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JAKE'S WERKSTATT

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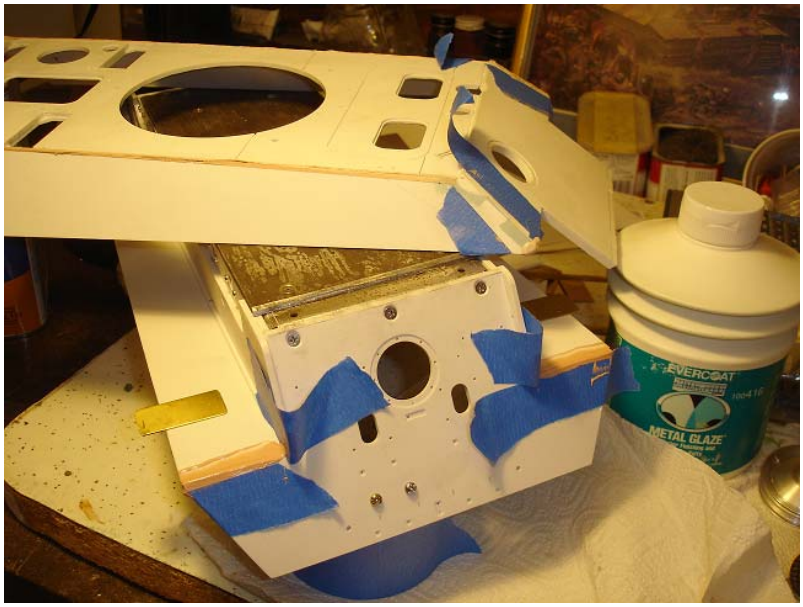
CONSTRUCTION OF THE WeCoHe PANTHER AUSFÜHRUNG G -PART 6

In the last few articles we've been concentrating on getting the hull pieces made and fitted together. Now it's time to start cleaning up the joints and interfaces that are left behind when joining to increase both strength and visual integrity of the model. In the photograph below is the *'murderer's row'* lineup of fillers and finishing products for body work. These are all auto-body products, and you have basically three levels of filling and finishing prior to primering; on the lower right in the big can is 'Z-Grip', it is used for filling in large areas; The tub on top and the dark blue can are glazing putties, and basically you can use one or the other. These can be used alone for light areas, or used on top of the 'Z-Grip' filler; in the yellow tube is 'Nitro-Stan', and this stuff will definitely clear any and everyone out of your shop that's not used to it. This stuff is used for cleaning up the fine scratches and can be applied with finger or acid brush. All the products here are two-part, except for the Nitro-Stan, they have a hardener (the tubes seen on the mixing pad). You basically mix up small portions that are needed, and you have a couple minutes working time. If you use more hardener, the stuff will set up fast. The hardener comes in two colors, blue and red, and it's good to get both, as you can show distinction between layers or areas. The build process can move very fast with this stuff, and you can even make parts out of it, or use it to texture with among other things. The car auto-body guys use large quantities of this stuff at a time. They can't fool around waiting for something to dry and harden when a customer's waiting and they've got a lot full of cars. I use Squadron Putty pretty much for only one thing now, and that's zimmerit on styrene, it's not very good as a filler, as it shrinks too much. Also, do yourself a favor and buy the Evercoat brand, don't buy the cheap Bondo, as it's just crap in more ways than I can describe.

Implements of Body Work

In the two photos below you see a lot of blue tape. This is 3M brand painter's tape that you can get from Home Depot or Lowe's. It's low-tac and you can even make it lower by sticking it on and off of your clothes a few times before putting it on. You'd do this when painting a few different colored layers or like what I often use it for, painting different colored numerals. Here I'm using it to mask areas I don't want the glazing putty to go on. Some tape I've already removed such as between the side armor plate and the upper deck. Areas that provide little purchase area such as the long groove on the side need to be prepared further by scribing the groove between the joints deeper and hacking the area up slightly with a scribing tool. Place the filler on top, let it dry, and with wet/dry sandpaper (#220) sand each to the angle it's on and you're left with a clean angled joint. The rear plate of the tank had been permanently joined to the tank, and it is being finished here as well as all the upper hull joints. The Panther is going to represent one produced in the Spring of '44, it will have zimmerit, so the flame cut joints on the hull I don't have to represent.

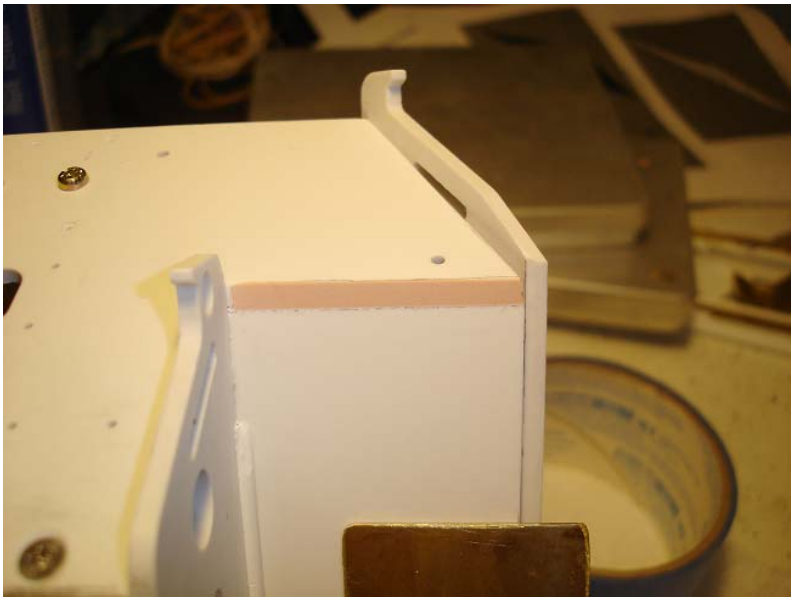


Applying Automotive Glazing Putty

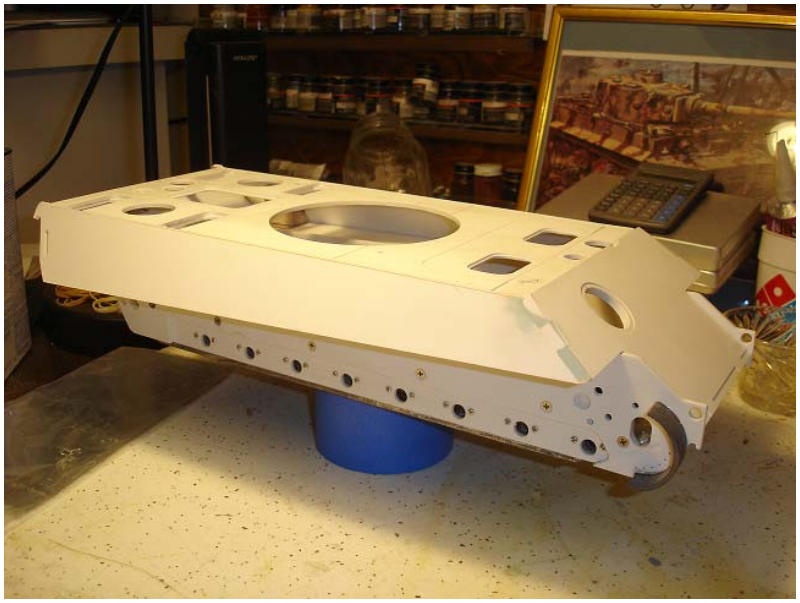
You want to apply this stuff adequately proud of the joint, it will wet sand down easily

Below after wet sanding you can see how the joints cleaned up. After applying primer you won't be able to tell where the plastic starts and the putty begins. Add to this that these areas will have zimmerit as well. At the top between the side and front armor plates, the glazing putty did not fill as well. This area needs to be scribed out, that is it is hatched up slightly before another coat of glazing putty is applied and wet-sanded.

After wet sanding, clean joints are left. The area on the upper left will have to be slightly cleaned out and an additional coat applied, then wet sanded.

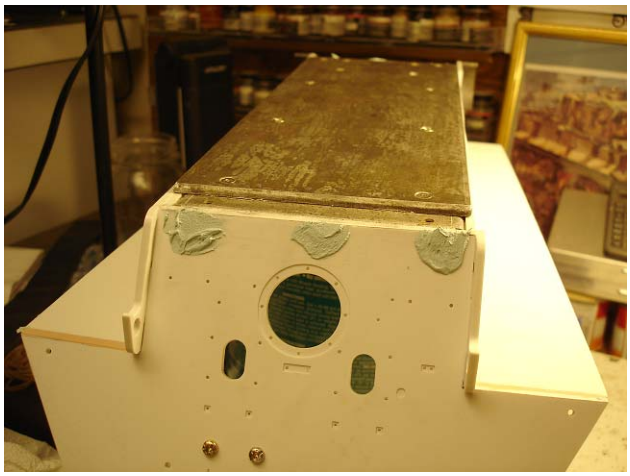


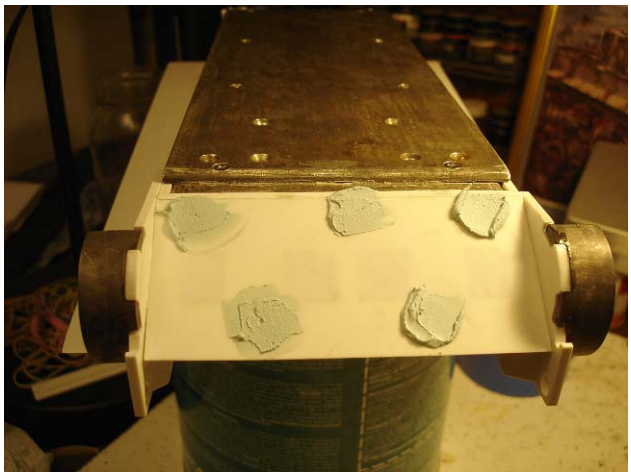
Interface between the panniers and the rear plate cleaned up nicely. This area also was scribed down prior to applying putty as it's a thin area and prone to chipping. The scribing provides additional 'tooth' for strength.



This is what we're left with. All the upper hull joints filled and finished.

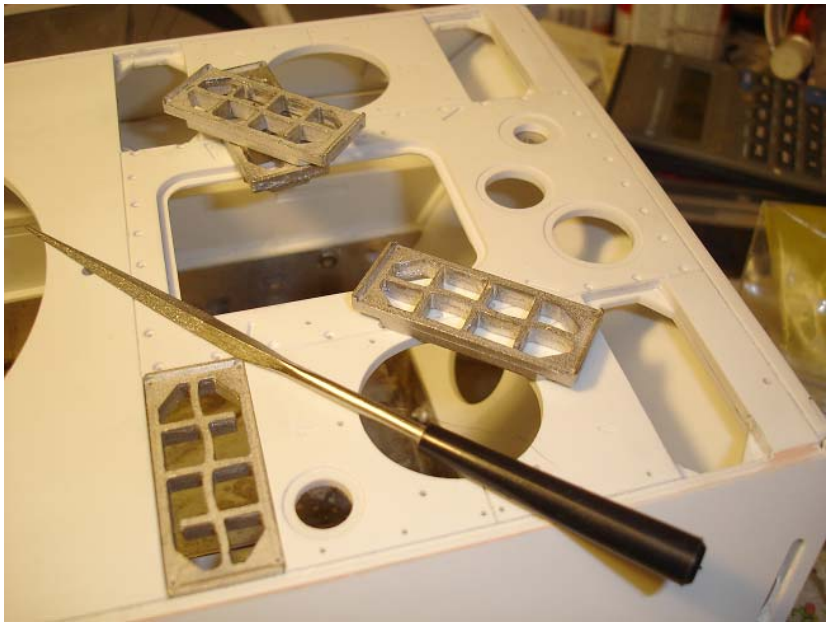
The next two photos show the mounting screws for the forward and aft mounting plates being glazed over. These screws were countersunk below the surface of the armor. The edges of the holes were hatched up also with a scriber as it's a shallow amount of glazing putty, and after the putty has dried, the areas were wet sanded.





The aft plate and front lower glacis armor mounting screws puttied over.

Often you get tired of working on one particular area of a subject, especially if it's lengthy, so you switch to something else that needs accomplishing. In the photo below the radiator air cooling induction grates are being cleaned up of flashing and casting seams for trial fitment. These pieces will also partake of an acid bath prior to installation. Lot's of metal on this kit.



Cleaning up the radiator air cooling induction grates.

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