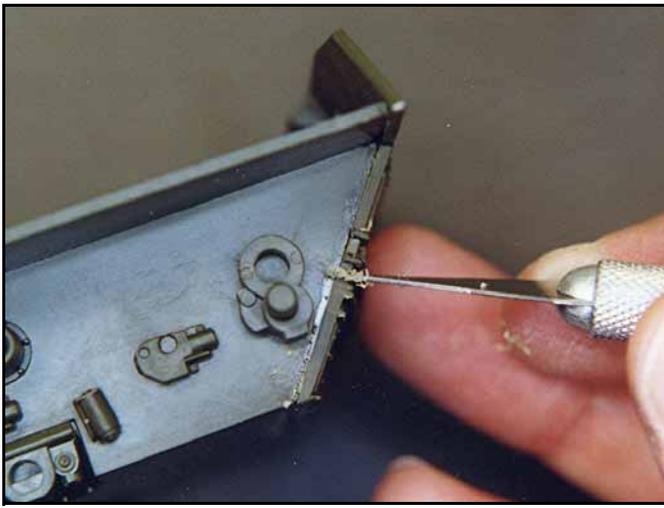




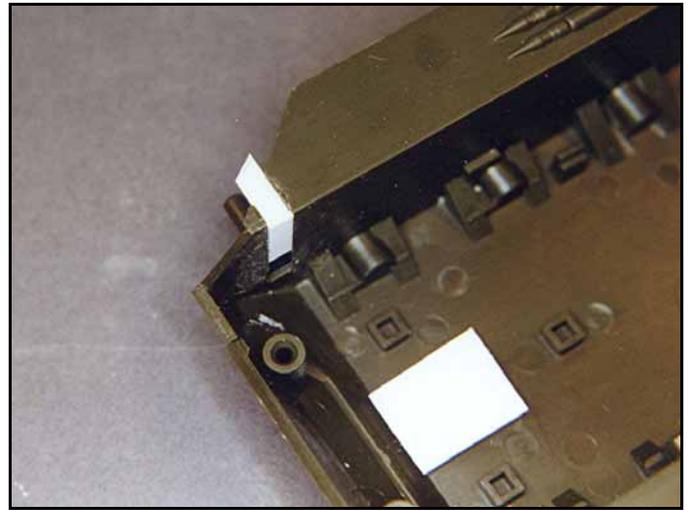
**MIKE ASHEY PRODUCTIONS
PRESENTS
BUILDING ACADEMY'S 1/35 SCALE
M-18 HELLCAT
BY
MIKE ASHEY**

This kit has a well detailed turret interior and forward transmission area if you decide to display the model with open hatches. There are some fit challenges and a few surface dimples, but they are easy to fix. The track links fit together well, however they did not snap together. I finished the model with Testors enamel paints and drybrushed it with Testors silver. Exhaust and gun powder stains were achieved with pencil pastel dust sealed with Testors dullcoat. The interior was painted with a medium gray and the exterior was painted olive drab with little flat white to lighten up the color. The tracks were painted with Testors metalizer paints.

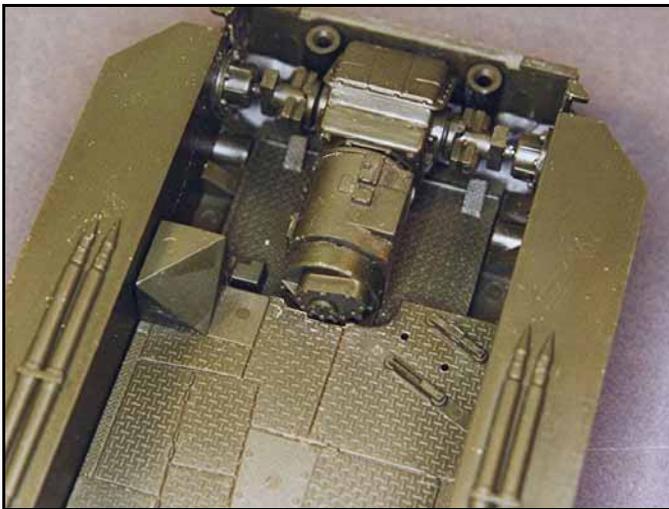
Finished photos of this model are posted on the military ground vehicles web page.



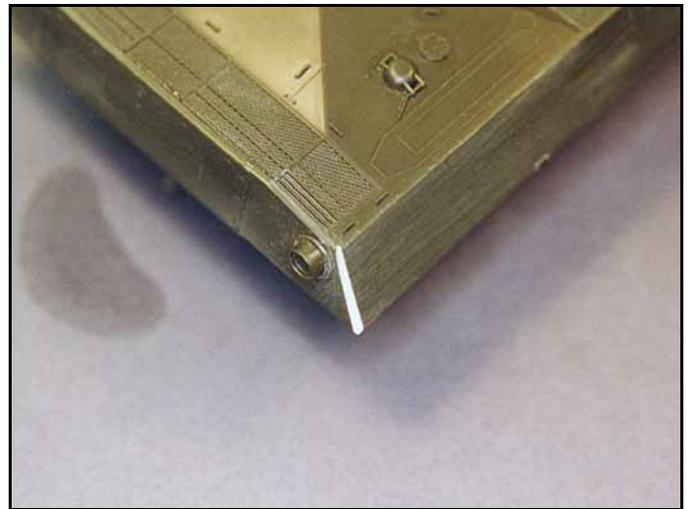
I used a number 11 X-Acto blade to scrape down the plastic of the aft panel which was slightly oversized for the width of the tank's body.



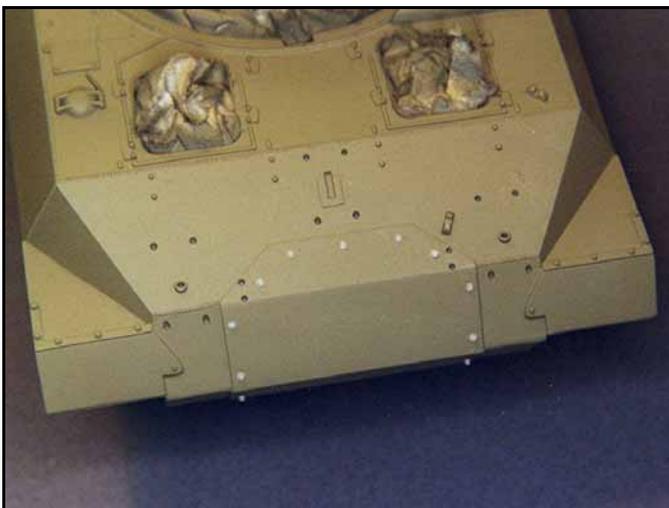
I filled the voids at the front of the tank body with .020 inch sheet plastic which I carefully positioned so that the plastic would be flush with the outside surface.



The backside of the transmission interfered with the floor so I trimmed some plastic from the floor part to get everything to fit correctly.



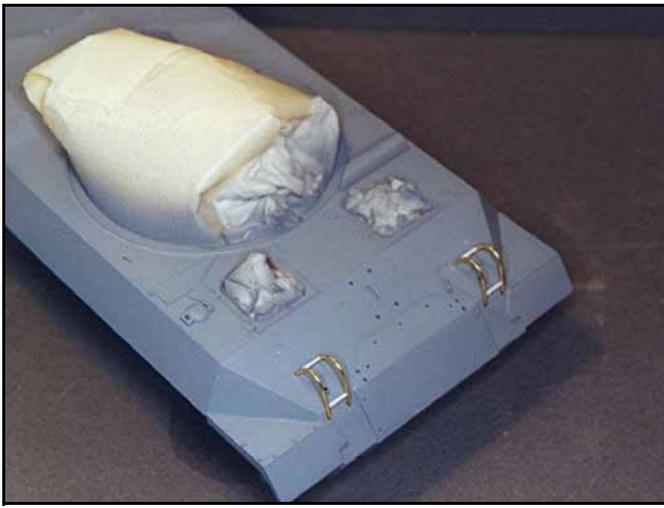
There were voids on the rear outer panels with I filled with Evergreen strips. I then sanded them flush with the surface and polished the plastic with 0000 steel wool.



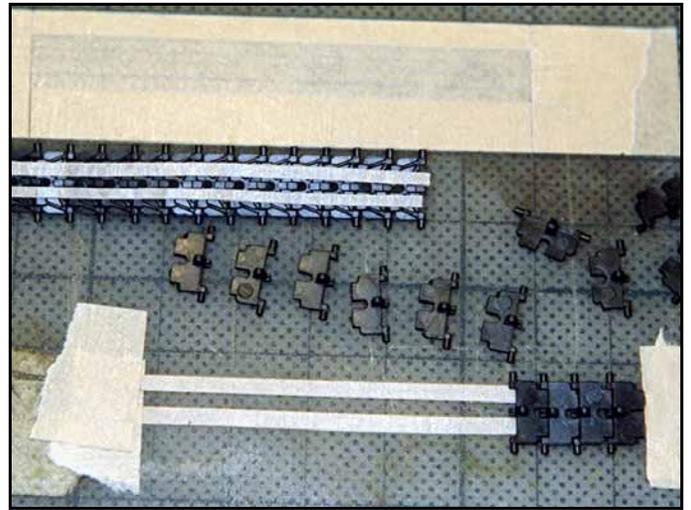
There were some dimples on the surface of the front armor plating that I filled with putty. After sanding the surface I replaced the bolt detail with Grandt line detail bolts.



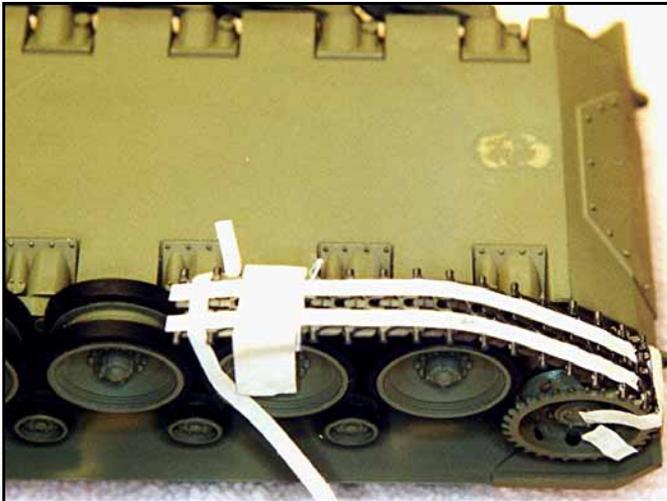
The kit supplied brush guards were not well molded so I made new ones with thin diameter stiff brass wire. I shaped the curves with a wood dowel.



I form fitted the brush guards in place and used plastic rod for the cross section supports.



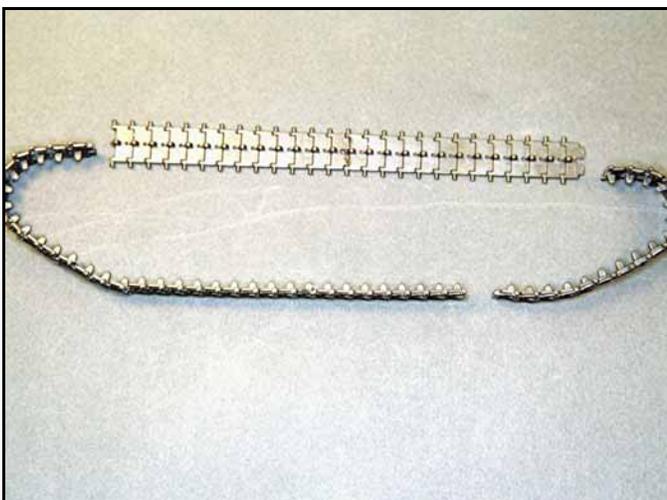
The individual track links did not have snap fittings to link them together so I used thin strips of masking tape to hold the links in place.



I carefully form fitted the lengths of links around the drive sprockets and then applied tiny drops of super glue to each link.



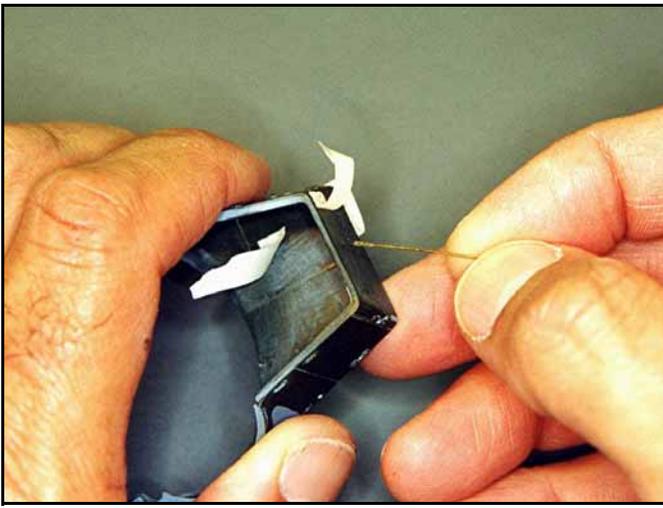
Once the glue on the first track length was dried I repositioned it around the drive sprocket and the road wheels and added the remaining lengths.



For this model I made three lengths of tracks. Once all the wheels were installed I positioned the tracks, attached them together with small strips of masking tape and then glued them together.



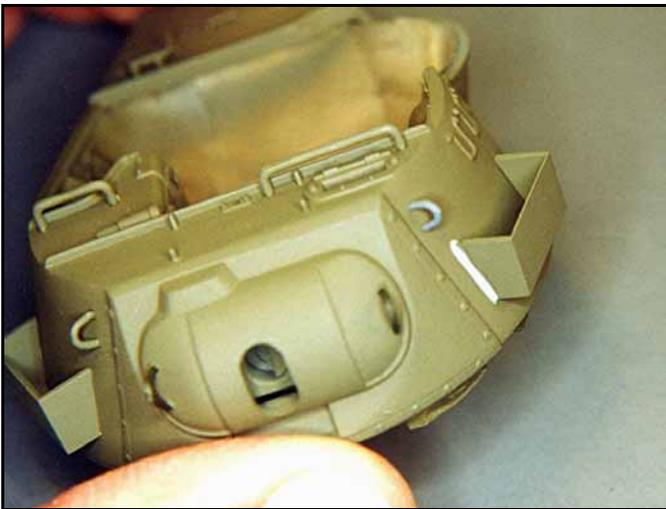
Once the tracks were completed I turned my attention to the turret. I taped the turret halves together and then applied a bead of super glue along the seam line.



Once the glue was dried I applied additional glue where the tape was located. The seam lines were then sanded smooth and polished with 0000 steel wool.



I primed the turret to help me identify other seam areas and voids that needed to be filled.



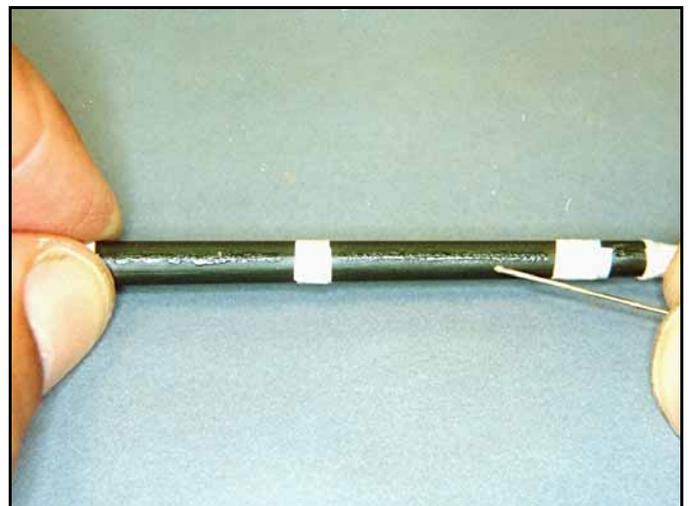
The storage bin sides did not fit correctly onto the curved surface of the turret. I applied a tiny bead of white glue along the void with a small diameter wire applicator.



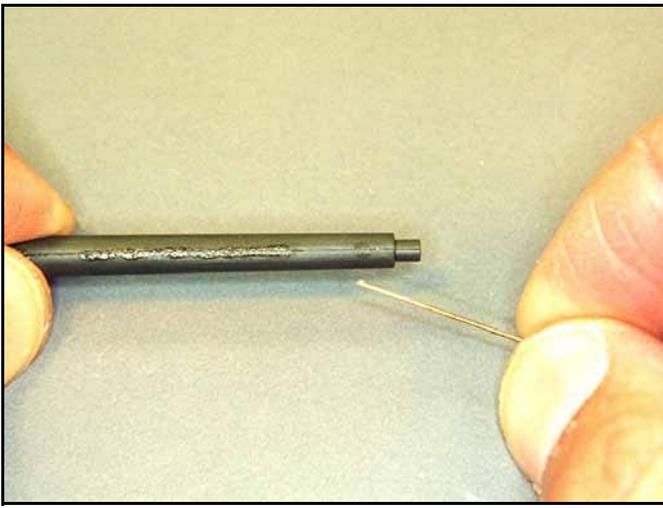
I swiped the white glue with a damp Q-Tip and it filled the void perfectly. Once the glue was dried I primed the area and applied a finished coat of olive drab.



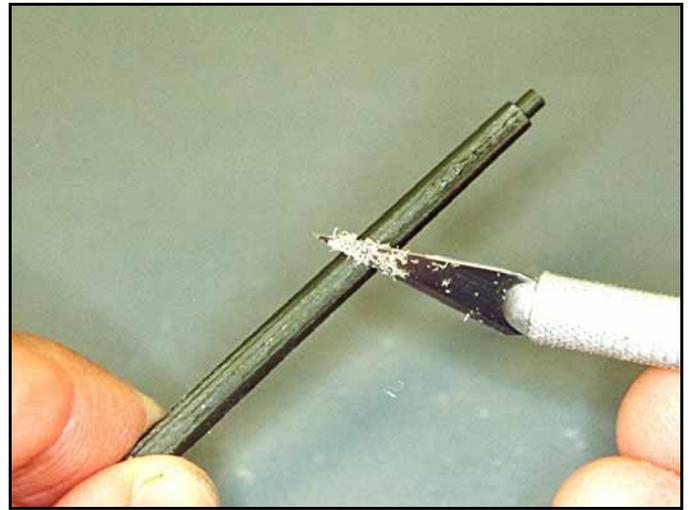
The interior of the turret was painted a medium gray which was then masked off so that the exterior could be painted. I used small sections of square and rectangular shapes of tape to cover the interior paint.



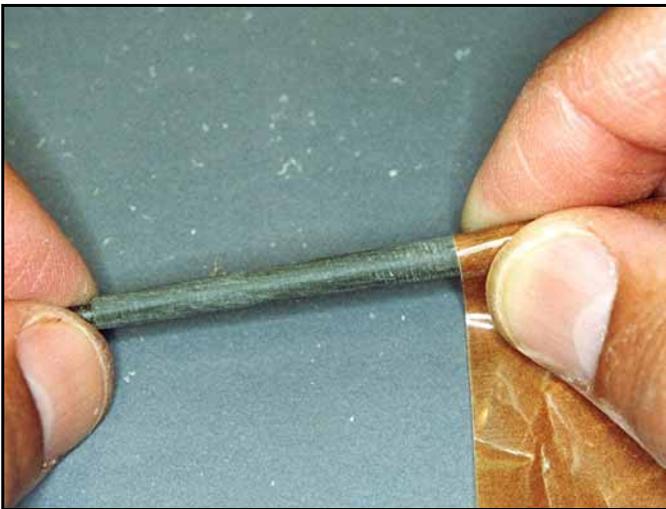
I used small lengths of masking tape to hold the barrel halves together and then I applied a tiny bead of super glue along the seam line. Its very important to ensure the barrel halves are properly positioned prior to gluing.



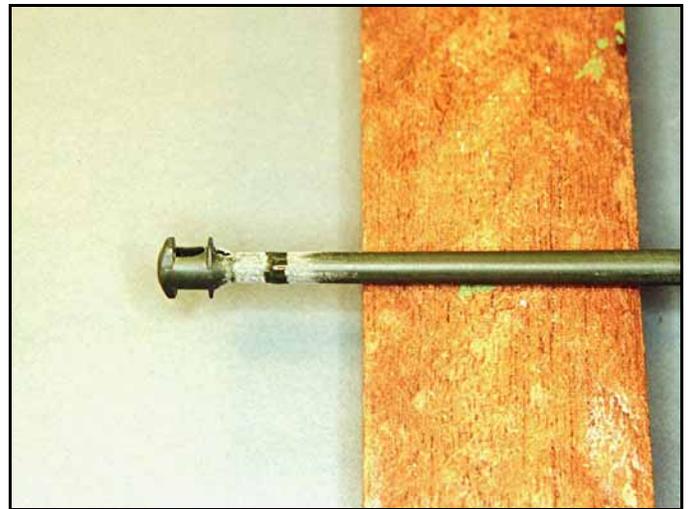
The next step is to remove the masking tape and apply glue to the remaining areas. The capillary action of the super glue will pull the glue into the area between the barrel halves.



To remove the excess glue hold a number 11 X-Acto blade at approximately 45 degrees and lightly scrape the surface.



To ensure that the round shape of the barrel is maintained wrap sandpaper around the part and rotate the part as you sand. Use finer grits to get the plastic smooth and then polish the plastic with 0000 steel wool.



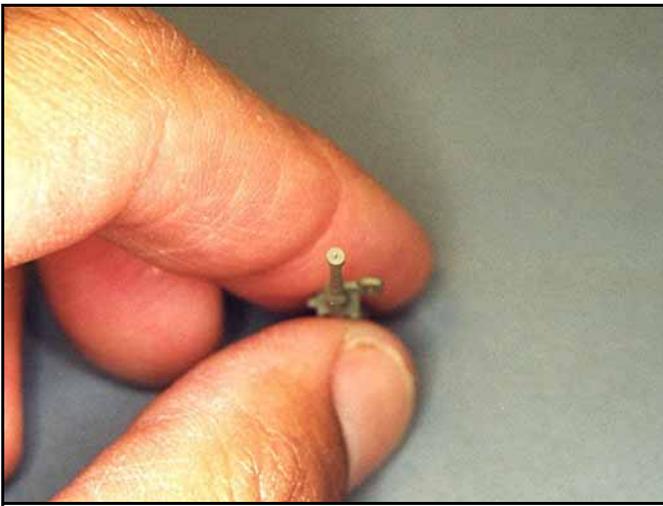
The muzzle brake on this kit did not fit very well onto the end of the barrel it required some careful scraping. I added tiny amounts of super glue around the connection point and then sanded the area smooth.



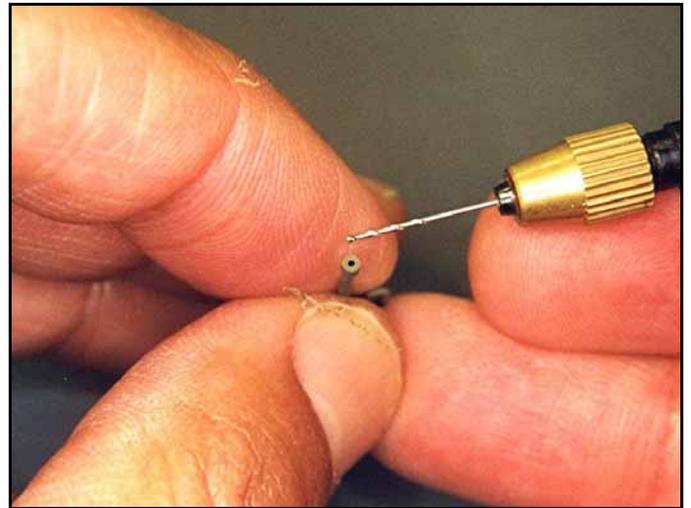
The seam areas were all checked with Testors silver paint. Additional super glue was applied where needed, scraped, sanded and then the plastic got a final steel wool polish.



To clean up and round out the muzzle brake opening I used several diameter drill bits. If you use too large a bit it will crack the plastic.



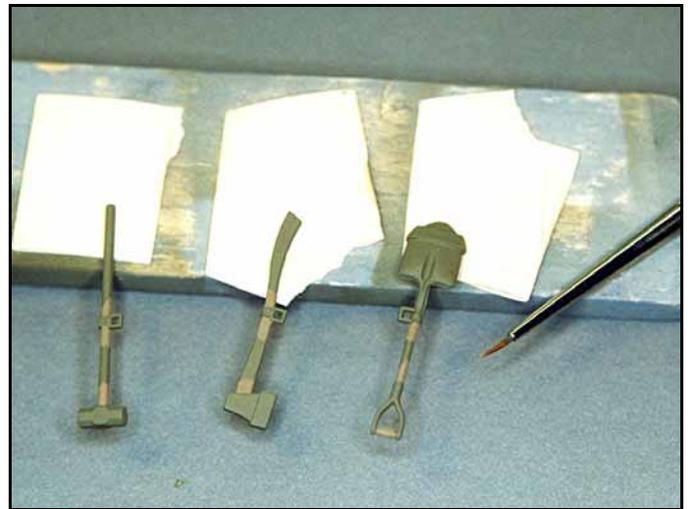
To hollow out the tip of the 50 caliber machine gun I indented the surface close to the center to help set the tip of the drill bit.



I hand drilled the plastic using several different diameter drill bits. Starting with small diameter bits prevents the plastic from cracking and it also allows you to correct the opening of the hole if it is off center.



I finished the opening by peeling away a few layers of plastic with the tip of a sharp number 11 X-Acto blade.



To paint wood handles on tools use a detail brush and paint around the metal first.



Once the wood colored paint is dry, finish painting the remaining areas. Two coats of paint will usually cover any brush streaks.



Drafting pens come in handy for getting a black color into the tiny areas that would be difficult to get to with a detail paint brush.