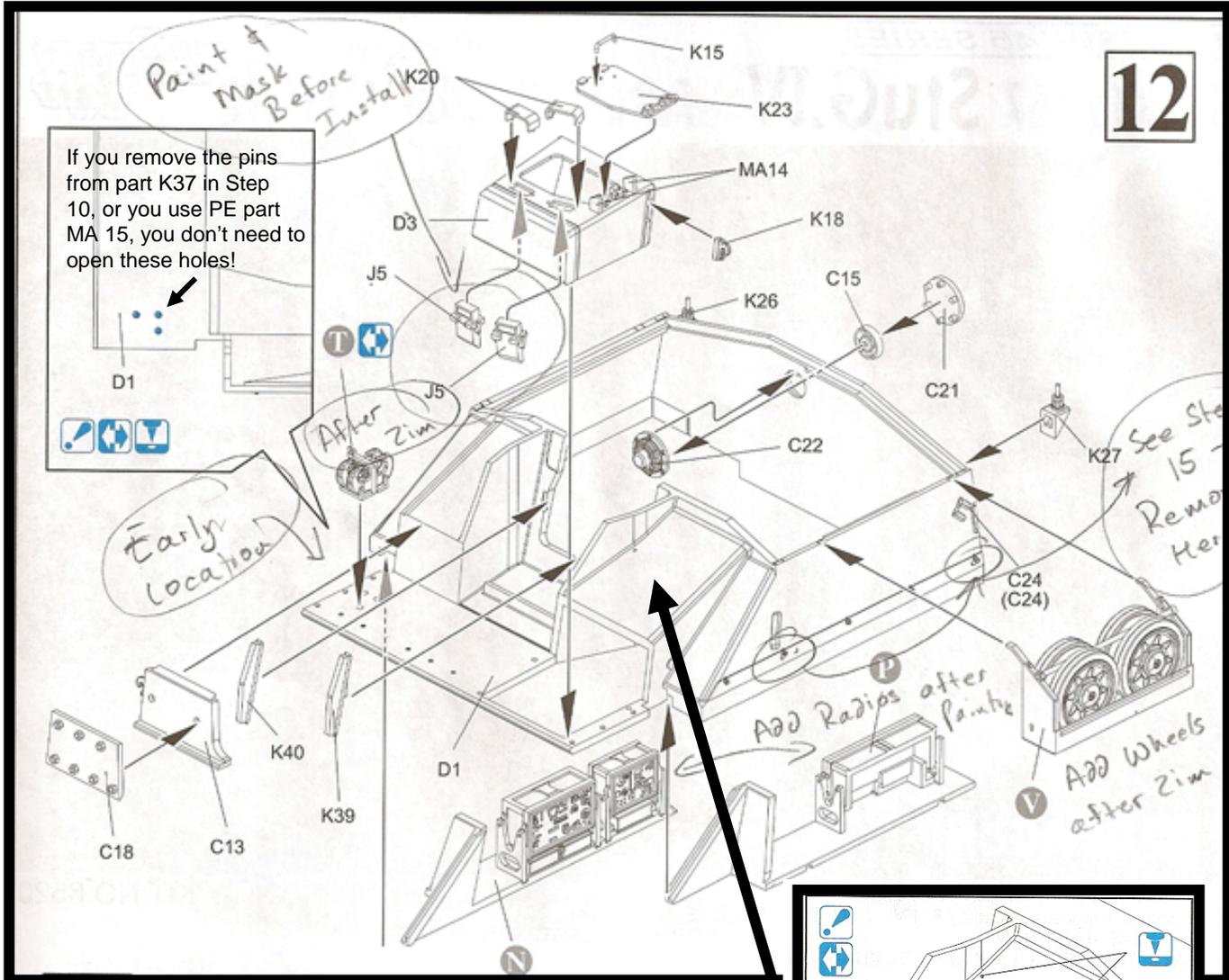
Assemble Radios/Dry Fit to C16/11//Add after painting

Modify These but don't add Radios Yet

keep Radios out For painting



1. Modify parts C 11/16 (superstructure side parts) per instructions.
2. Build radios and dry-fir to parts C 11/16 but don't glue on until after painting them. Install during Step 14 final assembly.
3. Build spare wheel box (K1 and MA 13), but don't add wheels until final assembly.



1. Mask and paint diver's periscopes (J5) silver before installing them.
2. ! Modify driver's hatch and periscopes for late version.
3. Remove bolts blocking Schurtzen brackets (see Step 15) on both sides of superstructure.
4. Don't add "C" hook assembly ("T") until final assembly. Check references for correct location. See notes with Step 8.
5. Rain drip channel (K5) is for Mid – Late versions. Initial production / OOTB didn't have it.

Note: Atak Resin Zimmerit set replaces kit part C18 with a resin part.

Refer back to Step 5 notes about fitting kit parts in the Atak Zimmerit part holes. In this step, parts K26/27, C15+C21, C24/25, assembly "V," and K18 all fit into spaces already molded in the resin Zimmerit "skins."

Step X – Zimmerit (Finally!)

Add Zimmerit now. Either use the Atak Resin Set or hand make.

Note that the spare track links on the upper rear hull don't have Zimmerit under them.

The sheet metal fender extensions on the bottom sides of the superstructure (part D1) usually have Zimmerit, but this is not 100%.

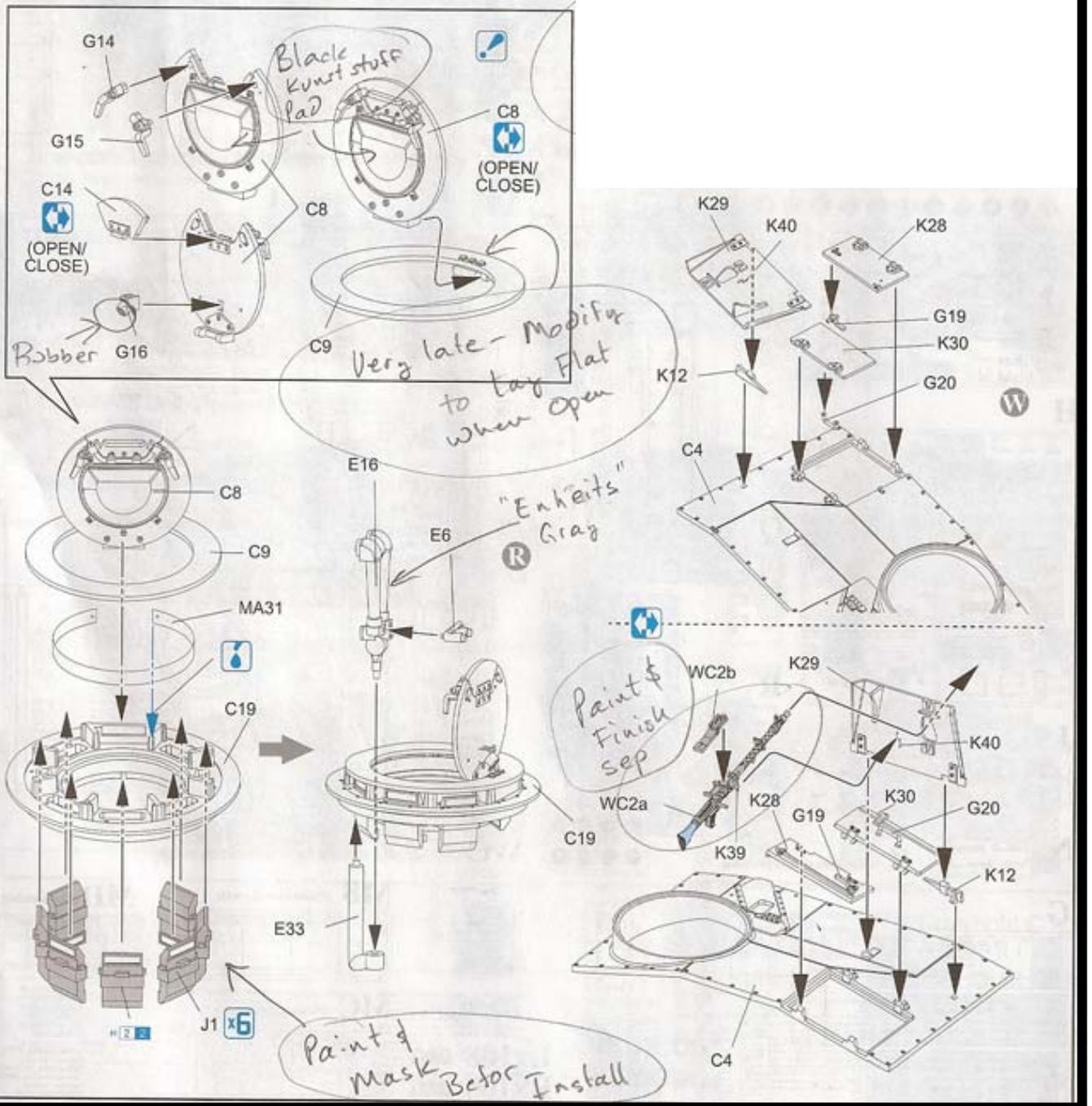
If you add the concrete “armor” to the front of the driver's Position and the vertical right front part of the superstructure, There is no Zimmerit on those locations.

If you don't add the Concrete to those places, add the Zimmerit.

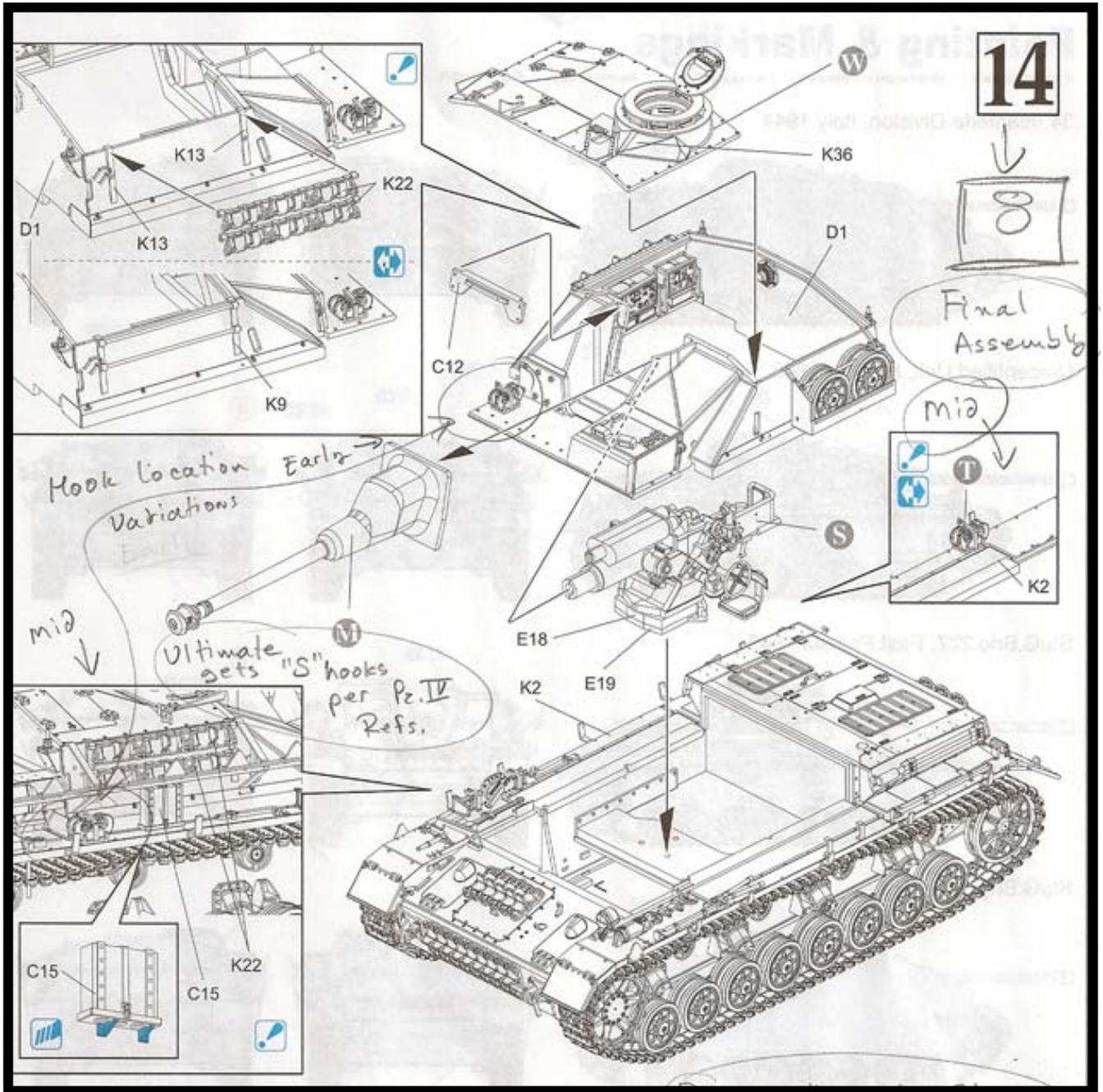
Don't forget to add the Zim on the front and rear mud flaps.

Keep the superstructure (fighting compartment) separate From the lower hull / chassis at this time.

Note to self: Check / dry-fit the fighting compartment and main gun before adding the Zimmerit. If possible, glue the superstructure down and then add the Zimmerit. Then add the gun later.

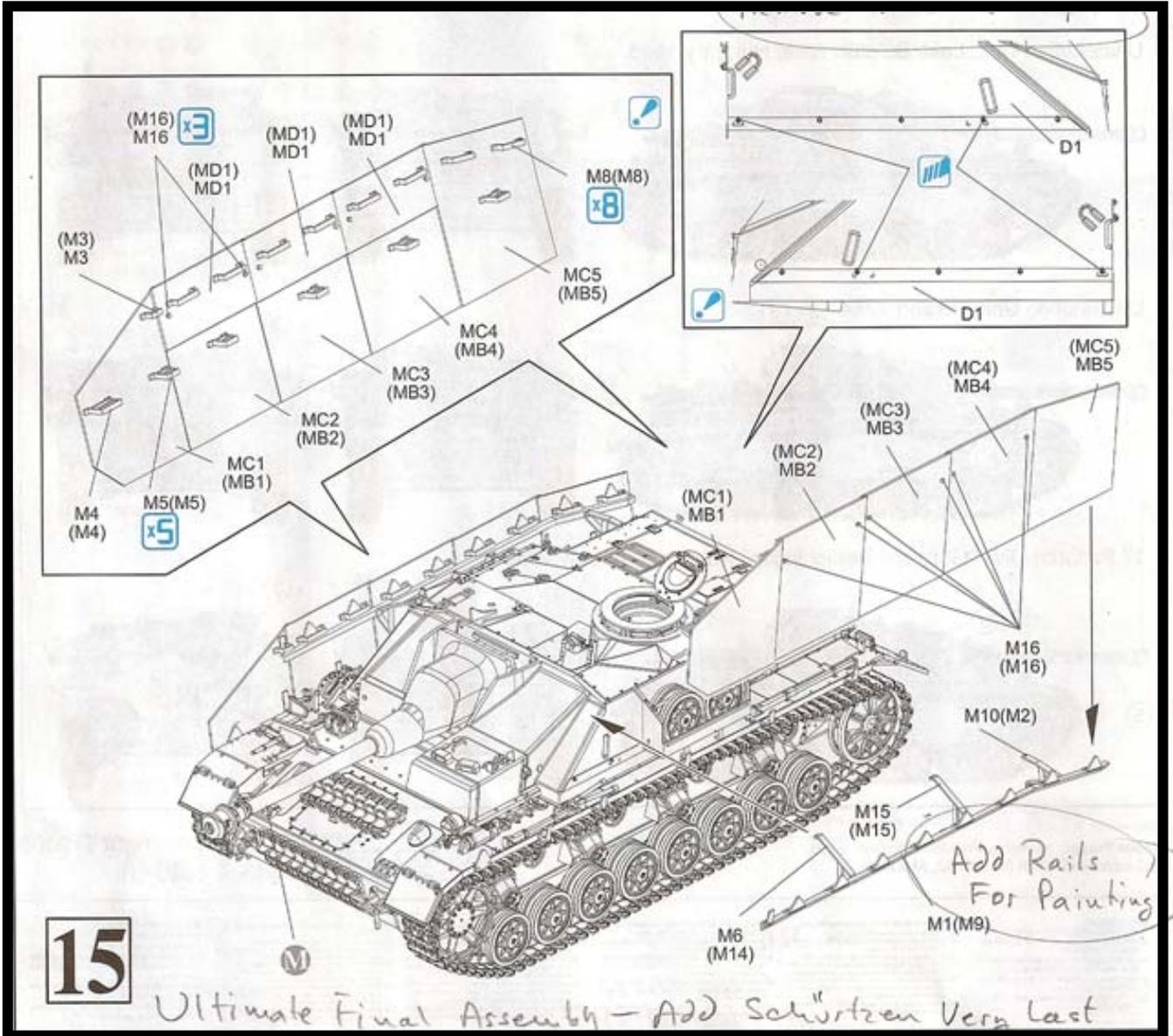


1. Paint the commander's periscopes (J1) silver and mask before installing.
2. Vary late version modify the commander's hatch to open flat.
3. Scissors periscope is optional – Paint and add during final assembly.
4. Paint and add MG 34 during final assembly. Can substitute MG 42. Either needs ammo belt or magazine.
5. Mid – Late versions need modified loader's hatch, Rundumfeuer MG, Nahverteidigungs Waffe, and Pilzen sockets.



1. Add fender details from Step 8.
2. Add weld bead along bottom of part K13, shot deflector, along edge of superstructure roof.
3. Chose final location for "C" hook assembly. For late version, omit "C" hooks and substitute "S" hook on front left fender (per Pz. IV G!). This was apparently an austerity measure.

Note that the tools can be left of and painted separately, then added after cammo finish has been added. Tools were nominally delivered from sub-contractors in Dunkle Gelb and / or Black. Field applied cammo was painted over the tools, factory cammo added before tools.



1. Assemble and add Schurtzen rails before painting.
2. Add main gun barrel and mantlet. Note: There is a fabric weather cover that is on the prototype between the inside top edge of the mantlet and the front edge of the superstructure opening. Make from tissue, foil, or epoxy putty sheet.
3. Assemble and paint the Schurtzen before adding. Insides of panels are either plain Dunkle Gelb (Early – Mid versions) or primer red (Late).
4. Weathering should probably be done before adding the Schurtzen.
5. Adding the tracks must be done before the Schurtzen. Weather before or after adding the tracks depending on final appearance (heavy mud or light dust, etc)

Alternatively, the tracks and suspension (wheels) can be assembled as units and painted and weathered before installing on the model. Dry-fit the wheels, glue the tracks around them, then after the tracks dry, remove the entire set.

Final Notes:

- 1. Remove masks from periscopes and gun sight after final flat finish coats are added.**
- 2. Tail light painting: Four small openings on top = green // Two oval openings on bottom = red-orange // Late model convoy light is clear blue.**
- 3.**