

Desert Stormer!

It would appear that Tamiya have a liking for the American Hummer, as in fact there are no less than three replicas in their catalogue, all of them modelled in different scales! The latest, and biggest version to date, is this 1/12 scale radio controlled M1025 Hummer, which although primarily aimed at the R/C enthusiast, still appeals to the military modeller. Incidentally, 'Hummer' is a nickname derived from the vehicle's correct title: HMMWV or 'High Mobility Multi-Purpose Wheeled Vehicle.'

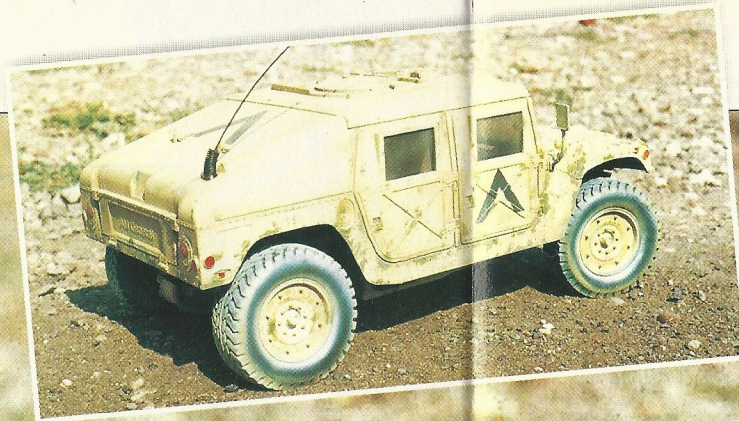
So, What Do You Get For Your Money?

The kit is based on one of Tamiya's well tried and tested 'moulded tub' 4wd chassis, which encloses the radio gear and battery pack, with the front and rear suspension/transmission units hung off either end, the standard motor supplied mounted just forward of the left rear wheel. The injection moulded shell is principally a one-piece moulding, only a small amount of assembly being required to add such details as the air cleaner top and wing mirrors. No internal detailing is included, but this is concealed by the use of dark tinted glazing all round so the finished product doesn't suffer unduly.

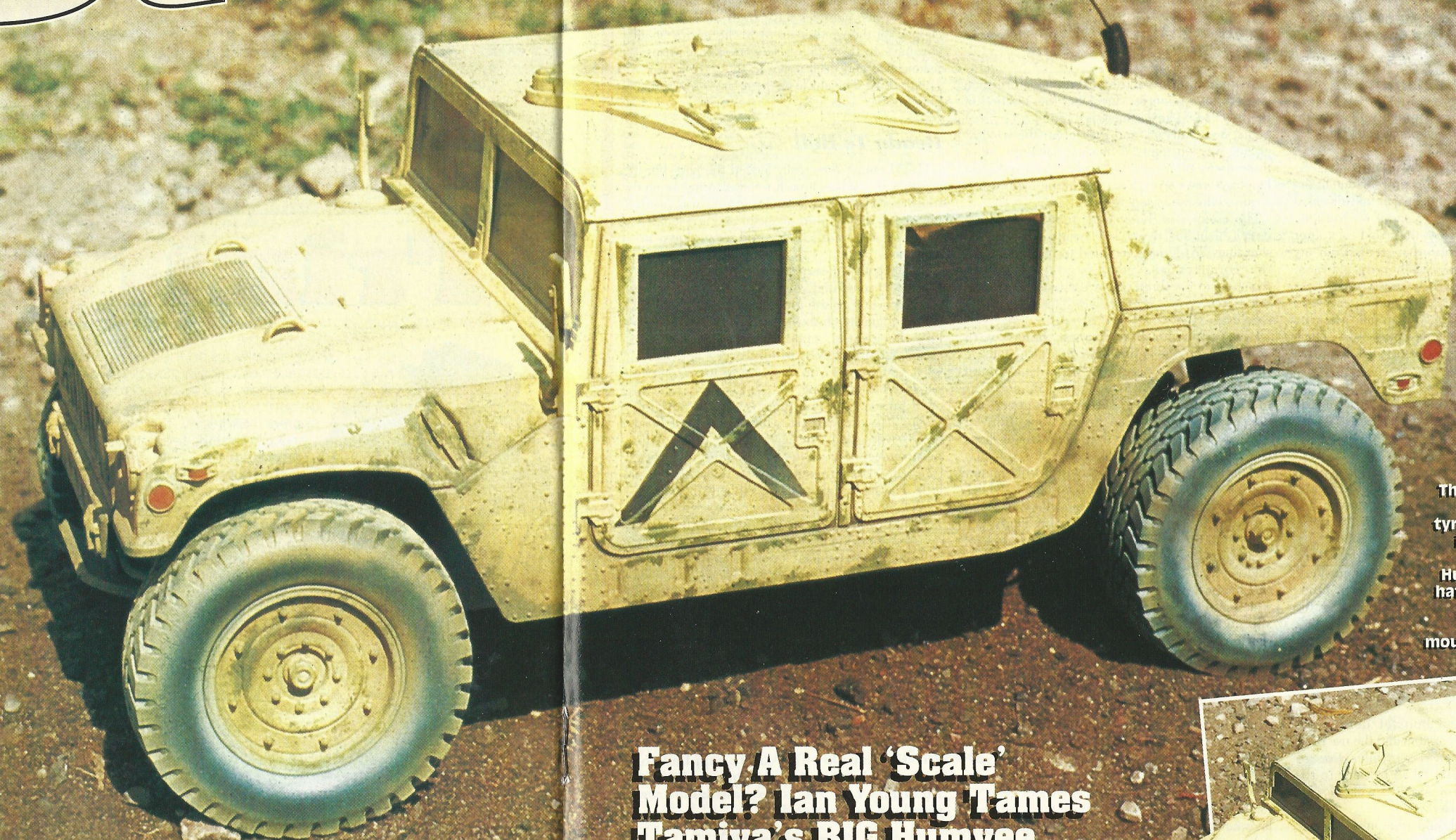
The large and impressive box is packed with sprues of components, most of which are moulded in black, apart from the shell which is dark green. The tyres are the usual semi pneumatic rubber variety, with a realistic tread pattern but no side wall lettering. They actually appear a touch over sized when compared to the the body shell, but the overall appearance is still very impressive.

The suspension features oil filled coil over type shock absorbers and upper and lower wishbones. Although similar in layout to the real thing, it's most definitely not the same, but is close enough to look the part on the finished model. An aerial tube and simple wiper board speed controller are also included as a part of the kit, but a set of radio gear has to be bought separately, either a standard two channel Acorns set as used on the review model, or alternatively you could use the Adspec system. The principle difference is that the Adspec system replaces the receiver and speed control servo with a combined receiver/electronic speed controller, just the one servo required then for the steering.

The decal sheet provides some stencilling and markings, the windscreen surround details plus silver inserts for the rear view mirrors. The painting instructions refer to the usual three tone temperate camouflage scheme shown on the box top, but I chose the Gulf War desert scheme for the review model.



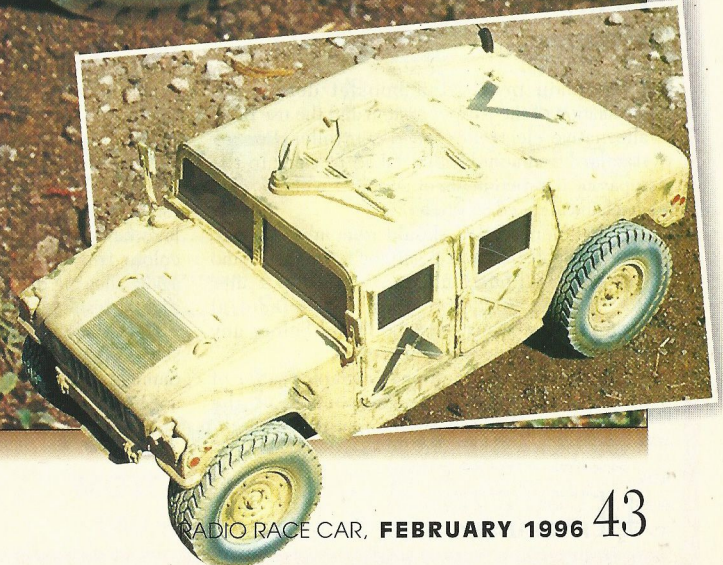
Left: Tethering the aerial doesn't affect the Hummer's performance, but it does add a touch of realism to the model. The simulated paint damage is clearly visible in this photo.

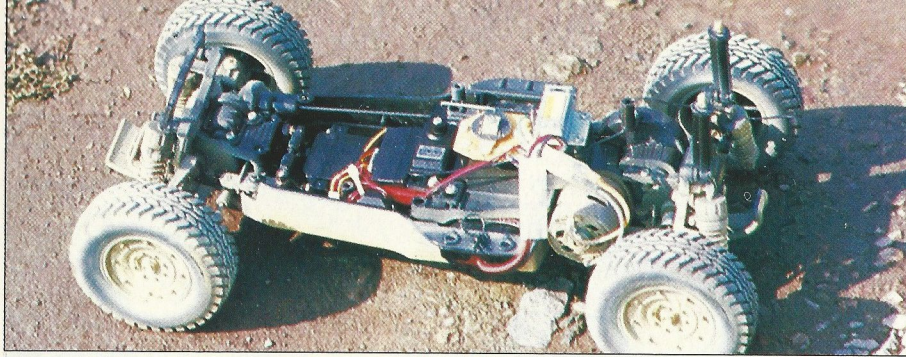


The realistic tread patterns on the tyres show up well in this overhead shot of the Hummer. The roof hatch is one of the items supplied separate to the moulded body shell.

Fancy A Real 'Scale' Model? Ian Young Tames Tamiya's BIG Humvee

The Desert Storm Hummer showing off its weathered paint job. Note the tethered aerial.





This rear shot of the Hummer clearly shows the hand painted chevron markings.

Simple Construction

Tamiya R/C kits boast superbly illustrated instructions that are really simple to follow, making them a piece of cake to build.

Construction began with the rear differential, the only tricky part of the assembly process, due to the tiny ball bearings that have to be carefully dropped into place in the assembly. I spent far too long trying to retrieve them from the workbench after dropping them, a problem that stems from my sausage-like fingers! I eventually retrieved them using a 'Gizmo-Stic.' Similar to cotton buds, these have a solidified adhesive compound on each end rather than cotton, so when you carefully press the tacky tip onto the elusive item, it sticks to it. Once the tiny bearings were in place, a quick twist saw the grip released - simple!

Finishing off the assembly of the rear transmission, which included the fitting of the motor, suspension arms and drive shafts, was merely a matter of following the manual, and brought no problems.

By stage 17, the both transmission/suspension units were complete, so work began on the four oil filled shock absorbers. For those familiar with R/C cars, these are straightforward, but for those modellers used to static kits, do be sure there aren't any air bubbles left inside the shock absorbers when filling them with the oil provided, otherwise they won't function properly. Once they're complete and assembled to the chassis, the radio installation was next.

Gentlemen, Choose Your Weapons!

The main instruction booklet details the installation of the Adspec system and the use of an alternative electronic speed controller. For my standard 2 channel radio, I had to refer to the separate instruction sheet supplied with the kit's mechanical speed controller.

Newcomers to R/C should remember to take note of the instructions regarding testing the radio gear before it's fitted in the car - don't try it after it's been installed, as the neutral positions/directions must be found before any output arms, linkages etc., are set up.

The radio installation done; a simple matter of bolting and screwing the components in, the steering linkages, front and rear suspension units

Above: The heart of the matter - the Hummer's chassis. Note how it has been painted to add to the realism. If you wanted to be different you could always leave the wheels black as seen on some vehicles in the Gulf War.

and drive shaft, aerial and bumpers were added, and that was basically it, apart from the bodyshell and wheels/tyres, which were carefully superglued to the rims to ensure that they didn't roll off, using a 'pen' type applicator to prevent excess glue getting on to the tyres.

Arriving At The 'Weather Beaten' Look...

Assembling the bodyshell took no more than about fifteen minutes, involving the addition of the roof hatch, air cleaner top, lifting eyes, front lights, door mirrors, and the aerial (the window glazing was left until I'd finished painting). All of these items are screwed into place with small self tapping screws apart from the lifting eyes, which required the use of superglue.

The completed bodyshell features loads of detail, including rivets, bolt heads and recessed shut lines, so all that's required to really finish off the Hummer is a good paint job. Tamiya recommend the three colour camouflage scheme, but I painted the Hummer in 'Desert Sand' as seen in the Gulf.

I found several reference books with photographs of the Hummer in desert camouflage; the best of these were the Squadron Signal Hummer In Action (Armour No. 32) and War Machines No.7 - M998 HMMWV 'Hummer' and derivatives by Verlinden Productions. Both of these books are available from good model shops and military book specialists.

From the start I decided to give the Hummer the full 'weathering' treatment, no doubt a shock to the system for most R/C car modellers!

The first stage was to paint the entire model in a base sand colour, a mixture of three Humbrol enamel colours; Nos. 187 (Sand), 148 (Matt Radome) and 71 (Matt Oak). To simplify things, the mixture was an equal ratio of each colour, which also make the colour simple to reproduce should I run out of the original mixture for touching up etc.

Once the whole model had a coat of paint, including the wheel centres and visible areas of the chassis and suspension, I began the weathering process by 'pre-shading' the model, the process in which a slightly darker shade of the base colour (in this case Humbrol Sand No.187) is carefully applied as thin lines to all of the vehicle's features, such as the edges of the bonnet, around the door shut lines and along the feature lines of the body. Once these darker lines have dried, a second light coat of the base colour is applied over the entire model once again, allowing the darker colour to show through slightly, resulting in the subtle shading effect.

The vehicle I chose to represent had some very marked weather damage, caused by sand storms and general abuse, so some of the original green camouflage beneath

the recently applied (for the Gulf War) top coat showed through in patches. To replicate this, I simply took an appropriate shade of green and carefully dabbed blotches of the colour all over the model with a small paint brush, referring to a photo on page 48 in the Squadron Signal book. The paint was damaged in particularly susceptible areas such as around the edges of the panels, the doors (where they would have been kicked and knocked by equipment) and the front of the vehicle (stone and sand chips).

With the green patches applied, I chose a pale grey paint and lightly dusted the model with my airbrush to tone down the hard green patches, and at the same time applied some colour to the tyres, which were always coated in dust.

I then added the windows, painted the details such as the lights and reflectors, and then dusted on a touch more pale grey to tone down the shiny windows and bright lights.

For a final touch of realism, before you try out the car you could tie down the whip aerial as I did. Most service vehicles have their aerials either clipped on the windscreen or to the mirror, so all you have to do is take a length of fuse wire or fishing line and tie it down to the mirror on the same side of the vehicle as the aerial base - simple but effective!

Ready To Roll

The Hummer now really looked the part, but it was time to see how it performed. Bearing in mind that it's powered by a stock motor I was pretty impressed with its turn of speed and acceleration, spinning its wheels as it sped away down my driveway.

Not altogether unsurprisingly, it handled well and was nicely composed when cornering, even when running over roughish ground and gravel. The low centre of gravity obviously helped the Hummer to hug the ground, making it almost, but not completely impossible, to turn over - not exactly what you want if you've 'gone to town' on the paintwork and detailing.

On tarmac, the Hummer is superb, nipping around like a scalded cat, whilst moving Off Road on to flat gravel doesn't really impair the performance a great deal, although grass does, especially damp grass where the tyres struggle a little. Having said that, do remember it is a 'Scale' model!

The Hummer is a superb all-rounder, with excellent performance and good looks to match, and I highly recommend it both as an R/C and as a static model. The Hummer isn't cheap, especially when compared to static military models, at around £159, but you do get a superb model for your money, with what are arguably the best engineered components on the market. If you're building it as an R/C model, you'll need to find another £50 or so for the radio gear, and then batteries and a charger will also be required, so I suggest that a kit 'deal' would be the thing to look out for from one of RRC's advertisers, but either way you get one impressive model for your money!

The Hummer kit was kindly supplied for review by Tamiya's UK distributors; Richard Kohnstam Ltd, and is now available from your local Tamiya stockists.

