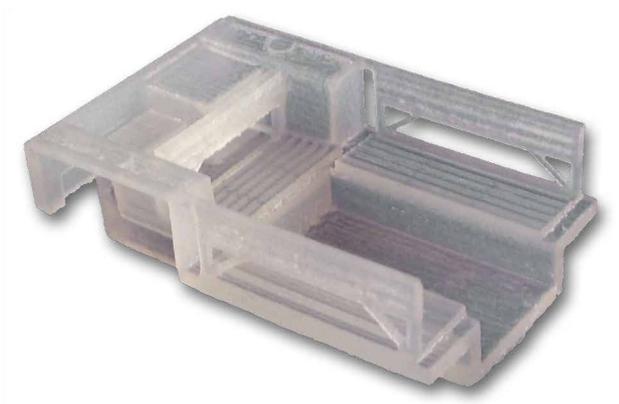


— 7202 —

British-Modified M14 Half-Track Body

A LARGE NUMBER OF HALF-TRACK MULTIPLE-GUN MOTOR Carriages M14, a vehicle based on the Half-track Personnel Carrier M5, were supplied to the British Army during World War II. Instead of using these as anti-aircraft vehicles as intended, the British removed the turret and most of its associated equipment, then installed wooden bench seats in the rear body to use the vehicle as a personnel carrier, cargo vehicle, or command vehicle. Many were also fitted with a rear door to ease entry and exit for troops and cargo. These vehicles were known as “M.14 Modified for Personnel Role” and/or “Truck 15 cwt. half-tracked G.S. with winch”.¹

This set is a simple conversion for the 1/2nd scale M5 half-track kit by The Plastic Soldier Company (No. WW2V20013). It may fit models by different manufacturers, but this has not been verified.



INSTRUCTIONS

The set consists of only a single part, designed to replace the passenger area of the body. Little or no clean-up should be required on the part itself, though it may have somewhat ragged edges, which can be cleaned up by scraping gently with a modeling knife.

To assemble the Plastic Soldier Company kit into a British-modified M14 half-track personnel carrier, these steps can be followed.

1. The kit floor's aft section must be removed by sawing it off from below directly behind the cab area.
2. The upright plates directly behind the cab must be removed as well, by cutting horizontally at the level of the original rear area seats. The opening between the sloping sections left at the rear of the cab should be widened so that only those sloping pieces remain. The ledge between them at the bottom should *not* be removed, however.
3. On the chassis part which fits underneath the rear floor, the two rectangular and four round lugs must



(Above) M14 half-track in France used by a British Royal Navy Forward Observation Bombardment unit. This is probably a “Truck 15 cwt. half-tracked Command” judging by the radio sets at the left rear, even though these “should” be fitted in the middle rather than at the rear. (Source: [IWM A 24353](#))

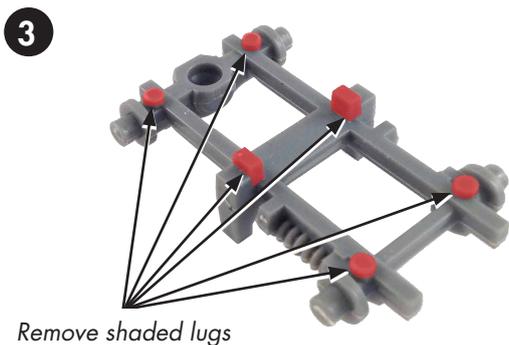
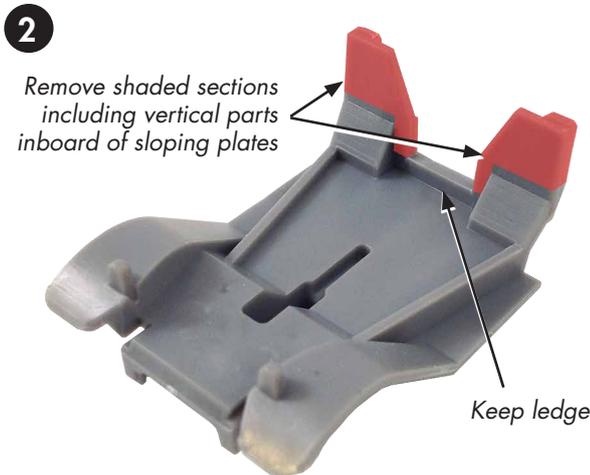
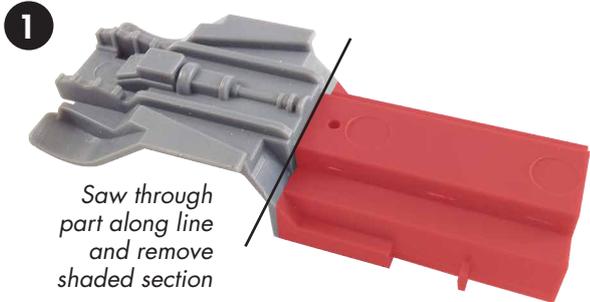
(Below) Interior of a British-modified M14 half-track. This photograph shows the prototype; vehicles in service often had a rear door added. (Source: via Leon Hassing)



CONTACT INFORMATION

Visit our Web site: <http://www.plasticwarriors.org>
If you have comments or questions about this set,
please address these to info@plasticwarriors.org.

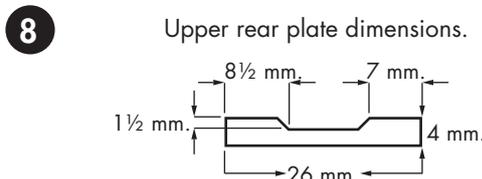
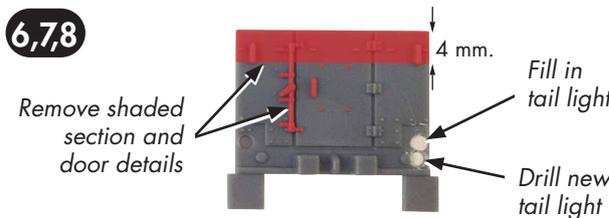
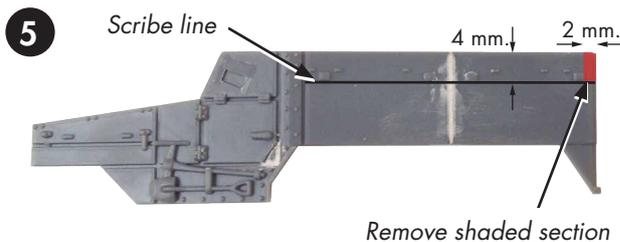
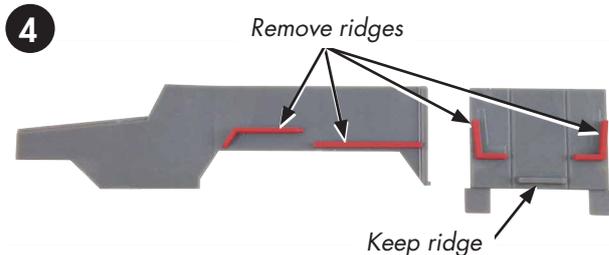
¹ “15 cwt.” is 15 hundredweight, or approximately ¾ tonnes.



be removed. The outer sections of the rectangular lugs in the center can be left in place, as long as care is taken that the floor of the new load bed fits flush on the chassis between them.

4. The locating ridges on the side pieces of the body must be removed, as they interfere with the new interior. On the rear plate, the L-shaped locating ridges must be removed, while the horizontal one at the bottom should be kept.
5. A horizontal line should be engraved on the outside of each side of the body, 4 mm. below the top edge and running all the way from the plate with bolt heads at the front of the rear body, to the rear of the vehicle. The easiest way to get it at the correct location is to scribe the line immediately below the small squares molded onto the vehicle's sides. The rear corners of the body above the scribed line must be removed to some 2 mm. in from the rear edge. Again, this is easiest to do by cutting the body away up to the rear edge of the rear-most of the small, molded-on squares.
6. The top 4 mm. must be removed from the rear plate of the body.

7. For accuracy, the recess representing the right tail light should be filled in and a new tail light created by drilling a 2-mm. hole further down, directly above the raised strip at the bottom of the hull rear plate. A recess like that of the original tail light can be created by inserting a disc of 3/4-mm. thickness into the drilled hole, fitting flush with the inner face of the rear plate.
8. The model can be built with or without a rear door, and if fitted with one, several styles are possible:
 - a. The simplest form is with a rear door and the folding upper rear plate removed, as shown in the photograph of a real M14 on page 3. This is what has already been created in step 6 and therefore does not necessarily require any additional work—however, for accuracy the door locking mechanism (the vertical bar and its fittings on the left side of the door) are best removed and replaced by one or two simple door handles. If desired, the hinges on the right side of the door can also be removed and replaced by a different style: comparing the photographs on page 1 and page 3 will show clear differences in hinges and door handles. Photographs are also known of vehicles with the hinges on the left and the handle(s) on the right side of the door.
 - b. The other option for a vehicle with a rear door is to include one or both upper plates: a small horizontal “roof” section at the top of the rear plate and a vertical plate with a cut-in its top. These can be cut from plastic sheet; a drawing is provided for the



upper (vertical) plate, while the lower (horizontal) plate should be cut to fit the model. Lines should be scribed in the plates to correspond to the width of the door, as on the real vehicle these plates were cut and the center sections attached to the door. Some vehicles only had the horizontal plate, others had the vertical plate above the door removed while those on either side remained (see the photograph on page 1 for an example).

- c. Without a rear door, the hinges and locking mechanism should be removed from the rear plate and the engraved lines forming the door filled in. The short “roof” section and folding upper plate must be built as described above, though without scribing door lines in them.
9. At this point, the sides can be glued to the cab floor and the rear plate; the M14 rear body can then be dropped in place between the sides, resting on the cab floor and the locating ridge at the bottom of the rear plate, and fixed in place with superglue. When it is in place, the chassis section can be attached to the M14 rear body, also with superglue.
10. The rest of the kit can then be built according to the Plastic Soldier Company’s instructions, keeping the following in mind:
 - a. The model should be fitted with a winch, not a roller, at the front of the body.
 - b. The M14 was not equipped with any machine-gun mounts, so neither the ring mount over the cab, the pedestal mount for the floor, nor the side-mounted machine guns supplied in the kit should be fitted.
 - c. The mine racks should not be added to the vehicle’s sides as these were not installed on M14s when originally manufactured, though some British M14s were fitted with similar—probably improvised—racks as field modifications (see photograph below).
 - d. The stowage racks to go on the rear plate should not be fitted, as no M14 had these at all.

PLASTIC SOLDIER COMPANY M5 KIT CORRECTIONS

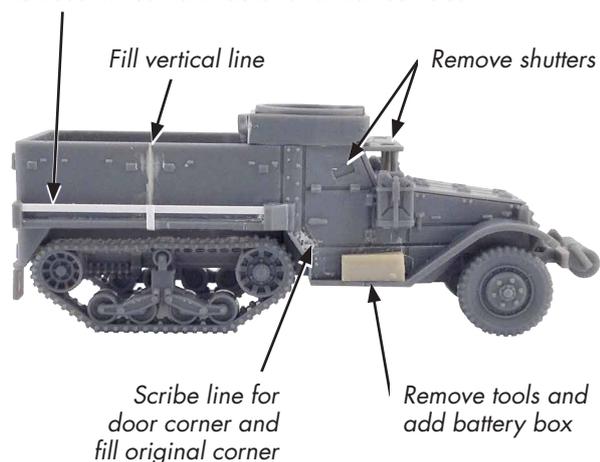
The Plastic Soldier Company’s M5 kit actually represents a hybrid between the Half-track Personnel Carriers M3 and M5—probably caused by altering the company’s existing model of an M3 without paying full attention to the detail differences between the M3 and M5. For the model to accurately represent an M5 or one of its variants (M5A1, M5A2, M9A1, M14 or M17), the following points must be corrected. Most of these modifications are best made before the model is assembled.

1. The shutters molded on the upper side doors and the windscreen armor plate must be removed, as these were on the inside on the M5, not on the outside as on the M3. This leaves recesses in the armor, which should *not* be filled as they will represent the vision ports well enough.
2. The lines marking out the lower rear corner of the left and right front doors should be filled with putty. A new lower corner can then be created by scribing a diagonal line parallel to the front of the rear wheel/track well directly behind the door. The top of this scribed line should meet the molded-in door line at the level of the top of the rear wheel/track well.
3. The vertical line in the side armor should be filled with putty and sanded smooth. This is best done before scribing the horizontal line for the M14.
4. The battery box on the right running board has been omitted. This should be located directly behind the fender and can be built from plastic sheet or by cutting it from a block of suitable material; in 1/2nd scale it is 9 mm. long, 4 mm. high, and the full width of the running board. Adding this box will require removing the tools below the right door on the model, but this is wrong in any case, as it is depicted as a mirror image of that on the left with a pickaxe and a shovel, when in fact only a normal axe should be stowed above the battery box.
5. If the machine-gun ring mount is fitted, there are two minor issues:
 - a. The rearward extension of the armor along the right side should be removed when building an M5A1, as this was a feature of the M5A2 only.
 - b. The vertical support for the mount is in the wrong place. It should be moved to the right of the vehicle’s centerline, approximately halfway between the hole for it in the kit floor, and the side of the footwell on the model. (The kit designers probably put it in the wrong location because that way, a single hole in the floor could be used for both the M5’s pedestal mount and the M5A1’s ring mount support.)
6. The rear stowage racks should not be fitted for an M5 or M5A1, as these were only fitted to the M5A2—a variant which only saw very limited service late in World War II. On the other hand, the kit lacks the ladder-like stowage racks along the body sides which were a feature of the M5A2.

M14 half-track with rear door installed but upper rear plates removed. Compare hinges and door handle to those of vehicle pictured on page 1, and note side rack with fuel cans. (Source: *I.P.M.S. Canada*)



Remove mines from racks for British vehicles



Modifications necessary to make Plastic Soldier Company kit more accurate.

7. The front axle should have a “banjo” differential housing, not the “split” type represented in the kit (which is correct for an M3 half-track). This, however, is hardly noticeable unless specifically looked for, and probably not worth correcting.
8. For a vehicle in American service (which the M14 represented here was not), the fuel cans in front of the doors are best replaced, as they represent the British or German pattern.

In addition to the above, the model can be detailed in various ways, if desired. As it is a wargames model, its detail is fairly thick, and quite a lot of work would be needed to bring it to current standards for a display model—though it is generally accurate, with the exceptions noted above. Such additions, however, are beyond the scope of the present article, and the reader is advised to seek out additional documentation if the model is to be detailed.

REFERENCES

HUNNICUTT, R.P. *Half-Track: A History of American Semi-Tracked Vehicles*. Novato: Presidio Press, 2001.

TM 9-707 *Basic Half-Track Vehicles (IHC): (Personnel Carrier M5, Car M9A1, Multiple Gun Motor Carriage M14, and Similar IHC Vehicles)*. United States War Department, 21 May 1943. https://archive.org/details/TM9-707_201405

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

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Thanks to Leon Hassing and Bert Lindeboom.

Completed model using a Plastic Soldier Company M5 half-track kit.

