

Chain Dogs

BMW R/75 in 1/9th scale, by ESCI
photos and story by Bruce MacRae
"Chain Dogs" (Kettenhunde) refers to
the chains of the gorgets worn by the
Feldgendarmerie. The term was
applied to them by other services,
possibly derogatorily.





Kit by ModelCellar

The Kit

In 1972, already being a very active member of the IPMS/LA chapter for four years, I built two of these kits for a client in New York, and at some point, I purchased a third kit that eventually was lost to time and space.

This was an excellent kit for its day, and I always wanted to build another and use the skills and techniques I have learned since to improve upon it. In 2021 while at the Best of the West in Las Vegas, a dealer gave me another 1972 era kit and said, "here I want you to have this."

With a funny twinkle in his eye, he told me to open it then and there. To my complete surprise, I found a half-built kit along with a 3x5" card in my own handwriting. He then told me that I had given him this half-built kit some 45 years ago, and knowing he was never going to build it, he wanted to return it. Although I don't really remember ever starting this kit, I thought it may be time to finish what might be the oldest Shelf Queen in existence.

The details of the parts is actually very good, but the injector pin marks were placed in the most inconvenient places that E.S.C.I. could find. Most of these were a real bear to fix. The kit had seams everywhere; almost every part had a seam to fill and sand away. The frame and the spoke wheels took an enormous amount of time to correct.

The instruction sheet is probably the worst I have ever seen. One wondered, does this part go here or there? Or maybe like this, and which side is up? When it came to the hoses the real nightmare started. Back and forth I would go through the sheet trying to figure out where each hose started, where they went, and how they were connected. To make matters worse, there are a lot of hoses. I began to think that the guy who wrote the instruction sheet never actually tried to build the kit by reading the instructions. Luckily, we have the Internet and there I found the answers to most of my questions. Eventually I stumbled across a new instruction sheet for this kit online, with all new artwork that cleared up many of the big mysteries.

Decals

The decals in my kit were half a century old and badly yellowed. ESCI had re-released the kit about ten years ago through Italeri with new decals (although different markings) and along with a new instruction sheet. I found that Italeri would sell me a new decal sheet for \$8.00, and this proved very helpful.

I have always wanted to use the 11th Panzer Division insignia on a model, and I thought that it would look great on this bike. However, no one made this insignia in 1/9th scale; in fact you really can't find any decals in this scale. That meant I'd have to hand paint it! I found the artwork online and used Photoshop to scale it out. I then made paper copies in different sizes and tried them out on paper, then cut each of them out and laid them on the model to see which looked right. Once I figured out the proper size, I carefully cut the insignia (positive) out so that I had a negative silhouette. I placed the positive on the hood of the sidecar to get the position perfect. I then took the negative (with the silhouette-hole in it) and carefully replaced it over

the positive. I had carefully cut all the paper so there was a very minimal border around the open silhouette. Then I carefully removed the positive. Then using the paper cut out of the positive insignia as a painting guide, I slowly started to free-hand-paint the insignia inside the negative silhouette. I mostly used a 3/0 round brush with a good point along with a Jo Sonja Warm White acrylic. A little Liquitex Flow Additive and a wet palette helps a lot. The trick is to keep the paint thin, so you don't get paint build-up. I painted test insignia on a piece of plastic to see if I could do it. It came out better than I hoped. Now I only had to do it two more times on the sidecar, front and back.

For the Military Police tactical marking on the sidecar fenders, I had to cut up three 50-year-old decals to make them . . . twice, as I wasn't going to try to hand paint those, thinking that I had already stretched my luck far enough.

There are no decals of this marking. Had to hand paint it. Was not sure if I could do it. Would have preferred a decal.



Bruce MacRae



Detailing the kit

One of the sprue trees in the kit is made of black vinyl, containing tires, pipes, seats, etc. The problem with this is you really can't effectively sand a seam out of the vinyl parts. The most prominent of these parts are two curved pipes that go on the front of the engine, of which I have no idea what they're called. To overcome the seam and fit problem, I made a two-part RTV mold of them and using urethane casting (Silpak Quick Cast) I made two new pipes. While they were still green (soft) I bent them just enough to make them fit right.

There were small details that I felt like I needed to add considering the scale of this kit. Because the parts are bigger and easier to see and handle than 1/35th scale, it's important that missing details be added. I added the wiring and clips for the taillights and sidecar fender lights. I made them from flat and round lead wire. *(below)*

A lot of bolt heads and washers were missing, so these were replaced with thin sheet plastic and lead using a punch tool set from UMM-USA. *(above right)* My good friend Bauble Young (he took Best of Show at the 2024 IPMS/Nationals with his

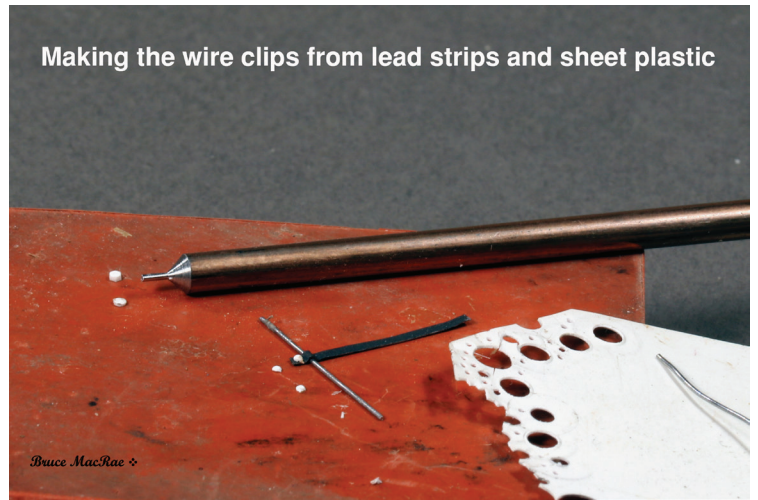
Added the wiring, clips and bolts for the lights, from lead.



Making reflectors for the lights



Making the wire clips from lead strips and sheet plastic



Foundation Spaceship), designed a 3D file and then printed the spent 8mm machine gun rounds that I placed under the MG-34 in the sidecar. Now that's a friend! *(above)*

I could not sand and clean up the seams inside the sidecar due to their location, as I couldn't really get my fingers in there. So, again I asked Bauble Young if he could 3D print me two Jerry cans that I could stuff in there and cover the seams, and again

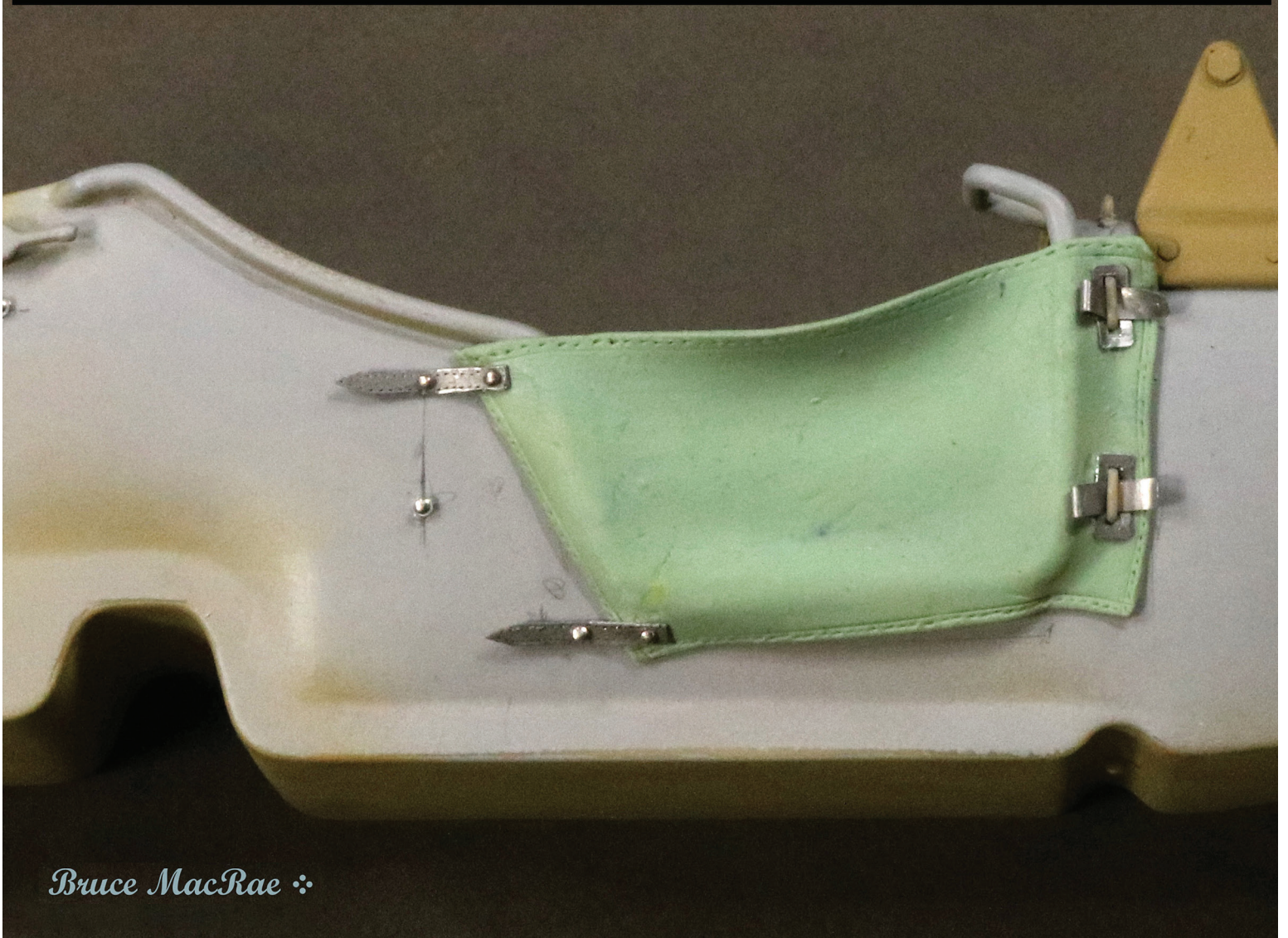
he came through for me. Those cans are really very nice, and it's a pity that you can't see any more of them, as the detail is amazing. *(right)*

I added dents and damage on the storage boxes and sidecar using a Dremel ball bit. Running the bit on the inside of the part back and forth, exerting light pressure on a low speed will eventually wear down the plastic till you can almost see through it. The keyword here is light and slow, to avoid any heat build-up that will melt the plastic. Then from the outside take your X-Acto or a needle and break through the plastic. You can open, peel and move the torn plastic around.

Steve Munsell, the owner of Value Gear, showed me how to use epoxy putty to make tarps. With this knowledge I was able to make the cloth door on the sidecar from scratch. I used thin sheet lead and straight pins for the bolts and straps.



Made side door from Apoxie Sculpt and lead.



Bruce MacRae ❖

Crew

The bike could be a good piece on its own, but I wanted to add a figure to the model to create a sense of scale and life. Something the viewer can relate to, and besides, who doesn't love dogs?

The rider and his dog (I call him Schnapps) figures are by ModelCellar. This is an excellent resin kit and was designed to fit perfectly on the ESCI BMW kit. It features clean castings and is sculpted perfectly with minimal seams that are easy to clean up. I highly recommend this kit. The gear such as the MP-40 machine pistol, two leather saddle bags and helmet are nicely detailed and separate for ease in painting. Even Schnapps comes with his own seat that fits his bottom perfectly.

Schnapps needed to be rotated a little bit to the left because otherwise his nose was right up against the handlebar. To accomplish this, I had to re-sculpt the seat with epoxy ribbon so it would fit this new impression. The sling for the MP-40 was made from flat lead strip and wire.



Bruce MacRae ❖



Base

I have a friend who owns a wood shop who has been kind enough to cut custom bases for most of my projects, this being one of them.

On top of the wood base, I mounted a piece of rigid foam left over from another diorama I didn't think I'd ever get to use again. While working in Hollywood we used tons of this foam material for sets and miniatures, most of which were thrown out when the film was done. Fortunately, some of it came home with me, along with this piece.

I used a sculpting tool to carve out the tire tracks locations. Then I pressed Apoxie Sculpt into them and smoothed it out while it was still soft and then rolled a tire through the track. I dipped the tire in water to keep it from pulling up the Apoxie. If it doesn't turn out well, you just smooth it out and do it again. It took me a couple attempts to get it right. Using a small rock from the yard I pressed some texture into the foam, then covered the foam with Spackle.

The sides of the base were covered with 1/8th" sheet plastic and then filled and sanded to remove any seams. I leave the plastic walls a little higher than the foam ground cover, that way I can cut it down to the exact shape of the groundwork. There is always a small gap between the plastic walls and the foam, which can be filled-in with Apoxie Sculpt. The wood/plastic base is sprayed with Rust-Oleum Auto Primer 2089 Dark Grey.

The Base color is Krylon Fusion "All-in One" Stain Midnight Garden. I spattered it with a fine grain of five colors: Medium Grey/Dark Grey/Black/Phthalo Green/Phthalo Green mixed with White. These

colors are spattered in many layers so there are many small dots of color. Lastly the whole base is given several coats of Satin Clear Wood Finish by Deft. Later, the sides are masked off to protect the finish while working on the groundwork.

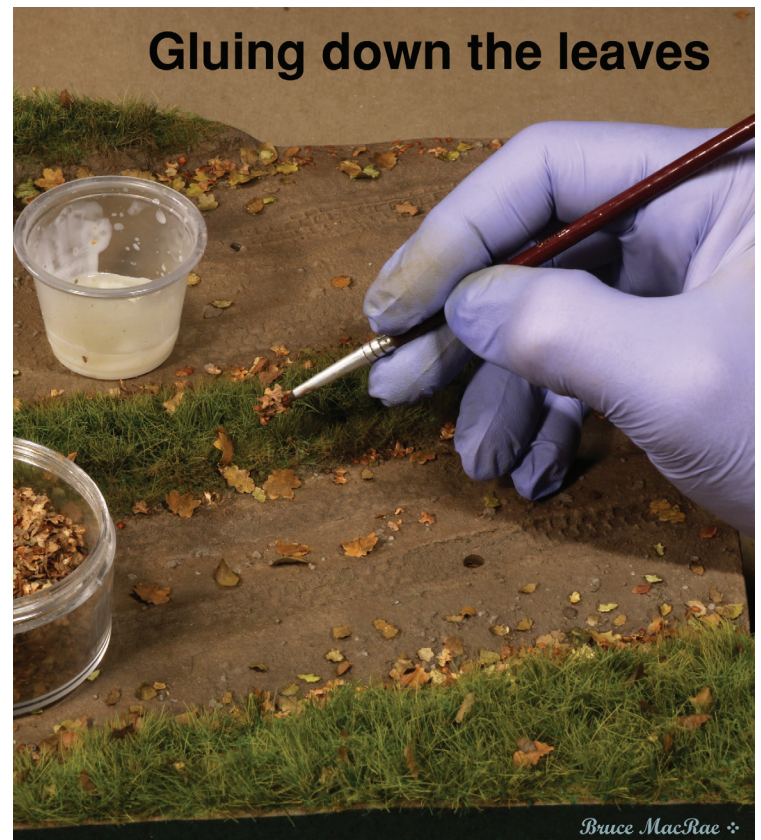
The groundwork was given a base of Jo Sonja Raw Umber to be followed by a thinned coat of Jo Sonja- Fawn. When dry, I added thin washes of Jo Sonja-Burnt Umber. Lastly, I mixed water with VMS Pigment 02 EU Brown Earth and airbrushed it over the pre-wetted ground. I used a short, wet brush to move the wet pigments around.

I use several leaf punches from Green Stuff World to punch out scale leaves from real leaves found in the yard. To add them to the groundwork, I make a mixture of 50/50 white glue/PVA and water, make a puddle and add the leaves in it. Sometimes I'll drip the leaves in the glue and place them singly. Once dry, the clear glue doesn't show and also helps seal the leaves. After all the glue is dry, I go over them with a thin glaze of browns and greens, mostly using AK 3rd Generation paint, leaving some of the natural leaf color to come through.

This project took 275 hours in three months to complete. I didn't think it would take this long, but I just kept finding one more thing to fix, and one more thing to add, and one more thing to paint, and one more thing . . .



Tracks were made from
Epoxy Sculpt



Gluing down the leaves

Paint

As for paint, I mixed my own colors to achieve the color-tones I was looking for. Please refer to the bottom of the article for the mixing formulas. On the inner side wall of the fenders, I used MIG Pigment 3028 City Dk Dust mixed with a little water and brushed it on. Once dried I blended the pigments with my finger to feather them in. I Used a damp Filbert Grainer brush to make weather streaks.

I later pin-washed the model using MIG-1618 PLW Deep Brown. VMS earth pigments were used for the underside dirt build up, most of which cannot be seen. The wood grain on the MG-34 stock was done with Burnt Sienna oil paint on an acrylic base of Tamiya Buff.



Paint Formulas

Motorcycle & Sidecar -

RAL 7028 Dunkelgelb - Tamiya XF-60, XF-88, XF-92, XF-73, XF-68. The RAL 6011. Resendagrun - mix of AK3Generation 1150 Gunship Green (3 parts) and AK3G 11157 U.S. DK Green (1 part). RAL 8012 Rotbrun - AK3G 11107 Dark Rust (3 parts), AK3G 11110 Leather Brown (1 part)

Tires -

AK3G 11027 Rubber Blk overall.

Dust -

VMS Pigment 02 EU Brown Earth.

Side walls with MIG Pigment 3024 Sand.

Inner side wall - MIG Pigment 3028 City Dk Dust. Mixed with water and brushed on.

Engine -

Vallejo 77.720 Gunmetal Grey and Vallejo 77.724 Silver.

Saddle Bag -

Black Primer base. Airbrushed base color AK3G - 11338(AFV) N8 Earth Red. Followed with AK3G - 11417 Waffen Brown 1st shadow. AK3G - 11102 Deep Brown 1st HL. AK3G - 11101 Orange Brown 2nd HL. AK3G - 11109 Dark Brown 2nd shadow.

Canvas Sidecar Door -

Black primer base color is AK3G-11312(AFV) RAL 6011B Resedagrun. Highlighted using AK3G-11058 Decomposed Flesh. AK3G - 11158 Reflective Green for Shadow.

Bike Seats -

Base is AK3G - 11028 Smoke Black. Thinned MIG - 3523 Oilbrusher Dusty Earth blended





Bruce MacRae ❖



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Bruce started modeling at age 7 as "quality time with Dad" and by the age 15 he thought he knew enough about to take his Revell 1/72 scale B-17 to the Revell Factory in Venice Ca to point out the flaws in the kit to Lloid Jones, the head of R&D. Mr. Jones patiently listened to Bruce before telling him that their business was not making perfect models, but rather to make money. Bruce discovered IPMS through Revell and was soon entering competitions as his skills progressed.

In 1979 his hobby led the way into the Hollywood film world where he worked full time building props and models for Star Trek 'The Motion Picture' and 63 other feature films and TV commercials over the next 33 years. Bruce is now retired and live in Las Vegas with his wife and two golden retrievers and enjoys travelling to model shows around the U.S. in his RV making new friends and picking up a trophy or two along the way.

