



CONSTRUCTION OF THE WeCoHe PANTHER AUSFÜHRUNG G -PART 7

Continuing with the work presented in Panther Part 6, work now moves into tightening up the joints between the upper and lower hulls, as well as creating a seating 'lip' inside the upper panniers. The materials utilized are the same as before with the addition of using some wax paper. Wax is used to provide a barrier, so that the new material, in this case filler or glazing putty won't stick to it while it is being constructed on the opposite surface. Very tight joints can be created here. I had a choice to use either wax paper or wax out of the can, and my choice for wax is bowling alley wax as it spreads and stays well. Either method provides the same results and has its own inherent advantages. Bowling alley wax will conform to a non-consistent surface, whereas wax paper is better when the surface is relatively smooth and you don't have to clean it off afterwards. In the photo below you can see a sheet of wax paper in the foreground and a sheet of wax paper wrapped over the pannier edges and taped down that will be protected as the filler or glazing putty is applied to the adjacent surface, in this case the upper hull.



Wax paper is wrapped over the panniers to seal them from the filler and glazing putty.

Before starting, as the styrene is very smooth, the desired areas that will receive the filler are scored with a sharp object to provide adequate 'tooth' for the filler to adhere to. The first application will be the tougher Z-Grip Filler. This is placed on the inside edges of the upper hull (which is facing upward in the photo). The lower hull is then set down on top and pressed into the Z-Grip filler which a lot of the excess filler comes out on top. A putty knife then is dragged the entire length of the joint pressing putty back into the joint (see the two photos below), all the while creating one surface between the pannier and the side hull's bottom edge (now facing upward).



filler pressed into the joint and creating one single even surface between the two hulls.



The Port side also.

As there is only a thin layer at the separation point, it's relatively easy to separate the two hulls. After separating the two hulls, remove the wax paper; place the two hulls back together and wet sand the excess off using wet/dry 220. Inspect the areas, mark the areas that didn't come out correctly, and with a sharp tool hatchet up the area to provide 'tooth', put wax paper back on, wait till the surfaces are adequately dry, then conduct the same procedure again. Sometimes it takes a few times to correct all the problem areas. No big deal. In the photo below you can see the seating lip made from the filler. When completed and everything has been sanded smooth, and the surface is dry. Take some thin CA and apply it to all of the surfaces with the filler on it. The stuff is porous and the CA will give the filler increased strength. Afterwards, wet sand with some 1000 grit and that's it.



Filler has created a seating lip for the panniers in the upper hull.

The two photos below show how close you can get these working edges when utilizing this method. The result will be a vehicle that will have a further reduction of dust within the hull, as well as having a more correct appearance.



Right forward leading edge of pannier.



Looking aft on the left side.

Another side job going on is installing the ga-zillion micro-bolts in each wheel. There are total of 16 road wheels, and on each road wheel there are 24 bolts on the outer rim, 8 that surround the inner hub, and 8 that are on the hub cover itself, all for a grand total of 640 bolts. The bolts on the outer rim are extremely tiny, but not the tiniest in the kit by far. Still pretty small, so I place all the tools along with a magnifying glass inside a box lid, as sometimes the bolt heads invariably pop out of the tweezers. I cut a deep slit in a piece of styrene and filled it with CA. I dip the threaded portion into the CA then install them on the wheel. Later I'll take a toothpick and dipping that into the CA, I'll place a little more glue at the bolt head surface, ensuring it's firmly glued down. Once complete, each wheel will be pickled, primered, base-coated, and the tires installed.



The 24 outer bolts are being installed, 8 larger ones will go in the inside 8, and 8 more on the hub cover



The set up for installing the micro-bolts.

Once complete with installing the initial 32 bolts per wheel, a shaft is installed into each, but it's a tight fit, and needs to be wetsanded to fit. I used some 1000 grit sandpaper, and put the shaft in a Dremel tool and after soaking the sandpaper, made short work of polishing down the shaft. After words, the rest of the hardware was installed on the wheel with the exception of the wheel hub covers. These will be installed at a later date.



Polishing each wheel shaft to fit.

The Panther is going to be displayed at an upcoming show in its present condition. As we want to display it showing off the metal, the running gear is fully assembled. Following the show, it will again be disassembled so the wheels can be pickled, primed, and painted, and the interior of the tank painted out. Additionally, pre-assembling areas of construction reveal faults either in design, or changes that were made by the builder, or things that can be done to enhance performance. All three areas revealed something that needed addressing, so no time was lost.



Amazing how much larger a tank is when the running gear is installed. A lot of the fittings have already been worked, but will be added later when details of the hull are completed.

Jake

ACE member

Virginia Beach, Virginia

www.tankace.org

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