

But wait! There's more!!
Or
Part 3 of Group Build Project 1 Notes

Step 1: Drive sprocket (A 5 and A 6) needs to have the seams puttied. The prototype was cast with a bolted on sprocket part. Idler wheel (cast type, A 11 + A 7 + MA 9) needs putty and texture.

Step 2: Rear towing clevis mounts – the kit has all three types (early, mid- and late):

H 45 (early) no holes

H23 + H26 + H13 (mid) clevis assembly shown in instructions

H49 (late) bolts for clevis but no clevis

Detail the external starter pegs on part H12. These should be flatter on the ends, and they actually have very small annular grooves which should be about 1 mm from the ends.

Fill holes on K 16 (for late) and shave bolts on B 1

Step 3: Assembly "F" (rear hull) needs sanding to fit hull part X.

Part B 4 needs the lugs trimmed off its bottom edge to fit better.

Parts B 10 /11 are tough to fit and fill the seams (mostly hidden by fenders and final drives)

Steps 3 and 5: Use parts B 3 and B 2 to fill the gaps in the hull stiffeners on part B 1 and part X. (These are the gaps shown just below parts H 57 / 58 on step 4.)

Step 4: Add cast texture to rear tow hooks H 57 / 58.

Add bolts to tops of bumper stops (two small bolts on top of each part A 9).

Steps 4 and 5: Skip to step 5 and add parts B 6 and B 5 (upper glacis plates) during step 4 to allow filling and weld beads. Note: to add B 5 to the hull, fit the ends square and then add B 6.

Step 7: Upper rear hull part H 19 (early to mid) or K 6 (late). (Don't do what I did for a late version and modify H 19. Just use K 6. I didn't see it until I was already done modifying H 19.)

The hinges on the engine hatch part H 21 requires some sanding to fit the hinges on the engine deck part.

The kit contains both the early / mid (H 42 sloped sides) and late (H 41 straight sides) radiator access boxes. It also contains an extra lifting handle A 47 shown on some late vehicles. No need to scratch build either detail for late versions.

Step 9: Part K24 / MA12 (fender brace) is only for the initial production vehicles. Leave the mount pad on part B 6 but shave off the bolt heads for early and some mid-production vehicles. For later mid-production and late production vehicles, shave of the mounting pad completely. Note the Poznan museum StuG IV for an example of the missing pad.

Step 14: Use the bullet deflector part K 11 (smooth – rounded) instead of part K 36 (as shown in instructions). All but one reference photo shows the "rounded" deflector. The one photo that shows the possible "angled" deflector is still not definitive. (I think the "angled" deflector is just a result of the kit maker misinterpreting some versions of post-war StuG IV plans.)

What was Dragon Thinking? Or Mysterious Photo Etch Parts

Tom Cockle, author and noted modeler, who help with the research on this (and other Dragon Pz IV kits) sent me a note in response to a question I posted on Missing-Links asking what some of the unidentified PE parts were intended for.

Bottom line up-front, Dragon gave us several "bonus" PE parts (as well as a ton of useful "spare" plastic parts) with this kit. It would seem that the basic PE fret for the Pz. IV Ausf H was simply copied with a new kit number and added to the StuG IV. So, we have the following extras:

MA 10 and MA 11: These a Pz IV fender braces. All versions from the Ausf E had these just forward of the rear side cooling air outlet louvers. These were used all the way through the Ausf J. (But not on the StuG IV!) Save 'em for that future Pz IV project!

MA 12: Right front fender brace. This is a PE part that can be used in place of plastic kit part K 24 in step 9. As noted above, this brace was only on the initial production (probably only the first 30) StuG IV's. These vehicles were manufactured using Pz IV hulls direct off the Pz IV assembly line. After these first 30, the rest of the StuG IV's were produced on hulls made for the StuG IV.

Another interesting thing about these parts is that K 24 is for the early / mid Pz IV, so it has a hole in it (to allow for the 30 mm appliqué armor bolted on starting with the Ausf F2). After the appliqué armor began to be welded on, the hole wasn't needed anymore, and later, the armor was up-graded to 80 mm. So, sometime in during the Ausf H, the hole was no longer made on the brace.

Braces with and without holes were used at the same time, though, until the ones with holes were used up.

(This is a manufacturing phenomenon known as "last in first out." This occurs when a bin is filled up with new parts leaving some of the older ones in the bottom. The latest parts are used first – since they're on the top of the pile – and the older parts get used later – sometimes much later!)

Anyways, save this one for a later Pz IV project (unless you're going for that initial production StuG IV).

MA 16: This is the late style ax head mount. If you use the kit part N 4, you don't need it since the mount is molded on. However, you could show the ax not mounted, or you could shave off the molded on mount and use the PE part. The instructions don't show it, but that's what it is. This PE part is suitable for any mid to late Pz IV Ausf H through J.

MA 17 (x 20): These had me stumped. Mr. Cockle eased my mind, though. These are the hull mounting pads for the *Schurtzen* brackets. They're useful on any Pz IV Ausf G through J if you model it without the brackets and rails. They go on the attachment points on the hull where the brackets would be glued on if you used them.

Although they were not intended for the StuG IV kit, they're still useful for the same purpose, to add to the hull if you leave the *Schurtzen* brackets off the model. (Which was done for several of the StuG IV's photographed in Normandy, or perhaps to show damage, etc.) For the StuG IV, though, you'll only need three on a side at the most.

If you go this route, you need them only on the upper attachment points for parts M 6 (M14), M 15 (M 15), and M 10 (M 2) in step 15. You can either shave off the bolts on the superstructure sides (part D 1) as shown in the scrap view or leave them on. If you shave them off, you should open holes to show the missing bolts.

MA 22: This is the keeper chain for the jack block (kit part C 15). The kit part represents the strap type keeper and MA 22 representing the chain type. The chain type had a spring that kept tension on the jack block to hold it in its mount. This spring detail is missing from the PE part.

However, you could use this PE chain in one of a couple of different places on the StuG IV (unless you want it on the jack block). Part H 27, the towing clevis pin, step 2 needs a keeper chain. Alternatively, you could use it on part H 19, upper rear hull, in step 7 to represent the chain used to hold the towing cables. See the sketches in Part 2 for these locations.

In either event, use the chain for something. It's too nice to leave off and will add some detail wherever you choose.

MA 23: This is the small rain gutter used on the turret face over the gunner's sight aperture on the Pz IV. Humph...! I just can't think of any other use. Save it for a Pz IV project.

MA 30 (x 10): These are replacements for the *Schurtzen* hooks on the fenders, kit parts K2 and K3. The molded on hooks are pretty nice, but these are PE! I donno... I guess it's actually a wash to use or not use these. I think they would look slightly better than the plastic kit parts, but the effort would mostly show off if you don't add the *Schurtzen* plates. With the plates, I don't know if you could see them. Since I'm not adding the standard Schurtzen to my model, I'm hesitant to say to use these, but if I was adding the standard Schurtzen, I'd use them on my own model. Dealer's choice, but at least you know what they are now.