



In-Box Review

NeoGrade Sherman Armor Set [Type Europe War 1] and Sherman Armor Set [Type Europe War 2], 1/35th scale, \$27.99, available in the U.S. at Sprue Brothers.

The M4-series medium tanks of World War II were never intended to slug it out toe-to-toe with other tanks on the battlefield. Allied tank crews generally avoided these encounters, depending on protection from artillery, air and infantry.

However, perhaps the greatest threat to Allied Shemans came from German infantry armed with shaped-charge weapons like the Panzerfaust and Panzerschreck, the German copy of the bazooka anti-tank rocket launcher. Both weapons were effective even when wielded by a soldier with little training.

Crews looked to improve the armor of their vehicles and tried all sorts of field-expedient solutions. Logs, lumber and even concrete were tried. Disabled vehicles were cannibalized for their armor plate and steel track shoes, all of which were welded onto the Sherman's hulls and turrets.

The most popular and, perhaps simplest solution for adding armor was through the use of sandbags. Sandbags are common on the battlefield and can be filled with the local soil. The first examples of sandbag armor were simply piling them on the front hull. Field workshops were soon welding angle-iron racks on the hull sides and turret. The added armor meant extra weight and extended end connectors were often added to relieve some of the ground pressure exerted by these up-armored vehicles.

The Kits

NeoGrade, a South Korean company that seems to do a lot of those sci-fi combat robot kits,

has expanded their line to armor conversion and accessory sets. NeoGrade makes for Sherman armor sets -- two for the European theater and two for the Pacific theater. My review samples were the European theater sets of sandbag armor.

Both sets are molded in a cream-colored resin with no noticeable bubbles or warpage. The resin smell was rather strong when the bags were opened, but did not linger. The casting gates were clean and not very large, especially considering the size of the pieces. Simple instructions show how the parts are to be placed on the tank.

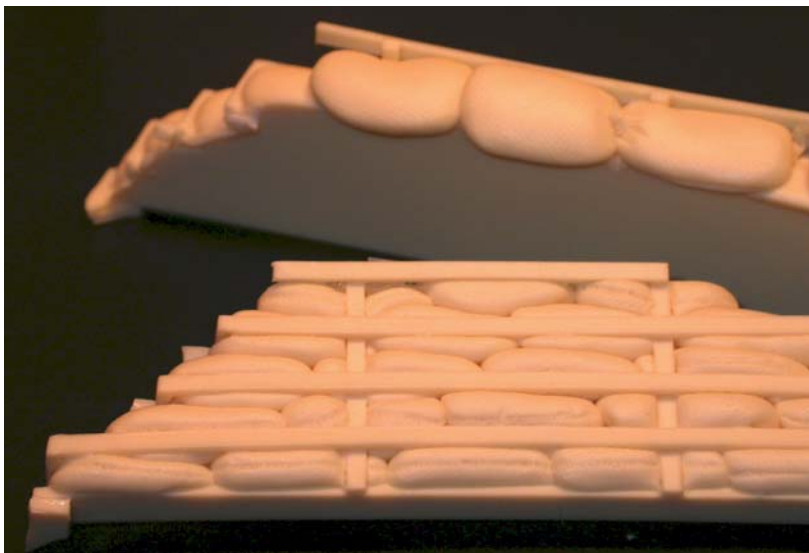
Each kit included five pieces: one for the hull front, two for the turret sides and two for the hull sides. The front and turret pieces are identical between the two kits. The turret armor is keyed to fit a T23 76mm gun turret, with one part fashioned to go around the pitot port rather than cover it, a nice touch. The parts were dry-fitted and fit nicely on Dragon and Tamiya M4A3 hulls.

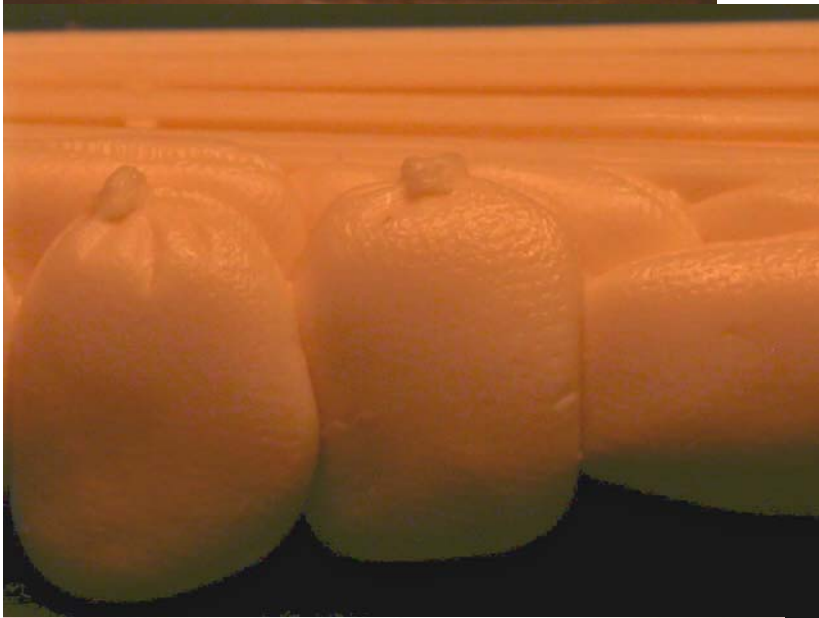
The two kits differ in that "Type 1" has steel sandbag racks, while "Type 2" features wooden racks.

The sandbags are nicely rendered, with seams and a fabric texture. The one shortcoming is that the steel "Type 1" rack does not tie-back to the hull, so some bits of strip plastic will be needed to connect the rack around the sandbags and back to the hull.

Conclusion: It's unfortunate the two kits share so many parts because it might have been neat to have two sandbag-armored Shermans in the same diorama. Other than that, they provide a quick way to dress up a Sherman in sandbags. Recommended.

P.S. Note the spelling "Sharman" on both kit boxes and instructions. This appears to be corrected on the later issues of the kits.







NEOGRADE MILITARY OPTION PARTS # 6

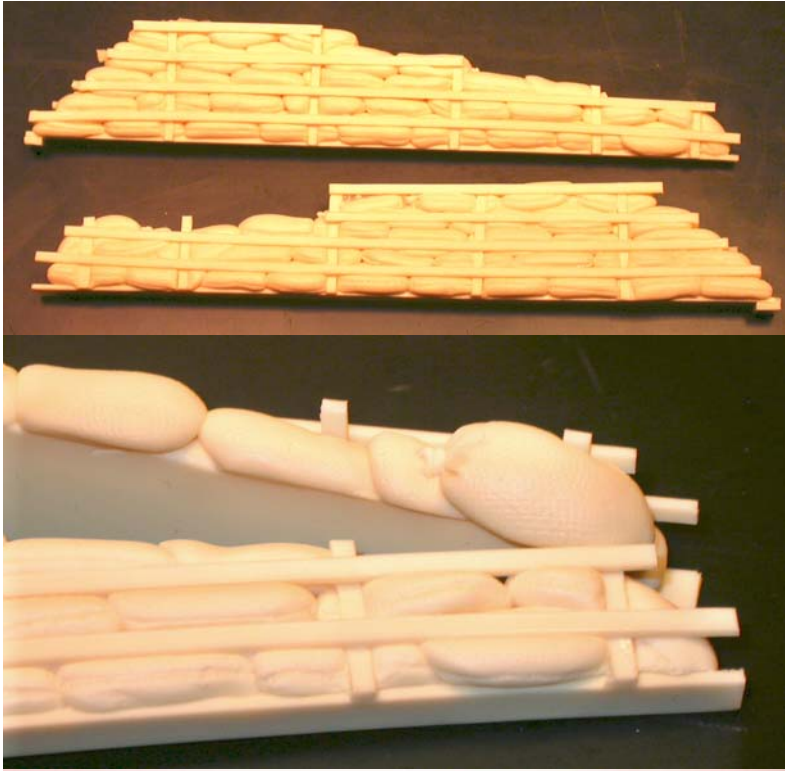


NEOGRADE MILITARY







NEOGRADE MILITARY OPTION PARTS #5



*SHARMAN Armor set 1
Type Europe War II*

NEOGRADE MILITARY

