

РУКОВОДСТВО ПО СБОРКЪ
БЛИНДИРОВАННАГО АВТОМОБИЛЯ

РУССКО-БАЛТІЙСКАГО
ВАГОННАГО ЗАВОДА

СЪ ПОДРОБНЫМЪ ИСТОРИЧЕСКИМЪ
ОПИСАНИЕМЪ И СХЕМАМИ

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RUSSIAN “RUSSO-BALT” ARMoured CAR

Imperial Russia produced one of the most advanced early armored cars and put them to effective use in the early phases of World War I, and continued to evolve tactics and organization as the war went on and as the nation emerged from the 1917 revolution as the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

The most successful of the early Russian armored vehicles was the Russo-Balt line of armored vehicles. Most of them mounted machine guns, but a few mounted cannon.

The Russian Baltic Wagon Factory (RBWF), was founded in Riga in 1869 as part of the German company Van her Zypen & Charlier to construct railway cars, and became the official supplier to the Russian imperial court. In 1874, it became an independent company, soon growing to become one of the largest engineering firms in Russia, building cars, agricultural machinery, stationary engines and more in its factories Riga and St. Petersburg.

RBWF established an automotive department in Riga in 1908 and began producing cars in 1909. Julien Potterat was hired as the chief designer, and in May 1909, the first car rolled out of the assembly shop in Riga, produced under the name Russian Baltic, which was later variously shortened to Russian-Balt., Russo-Balt and even the French-language version Russo-Baltique. In 1910, the firm acquired its factory in St. Petersburg.

The first and most popular car produced by Russian-Baltic was the Type C – the heir to the Belgian Fondu 24/30hp. The Russo-Balt C was repeatedly modernized, with increases in power, upgraded frame and springs, and improvements to radiators, gearboxes and other components. By 1914, the vehicles being produced were the Russo-Balt Type C 24/40hp 18 Series, where the two-part model number denotes the nominal engine power and the maximum engine power. The 4.5-liter four-cylinder engine could propel passenger versions of the vehicle to 75-80 km/h.



Illustration 1. Armored vehicles built by the Izhorsky Works on the Russo-Balt C 24/40 HP chassis and their crews during a parting prayer service on the Semyonovsky parade ground in Petrograd. Oct. 19, 1914.

With the outbreak of war, seven chassis were sent to St. Petersburg to the Izhorsky Works – which started as a sawmill in 1710 and evolved to producing naval armor by the late 19th century – to serve as the basis for a proposed fleet of Russian armored cars.

On Aug. 17, 1914, Minister of War V.A. Suchomlinoff selected Alexander Nikolaevich Dobrzhansky, a colonel of the Life Guards of the Jäger Regiment, to form an armored machine gun battery. Two days later, another order authorized the formation of the First Machine Gun Car Company. Within a month and a half, drawing recruits from the Officer Rifle School, the unit was formed, consisting of



**Illustration 2. Russo-Balt armoured car and its crew.
Winter 1915-1916**

15 officers, 150 enlisted soldiers and one civilian attache official.

Dobrzhansky was instrumental in designing the armored cars his unit would take to battle, and drew up the first schematic for the vehicles. Initially calling for the machine guns to be mounted in a turret, that idea was abandoned to speed production, and the weapons were mounted in the hull.

The first prototype was developed at the Izhorsky Works by A. J. Grauen, and numerous problems had to be solved by Izhorsky engineers ranging from the

composition of the armor to the method of riveting it to the framework and how to strengthen the chassis to support the added weight of armor and weapons.

Each vehicle was equipped with three 7.62-mm Maxim machine guns in a triangle arrangement that allowed them to fire on potential targets with at least two guns at a time. Two guns were fixed in the hull sides, and the third gun, mounted in the rear, could be switched from side to side as well as deployed against aerial targets through an opening in the hull roof. Other vehicles were armed with 47mm cannon.

The vehicles were ready to go by October, and Tsar Nicholas II recalled seeing them on parade in Petrograd on Oct. 14, 1914.

“It was snowing wet. At 11 o’clock, on the palace square, I saw a newly formed automobile company with 47mm cannons and machine guns with steel shields. They went to the front.”

The First Machine Gun Car Company got its baptism of fire on Nov. 9, 1914, and saw a stream of successes in its early battles. On Nov. 9, the vehicles sped at full speed into the city of Strykov, firing on houses where the enemy was taking cover and helping the 9th and 12th Turkestan regiments take the city. The next day, a detachment of armored cars drove along the highway outside the city and, firing into enemy trenches, helped rout two companies of Germans, for which the commander of the detachment, Staff Capt. B.A. Shulkevicha, was awarded the Order of St. Stanislay, 3rd Degree.

On Nov. 21, outside Lodz, amid fierce fighting, five armored vehicles destroyed two German infantry regiments. They were then called in to engage German units attempting to take a nearby highway, and they sped to within 100-150 steps of the enemy, pouring fire into them and repulsed the attack. At that range, however, German rounds could penetrate the armor, and two of the Russo-Balt armored cars were knocked out, but none captured by the retreating enemy. Throughout the war, not a single Russo-Balt armored car would be irretrievably lost.

The Russo-Balt armored cars closed out 1914 by covering the retreat of the 6th Army Corps from Lovich, working in the rear guard.

One of the remarkable engagements for the Russo-Balt armored cars occurred on Feb. 3, 1915, when four of the cars moved forward along the Belskoe Highway toward the village of Tsiulkuvla and encountered three battalions of enemy infantry. With their own infantry support more than 10 kilometers behind them, armored cars of the second and third platoons nevertheless opened fire on the enemy, immediately causing confusion and panic among their ranks. Targeted by German artillery, one Russian gunner was killed, and three of the armored cars were immobilized, but the enemy infantry retreated.

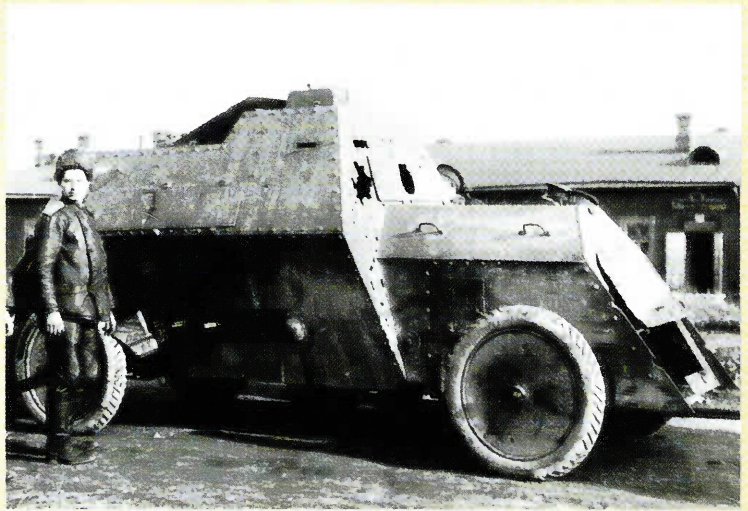


Illustration 3. Russo-Balt armoured car (company's number 7) evacuated from the battlefield in which Staff Capt. Gurdoff was killed in the fight for Dobrzhankovo, Feb. 13, 1915.

On the night of Feb. 12, 1915, two platoons of Russo-Balts, supported by an unarmored cannon truck, supported the Second Siberian Regiment of the Second Siberian Division in an attack near the village of Kmetsky. Each Russo-Balt fired 1,000 rounds at the German positions within 10 minutes, adding to the 300 rounds fired by the cannon-armed vehicle, inflicting approximately 300 casualties on the Germans. The Russians, however, took casualties as well. One rifle round pierced the armor of the lead Russo Balt, killing its commander, Capt. Gurdoff. The Russian cannon vehicle was also hit in the gas tank, caught fire and exploded. Shortly after, a reserve unit of armored cars arrived, and one of them, a Russo-Balt under the command of Capt. Podgursky, moved forward with advancing Russian infantry, broke into the village and captured two bridges to cut off the German escape route.

More than 500 Germans were captured, and the Russians lost Capt. Gurdoff and six machine gunners, with two additional officers and seven machine gunners wounded, one of whom later died of his wounds. Each of the crews was decorated, and the second platoon was renamed in honor of the fallen Capt. Gurdoff.

Tsar Nicholas II remarked on the success of the Russo-Balt units on Feb. 13, 1915, when he wrote in his diary, "Successful offensive battles are going from Lomza to Prasnysk; our troops took quite a number of German prisoners, guns and machine guns; cars with cannons and machine guns contributed a lot to the success!"

From July 7-10, 1915, the company covered the retreat of the First Turkestan Corps and the 30th Infantry Division on the left bank of the Narev River in the area from Serotusk to Pultusk. During the battle, on July 7, a German counterattack was repulsed by the Russo-Balts with Col. Dobrzhansky effectively directing their fire. On July 10, under heavy fire, he advanced the platoon forward to point-

blank range to stop the German offensive long enough for Russian units to secure a new position and drive off the Germans.

The First Auto-Machine Gun Company was in continual active service from 1914 until September 1916, when it was reorganized into the First Armored Division in the 42nd Army Corps. It served in Finland until 1917 and was sent to the Northern Front near Dvinsk shortly before the Russian Revolution.

The revolution resulted in the near-total collapse of the Russian Army, and when the Germans attacked on Feb. 18, 1918, they were able to capture five armored cars that had just been repaired without a fight, including two cannon-armed vehicles built on American Packard chassis, which were later taken back to Germany and involved in the 1919-1920 revolutionary battles in Berlin, Lindau and Munich. The Russians managed to evacuate all the Russo-Balts to Petrograd in the confusion of the German offensive, and none were lost to them.

Russo-Balt armored cars were involved in the civil war in Russia, and in 1921, one Russo-Balt served at the Tank Training Brigade School, and another served with the Red Army until 1923.



Illustration 4. 3-ton Saurer truck evacuates a damaged Russo-Balt armored car ahead of the cannon-armed Mannesmann-Mulag armored car. 1915.

Text by Stanislav Kiriletz.

Images provided in the article are from the Stanislav Kiriletz Collection

Important Notes

- Read the instructions carefully before starting the assembly.
- Use glue intended for plastic models.
- Choking hazard. Keep small parts and plastic bags away from children.
- Always wear protective eyewear when cutting and a protective mask when painting, glueing and sanding.
- Use paints designed and suitable for plastic model kits.

Symbols Reference

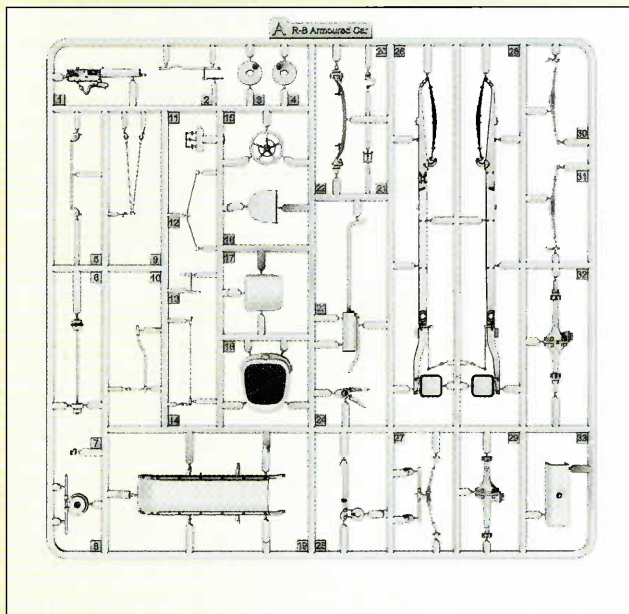
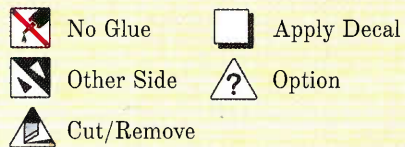


Fig. 1. Runner A

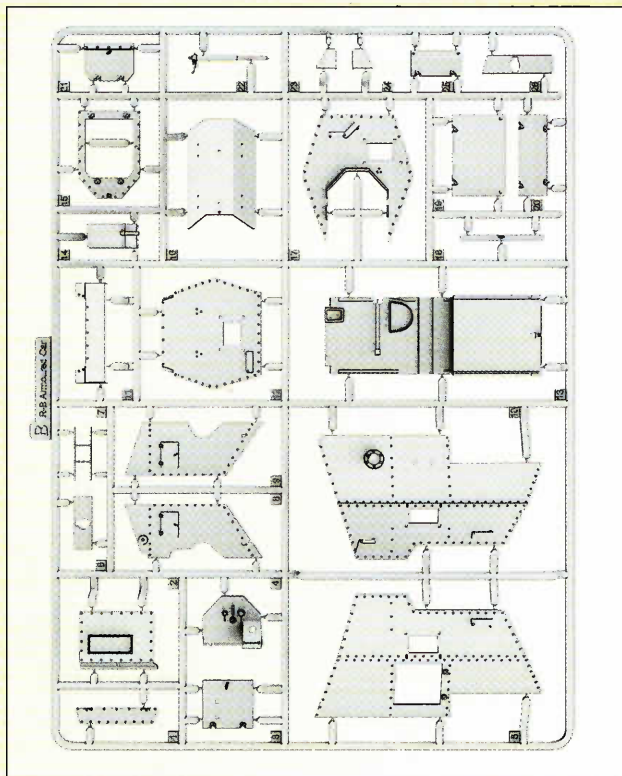


Fig. 2. Runner B

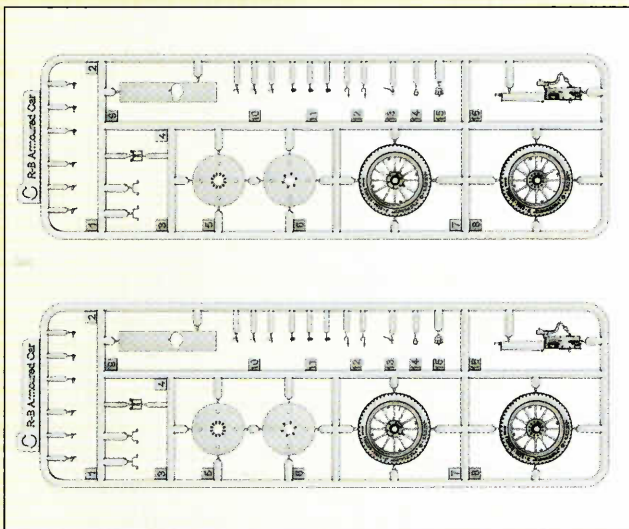


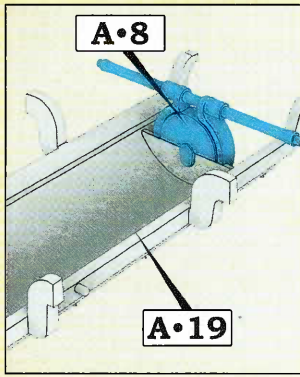
Fig. 3. Runners C



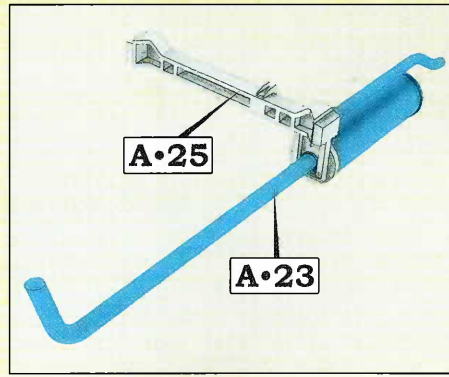
Fig. 4. Decals

Colour numbers

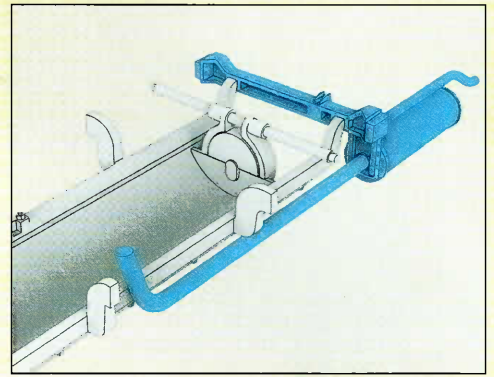
1 Burnt metal (exhaust)	3 Leather	5 Black	7 Wood	9 Green Moss
2 Rubber (Grey green)	4 Steel	6 Brass	8 Gun metal	10 Dark green



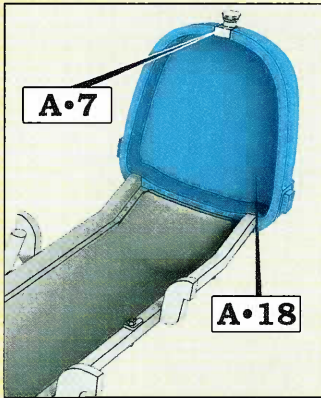
Step 1. Installation of the brake drum



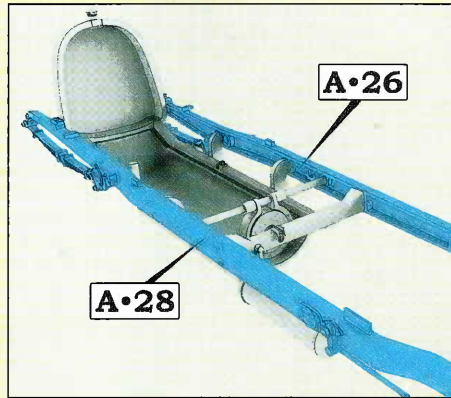
Step 2. Assembling the exhaust pipe with muffler and the cross member



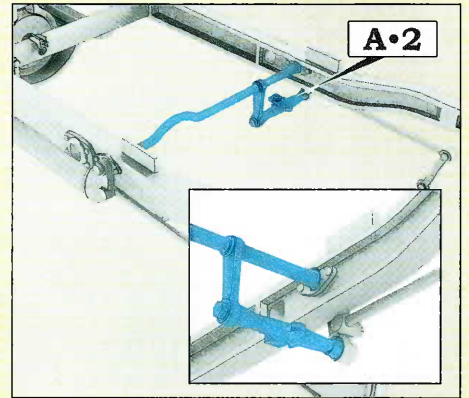
Step 3. Assembling the engine protection and the cross member



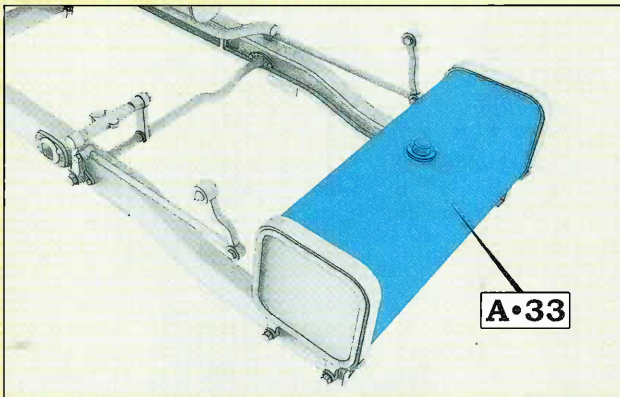
Step 4. Installing the radiator



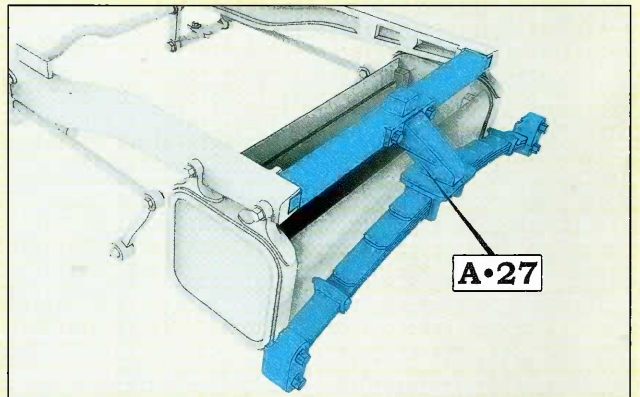
Step 5. Installation of both side rails



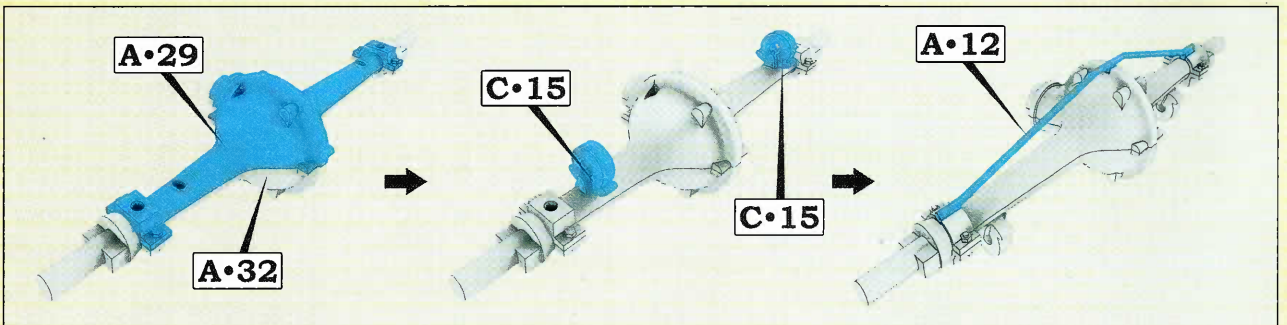
Step 6. Installing the emergency brake cross shaft



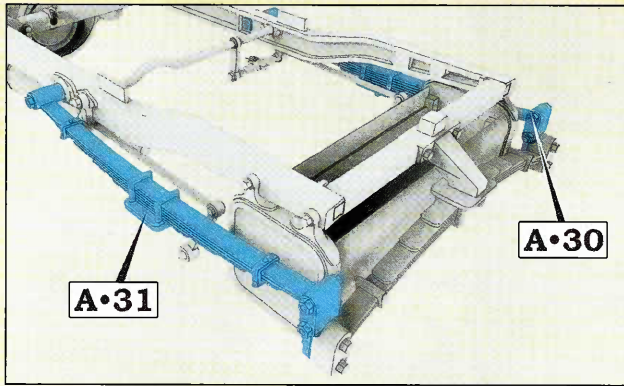
Step 7. Installing the fuel tank



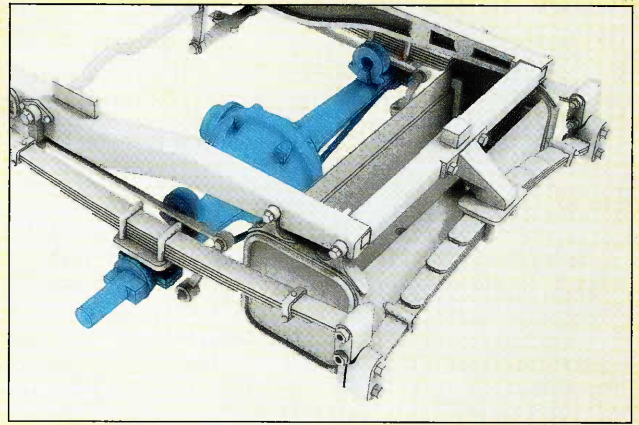
Step 8. Installing the rear cross leaf spring



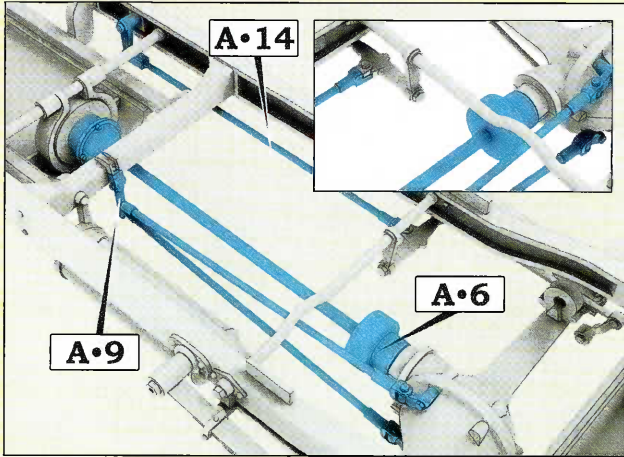
Step 9. Assembling the rear axle



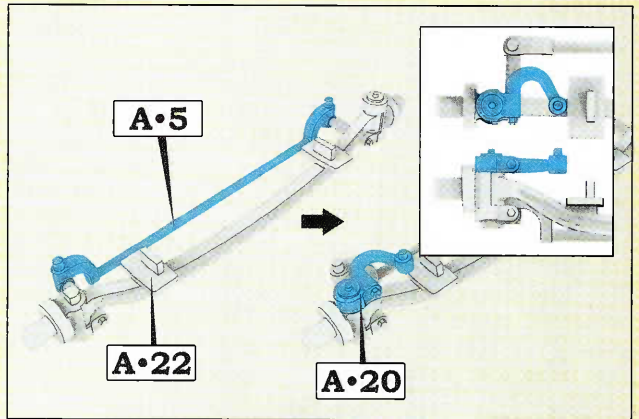
Step 10. Installation of the rear leaf springs



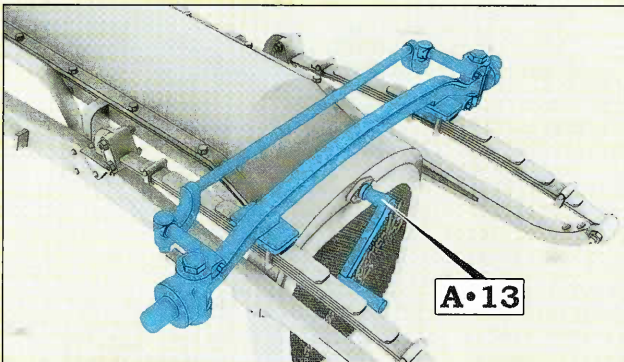
Step 11. Installation of the rear axle



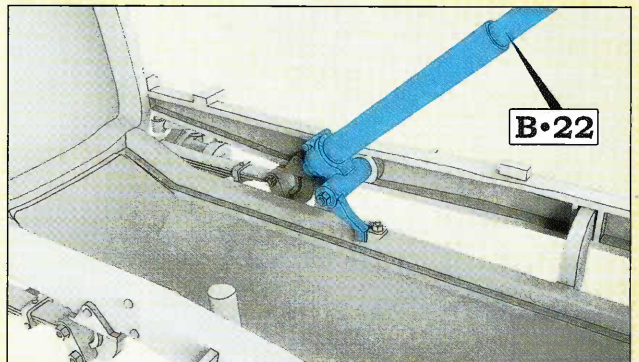
Step 12. Installation of the drive shaft and other rods



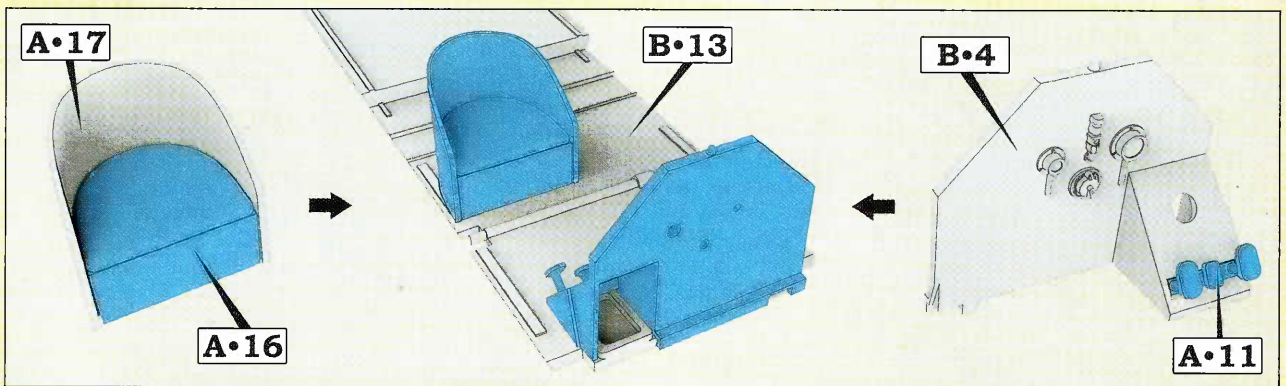
Step 13. Assembling the front axle



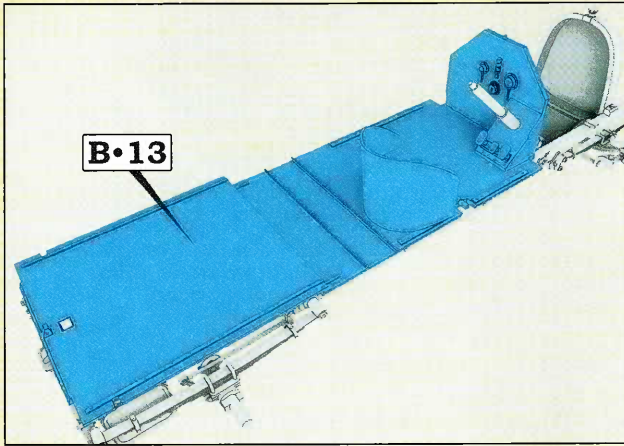
Step 14. Installation of the axle and the hand crank



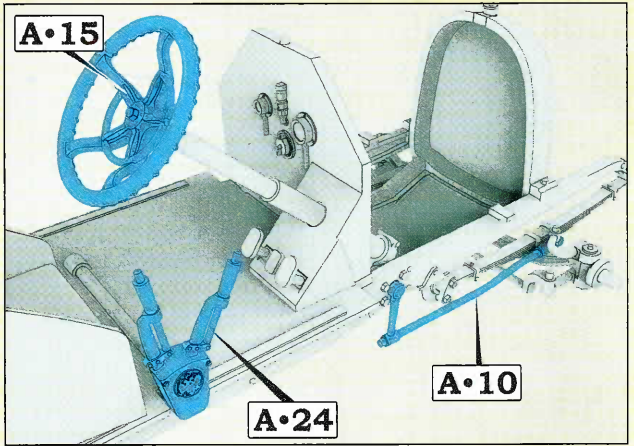
Step 15. Installation of the steering column



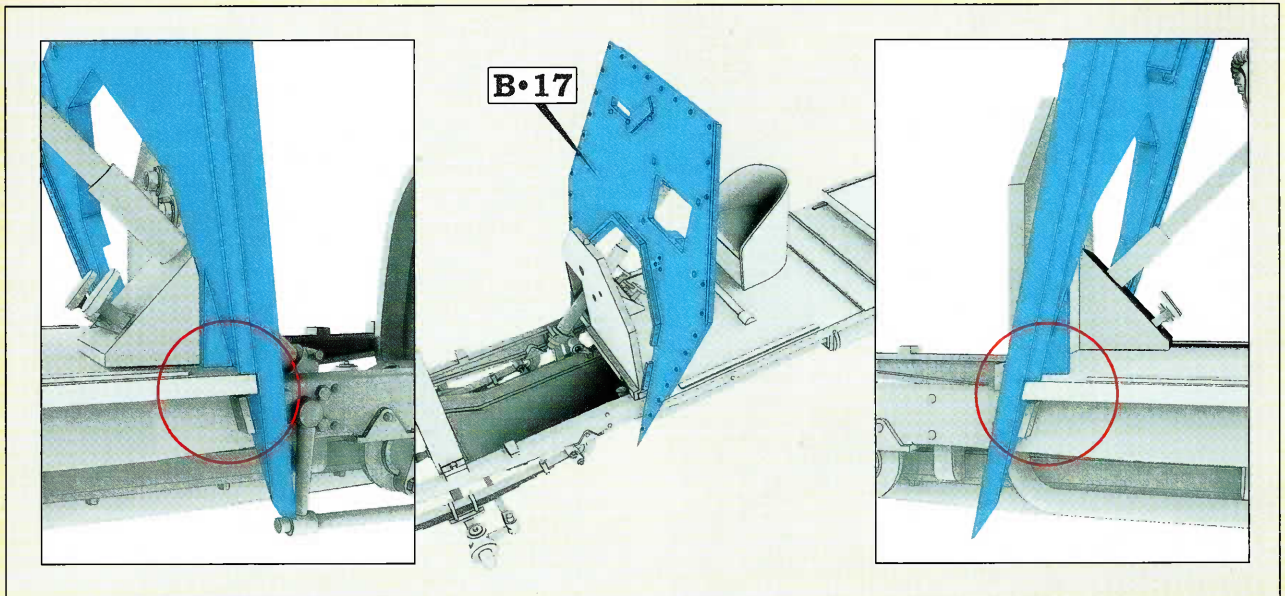
Step 16. Assembling the interior parts. Check page 15 (fig.7) for instrument decals



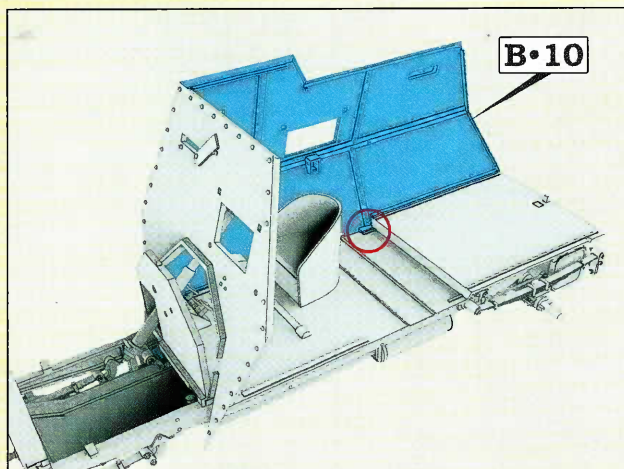
Step 17. Installing the floor with the interior



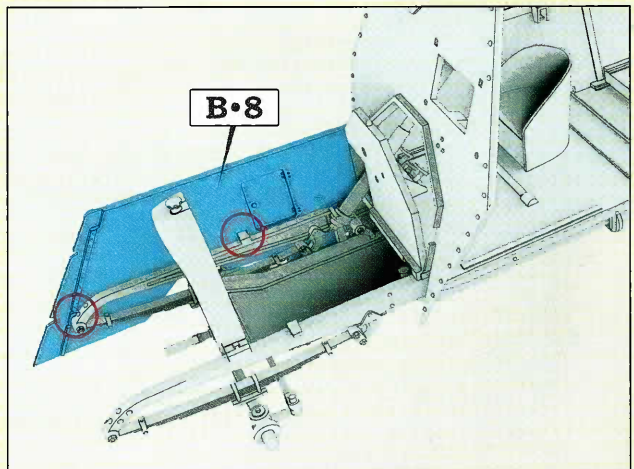
Step 18. Installation of the gear and handbrake levers, steering wheel and the steering arm



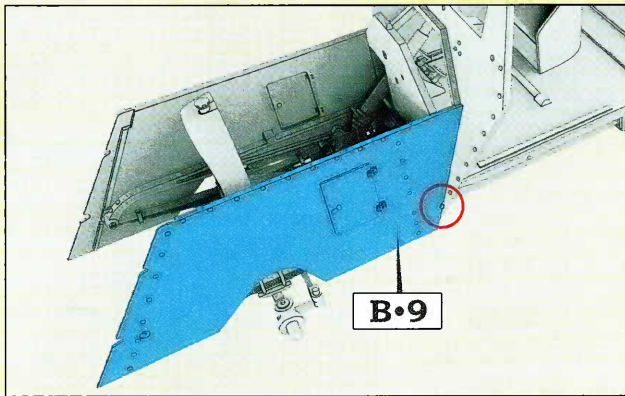
Step 19. Installation of the front armour plate



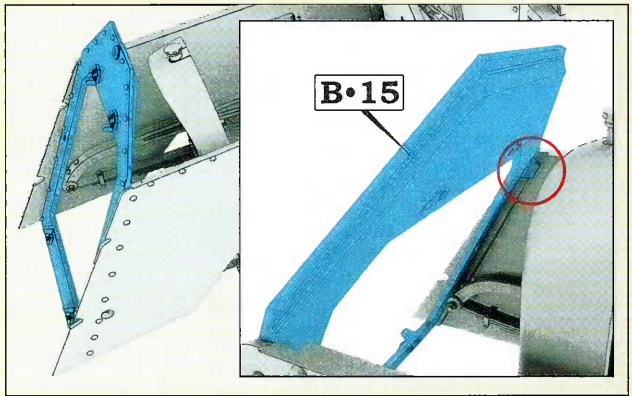
Step 20. Installation of the starboard armoured superstructure wall



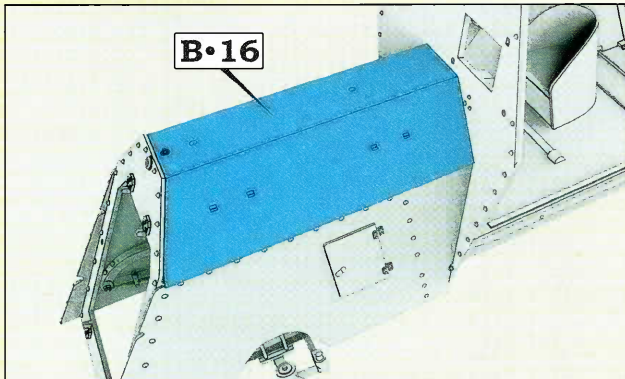
Step 21. Installation of the starboard engine armoured wall



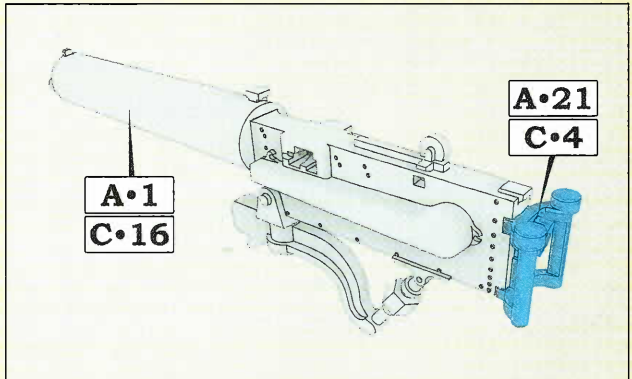
Step 22. Installation of the port engine armoured wall



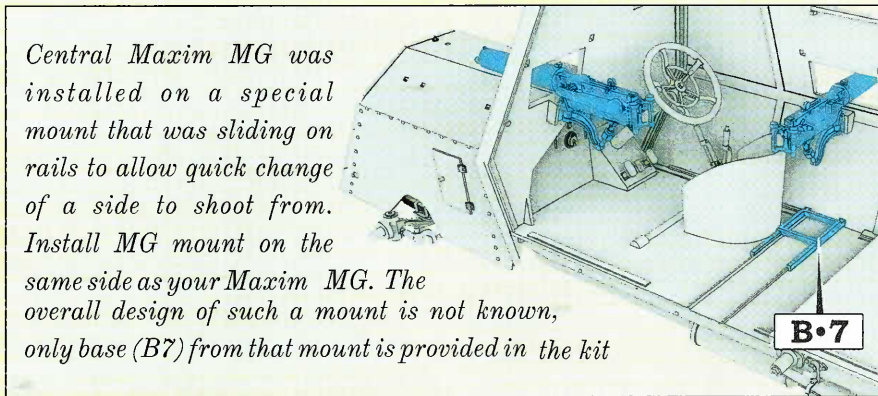
Step 23. Installation of the radiator armour



Step 24. Installation of the armoured hood

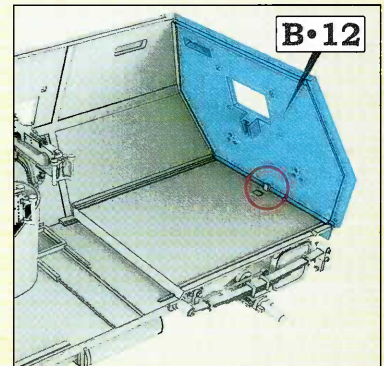


Step 25. Assembling the Maxim MG. Make 3 (three)

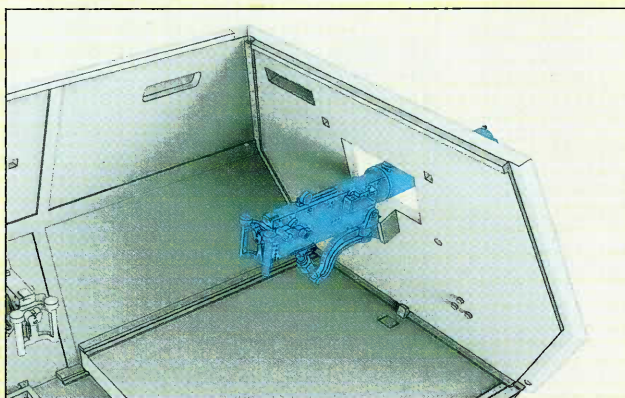


Step 26. Installation of the Maxim MII and central MG mount

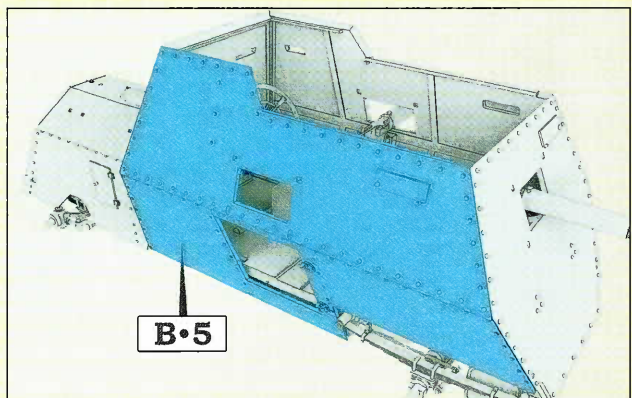
Central Maxim MG was installed on a special mount that was sliding on rails to allow quick change of a side to shoot from. Install MG mount on the same side as your Maxim MG. The overall design of such a mount is not known, only base (B7) from that mount is provided in the kit



Step 27. Installation of the rear armoured plate

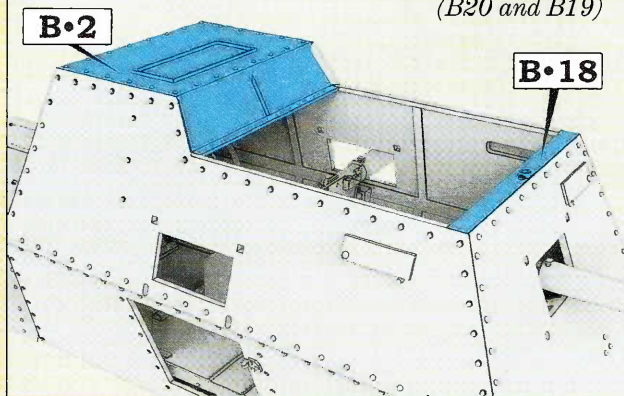


Step 28. Installation of the rear Maxim MG



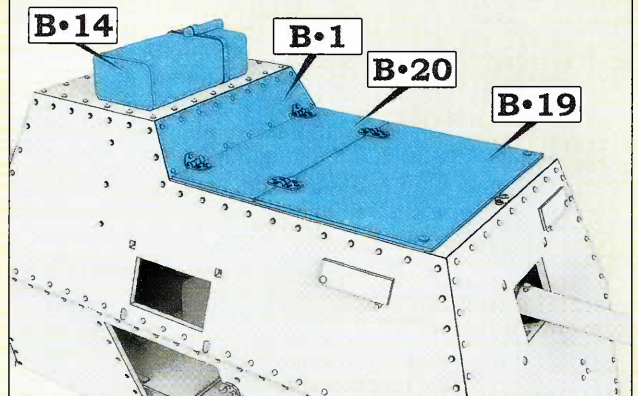
Step 29. Installation of the port armoured superstructure wall

Install B2 as close to the front armoured plate edge as possible, and B18 to the rear armoured plate. That is important for a proper installation of the hatches (B20 and B19)

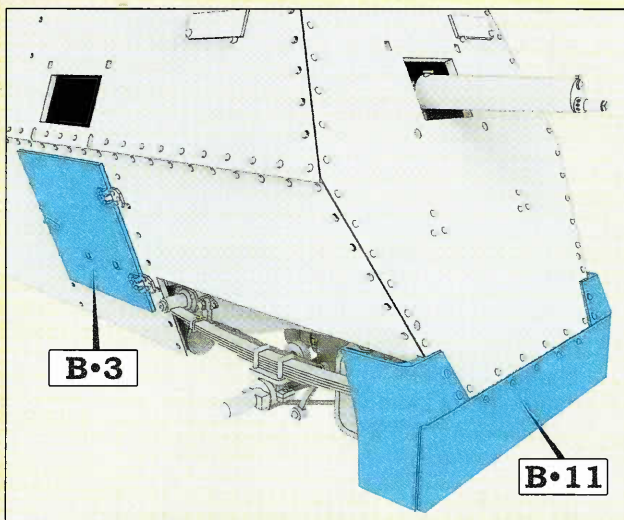


Step 30. Installation of the armoured roof

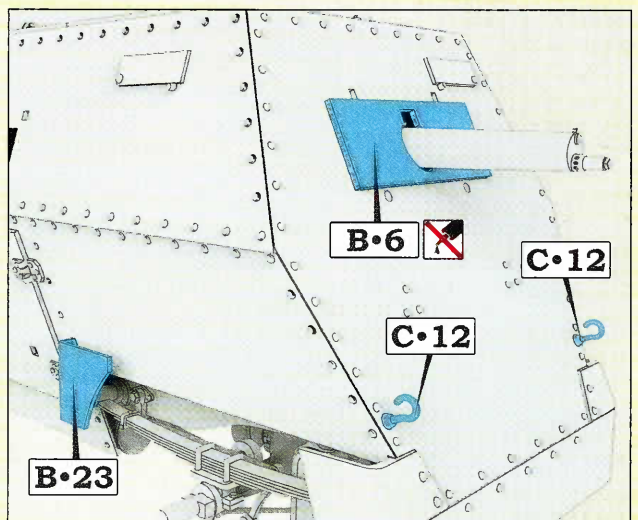
It is not known if part B14 was a stowage box, spare part box or, perhaps, a water tank for Maxim MG



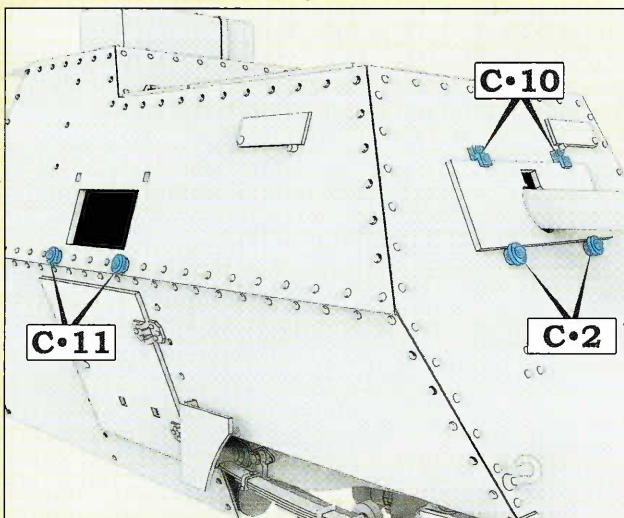
Step 31. Installation of the water tank(?) and hatches



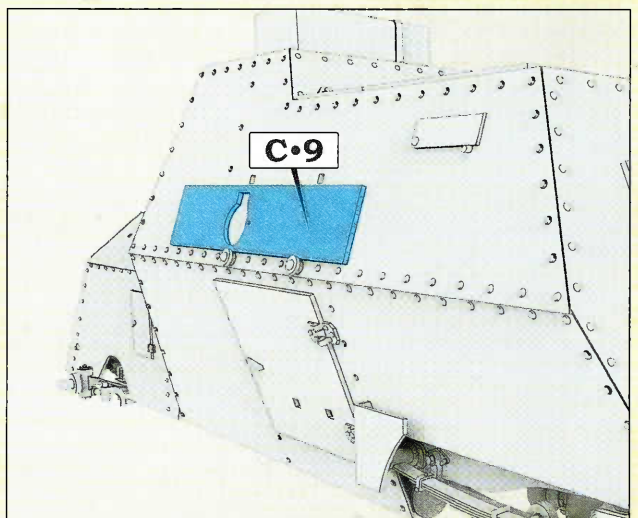
Step 32. Installation of the rear fuel tank armoured plate and the crew door



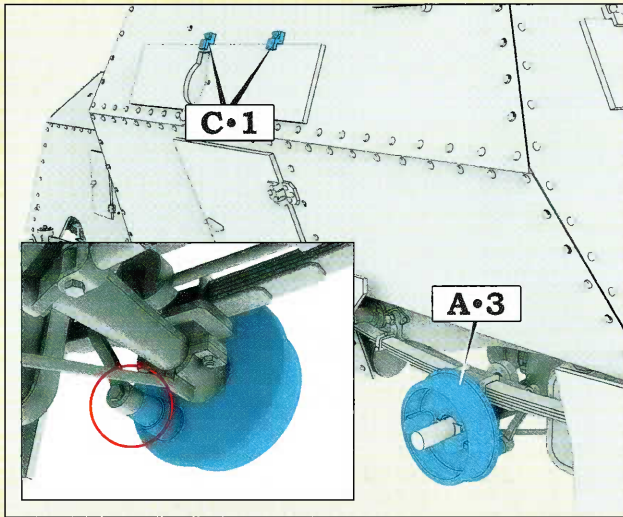
Step 33. Installation of leaf spring protection, tow hooks and rear MG shield



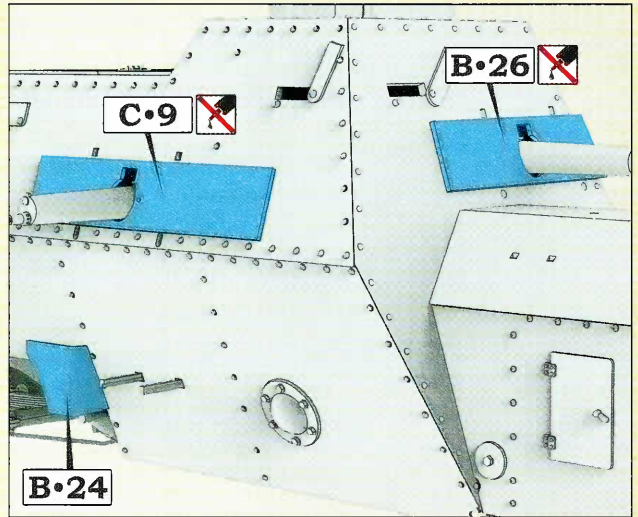
Step 34. Installation of the MG shield rollers and fittings



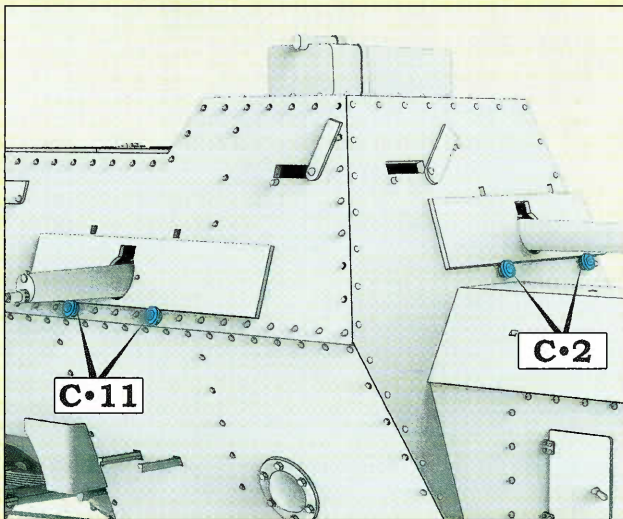
Step 35. Installation of the MG shield ("closed" position)



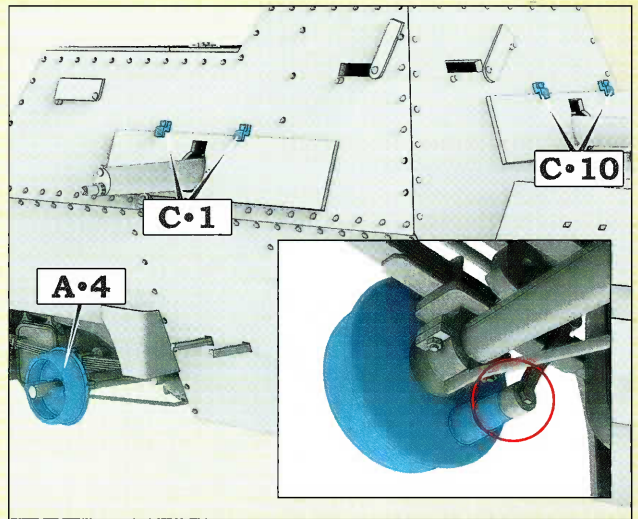
Step 36. Installation of the MG shield fittings and rear wheel brake drum



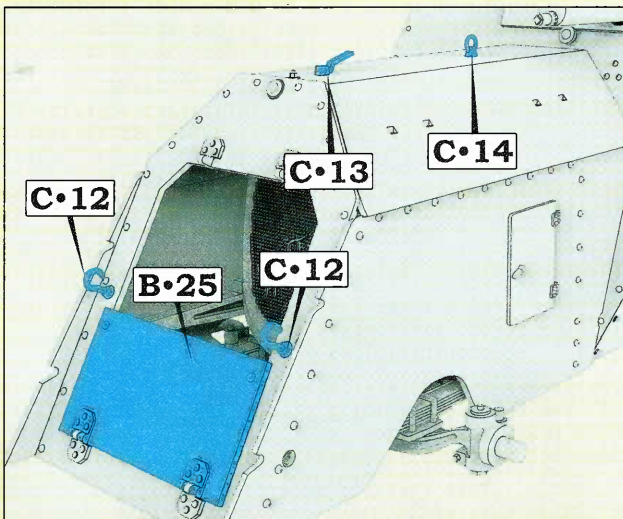
Step 37. Installation of the MG shields and leaf spring protection



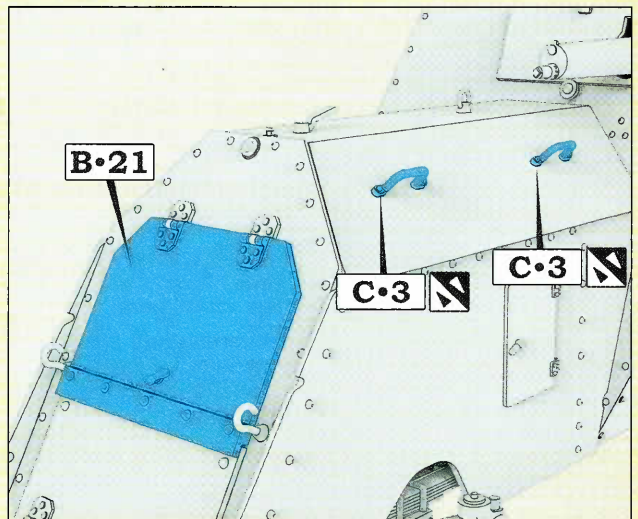
Step 38. Installation of the MG shield rollers



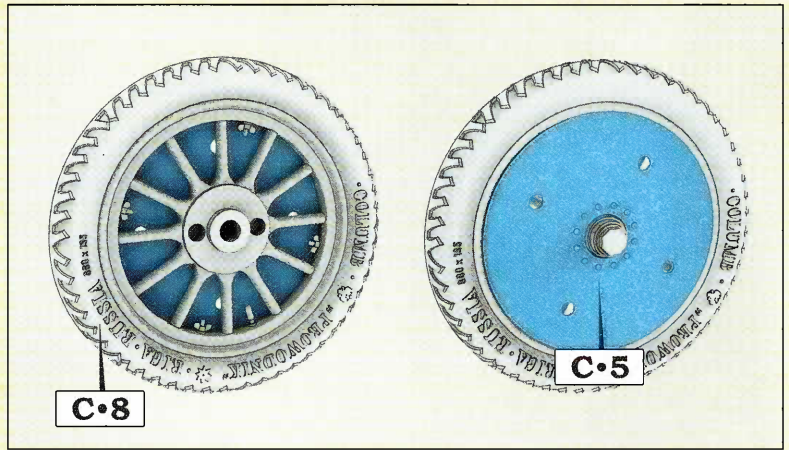
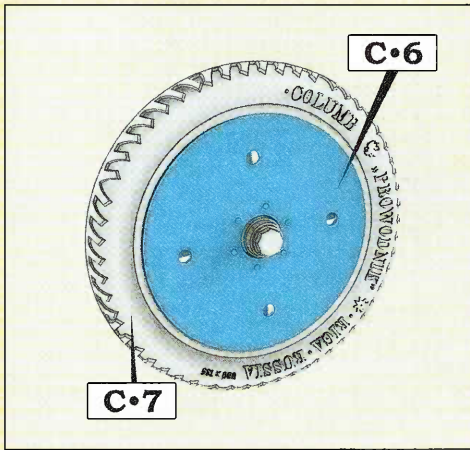
Step 39. Installation of the MG shield fittings and rear wheel brake drum



Step 40. Installation of the radiator shutters, tow hooks and armoured hood fitting points

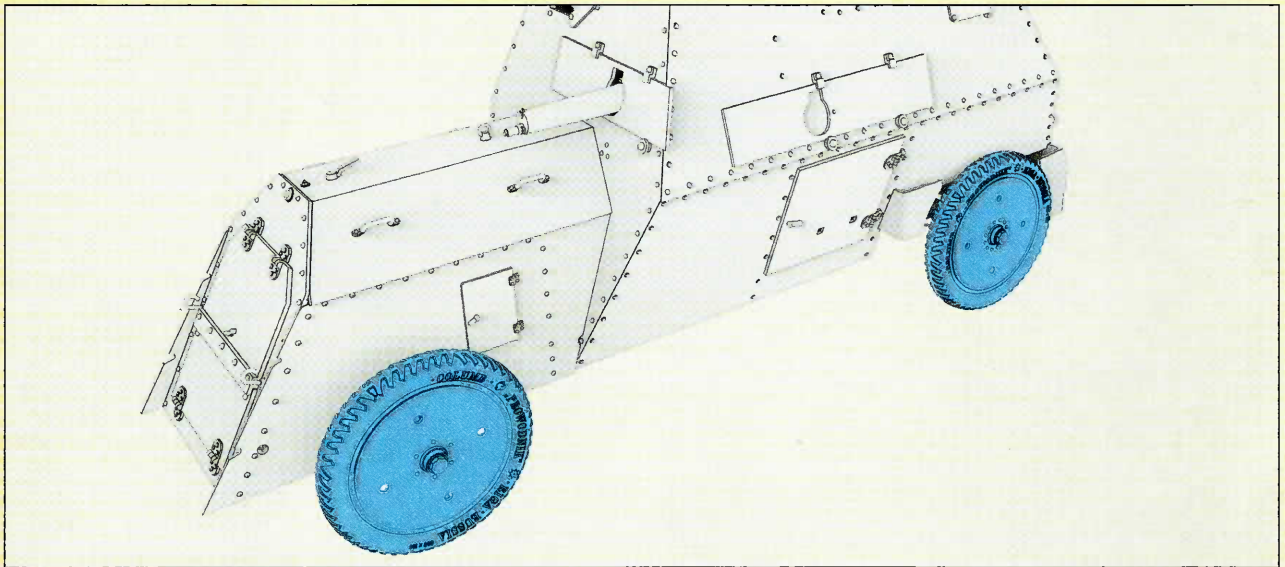


Step 41. Installation of the armoured hood lifting handles

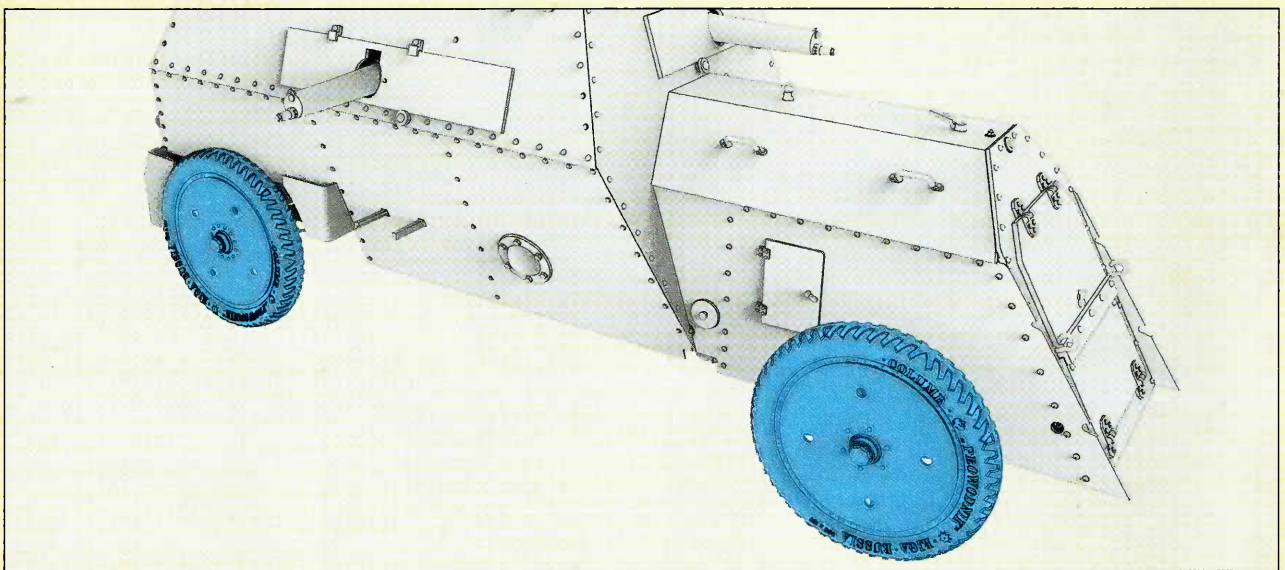


Step 42. Assembling the front wheel.

Step 43. Assembling the rear wheel



Step 44. Installation of the port front and rear wheels



Step 45. Installation of the starboard front and rear wheels

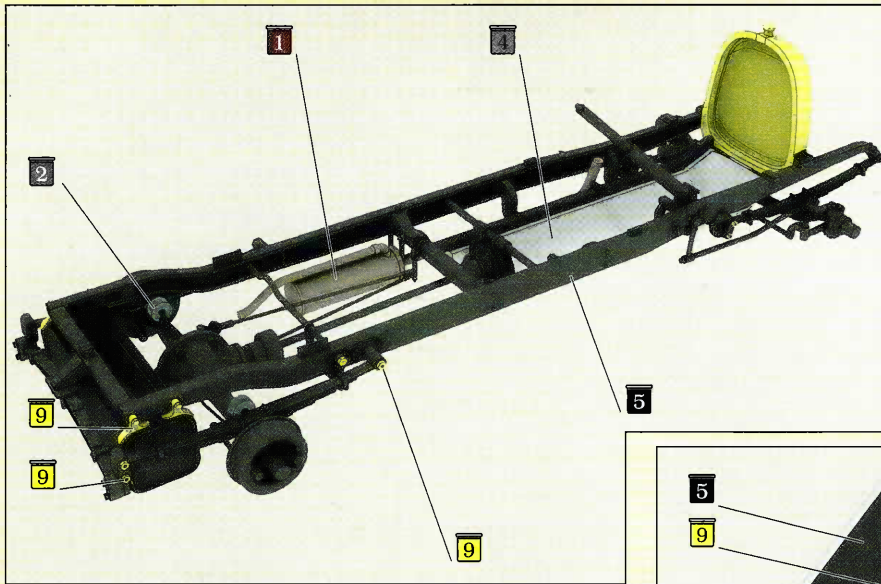


Fig. 5. Colours for the chassis



Fig. 6. Radiator colours

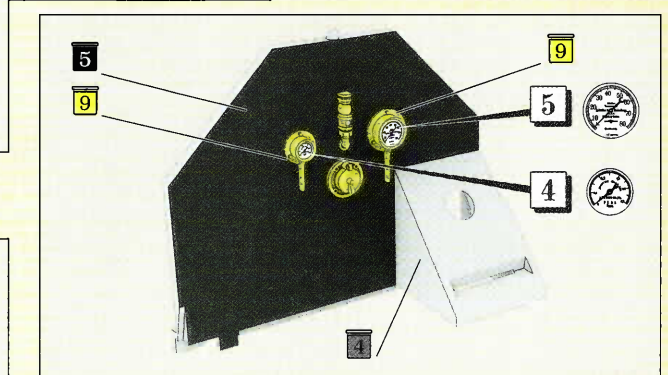


Fig. 7. Dashboard

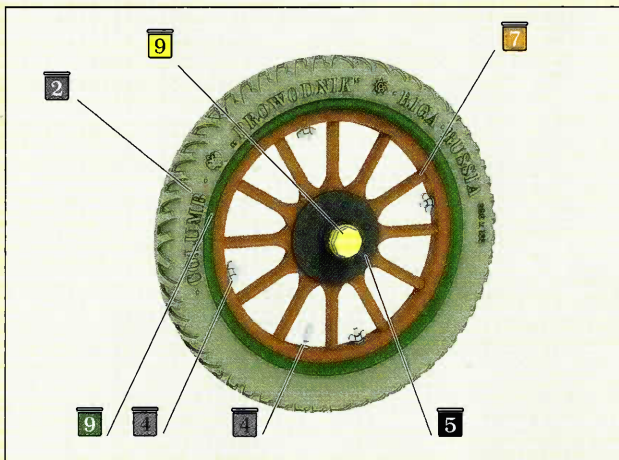


Fig. 8. Wheels

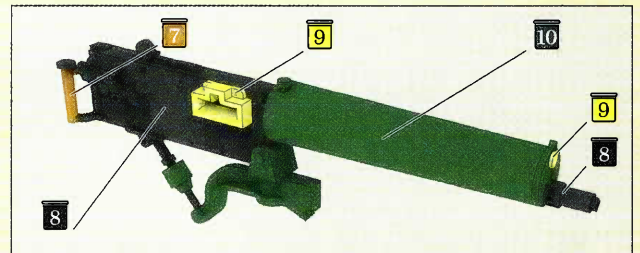


Fig. 9. Machine guns

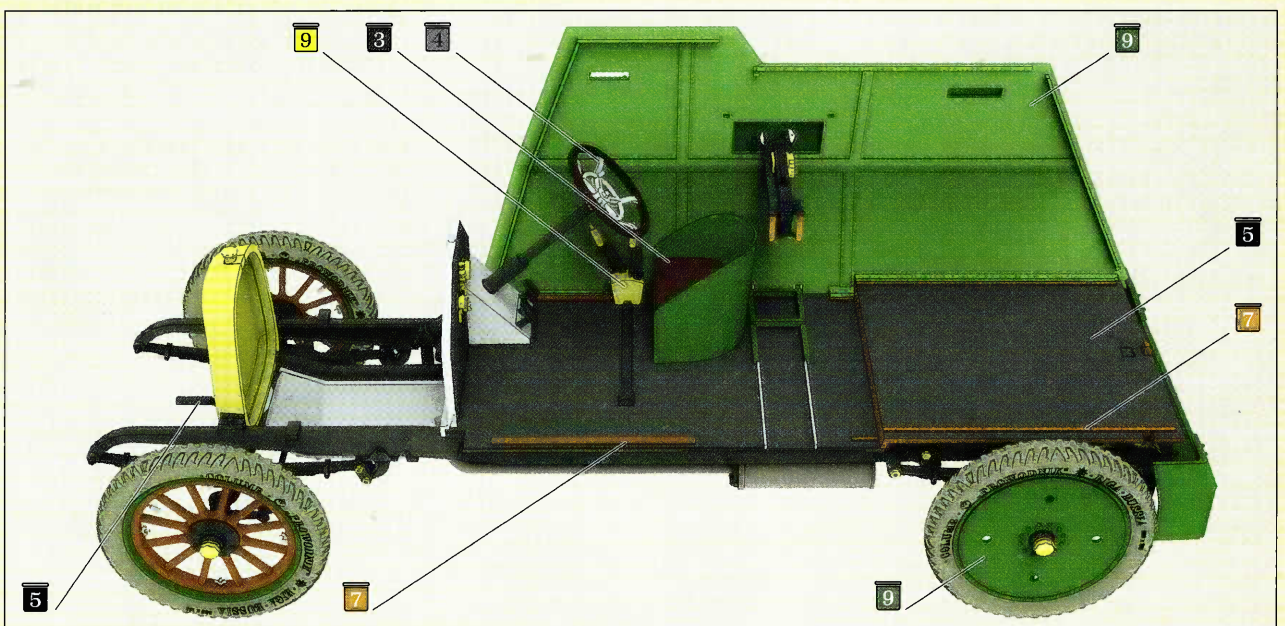


Fig. 10. Interior colours

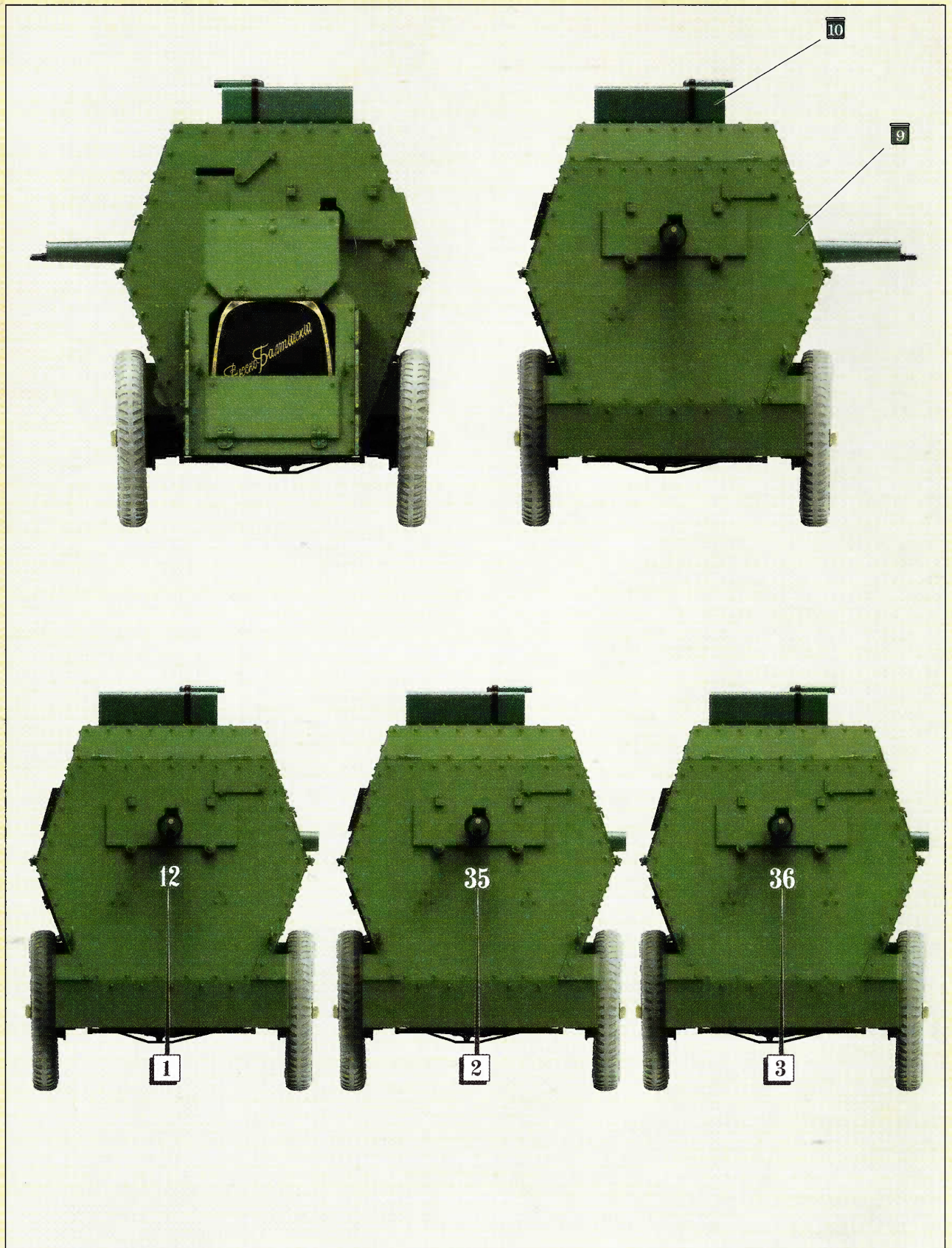


Fig. 11. Marking options for Russo-Balt Armoured Car

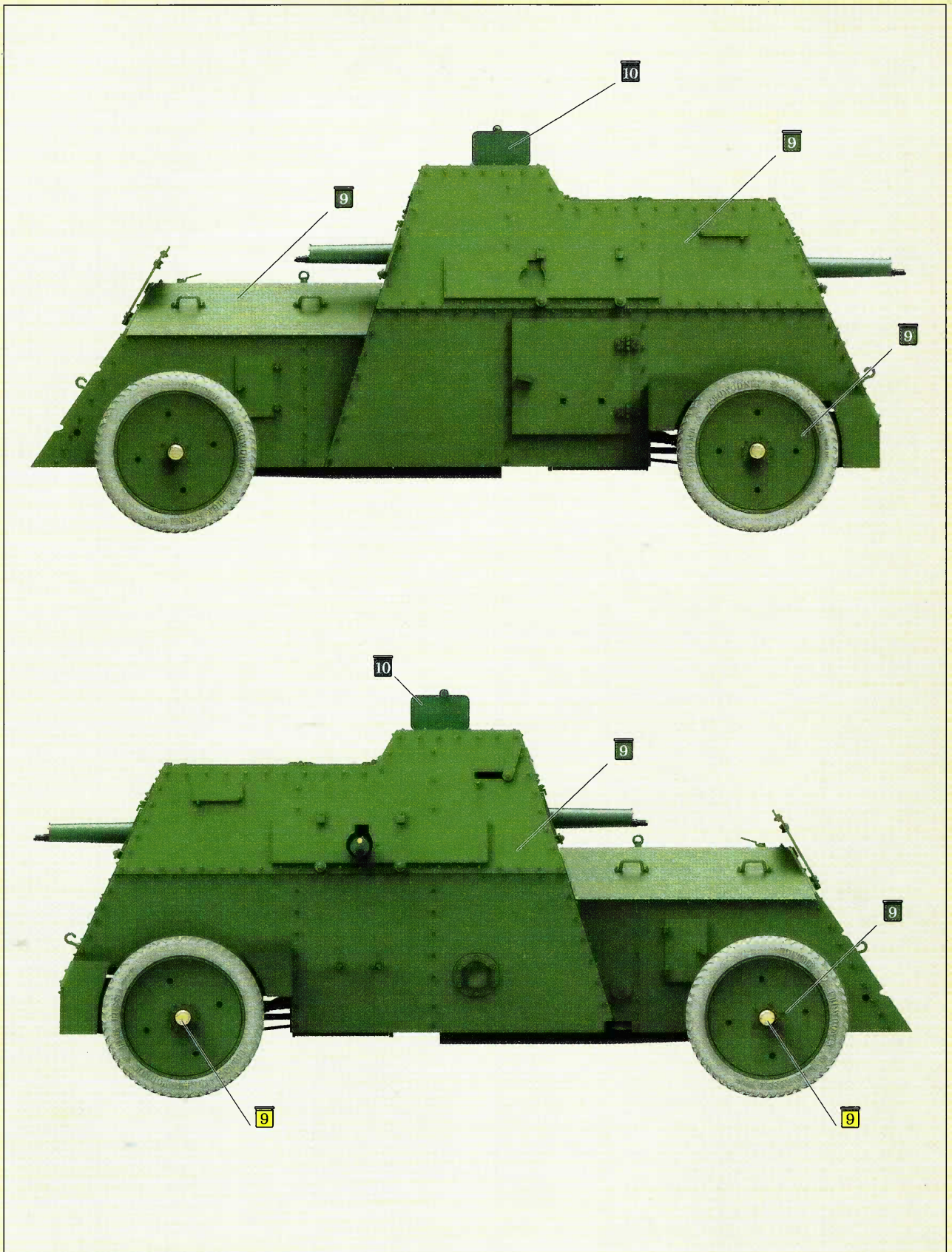


Fig. 12. Colour side profiles

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