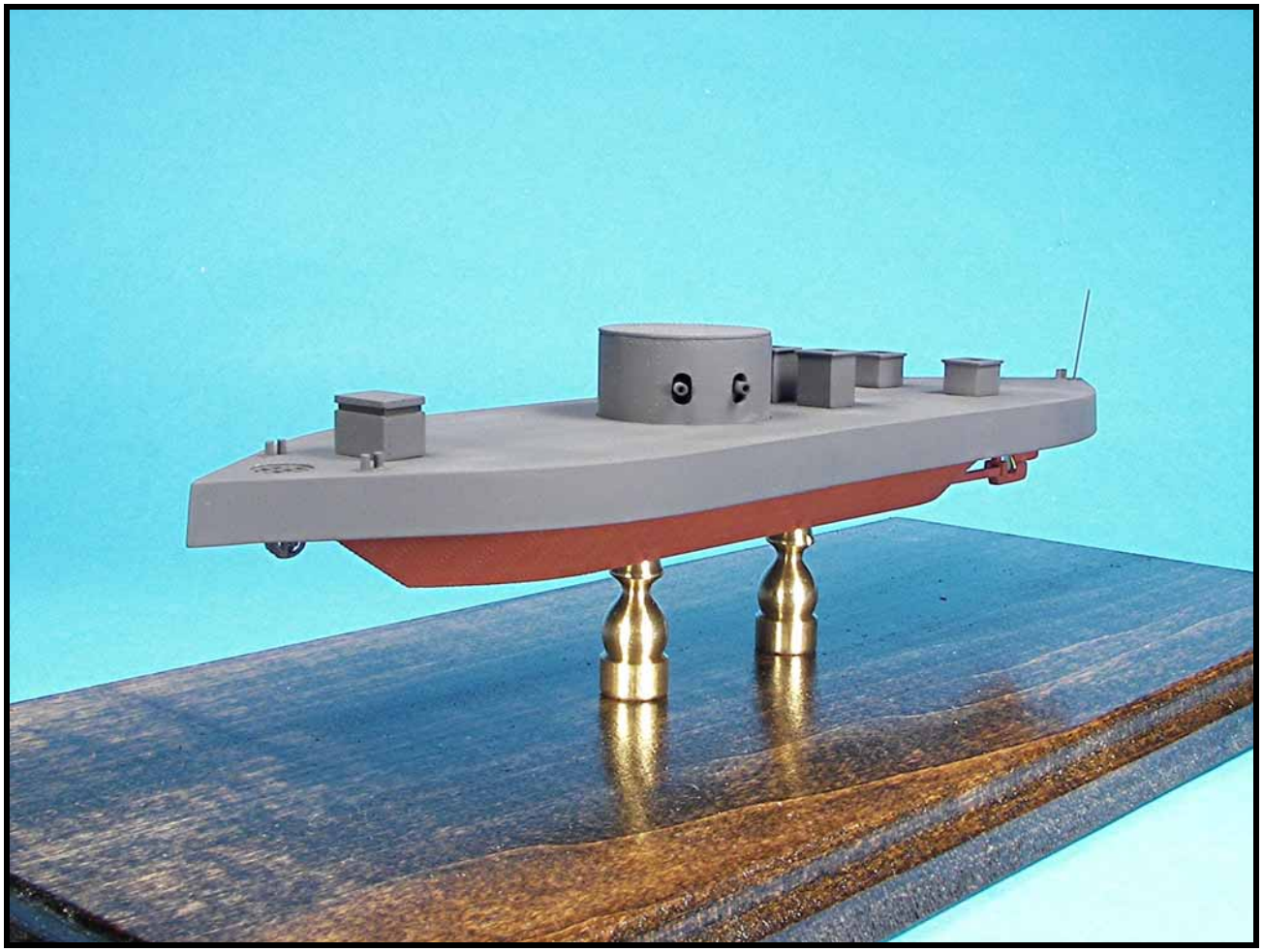


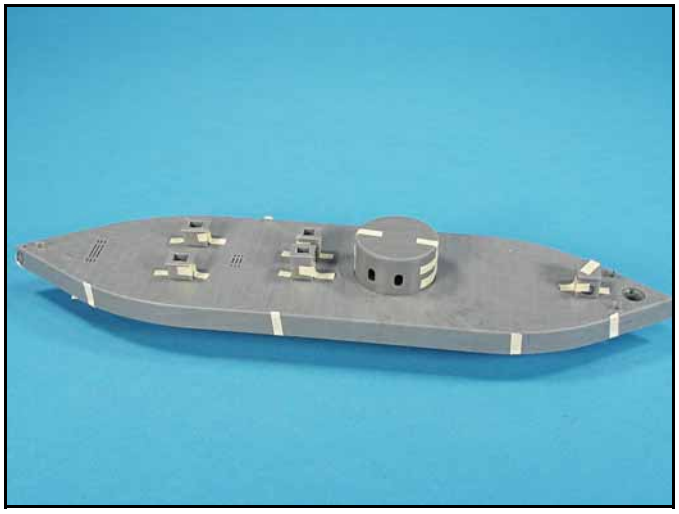
MIKE ASHEY PRODUCTIONS

PRESENTS

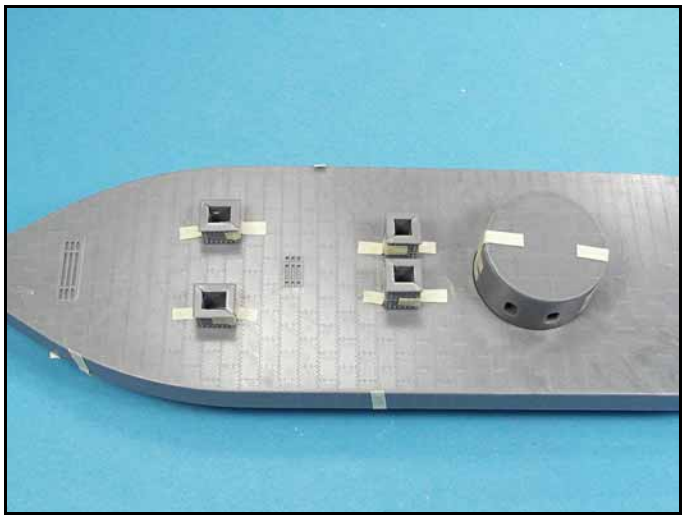
BUILDING THE LIFE-LIKE/PYRO USS MONITOR

The Life-Like/Pyro USS Monitor has been around for over half a century. I remember attempting to build this kit when I was about eight years old, sitting on the floor in my Grandmother's back bedroom. It was packaged with the CSA Merrimac and unfortunately both kits are in different scales. If my calculations are correct the Monitor is approximately a scale of 1/211. Much to my surprise my research indicated that the kit is a fairly accurate representation of the USS Monitor when she slugged it out with the Merrimac.

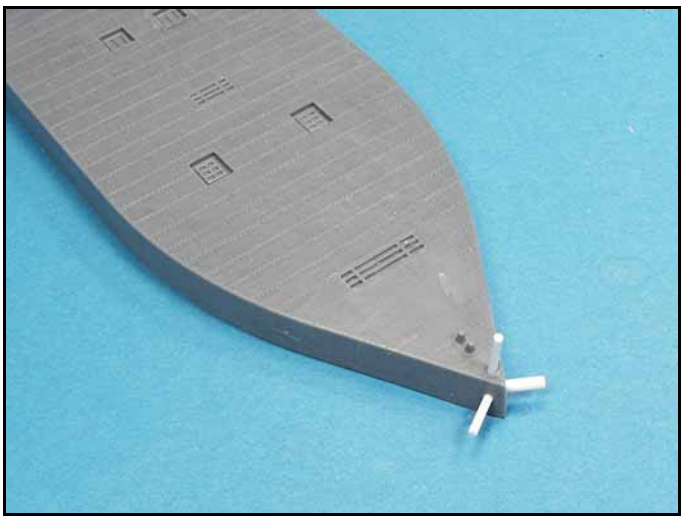
My kit was still in its shrink wrap and while both kits had very delicate and in scale surface rivets and plating lines, the kits had sink marks which marred the surface detail. In addition, the parts presented a lot of fit challenges. There were some things that I did to solve some of the fit issues and there were others that I should have done but didn't think of at the time. If I had sanded the bases flat on the pilot house and the exhaust and air intake stacks they would have had a flush fit with the deck. I should have also spent more time getting the turret top to fit better. Still, the model came out pretty good all things considered!



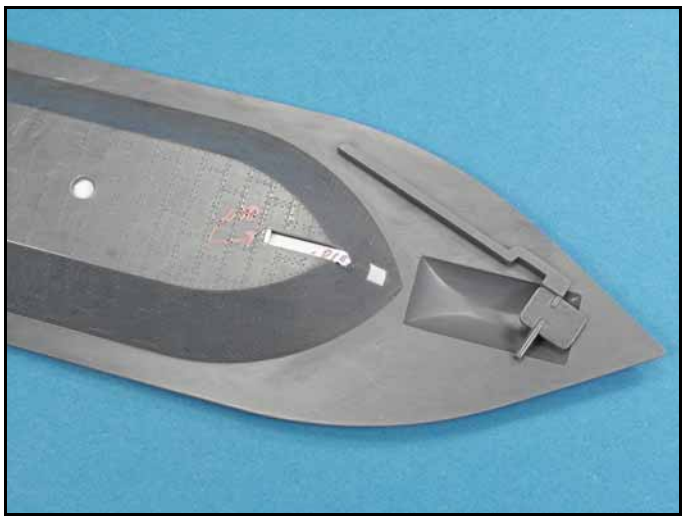
Cleaning up the parts and taping the kit together is a must on this old kit.



The upper and lower hull fit was not bad. The exhaust and intake stacks are diagonal parts and they are misaligned. The fit of the turret halves was not bad but the base and the top will need some work!



The sink marks on the hull and deck were drilled out and then plastic rod was super glued into the holes. The rod was trimmed and sanded smooth. It took several coats of super glue to get the rod to blend into the kits plastic.

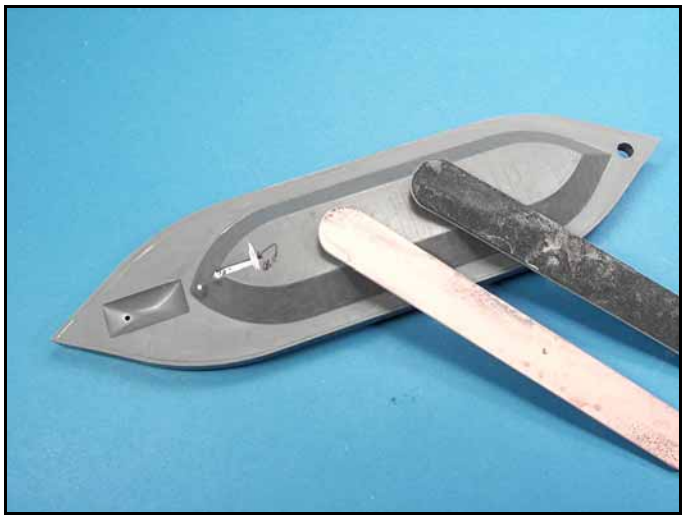


The skeg for the rudder and the prop had a loose fit so I added some plastic to the inside area to tighten up the fit. I also inserted a piece of plastic into the large prop shaft opening and sanded it smooth.

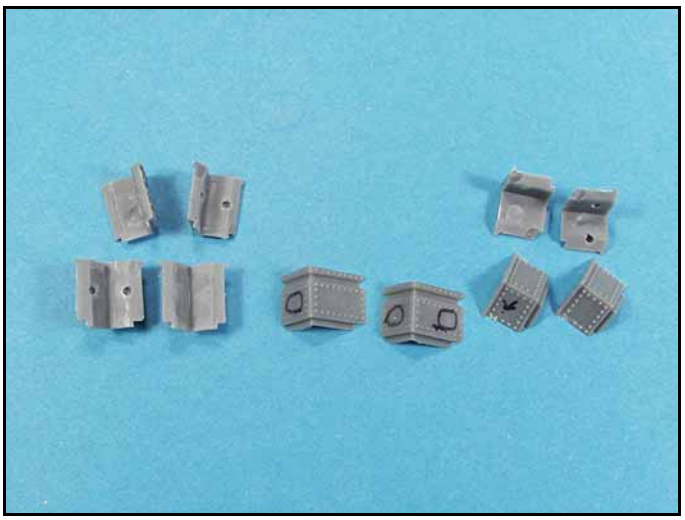
I cleaned up the prop and added a small disk to the end of it to close off the opening. The Skeg and propeller shaft support were glued together to make on assembly. I used brass rod for the propeller shaft.

Several layers of plastic were also glued to the inside of the hull to cover the openings for the display base. The increased thickness will provide a better contact surface for the brass pedestals.

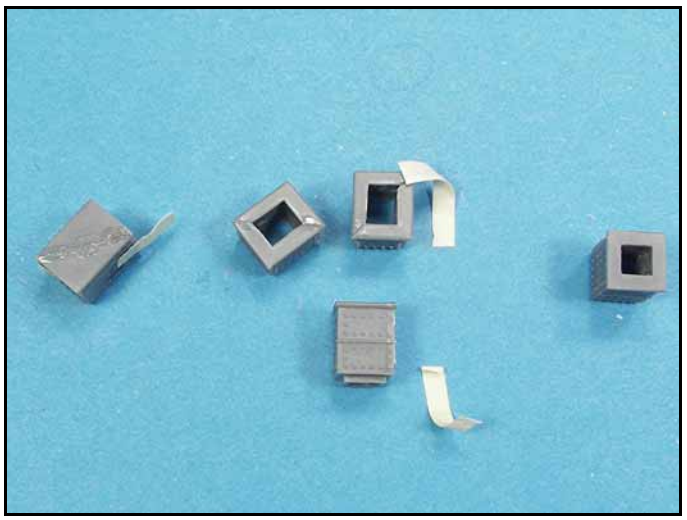
Several coats of super glue were applied to the seam area. I then wet sanded the seams smooth using various grits of sanding sticks.



Several additional applications of super glue were needed to finish the seam work. I then polished the plastic around the seam areas with 0000 steel wool.

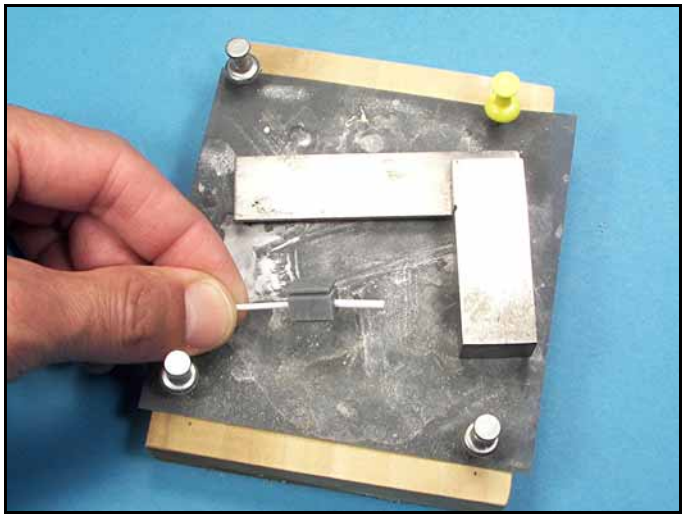


The exhaust and air intake stacks as well as the pilot house were a real challenge to glue together. I cleaned up the insides and flattened out the gluing surfaces. This helped to square up the corners.

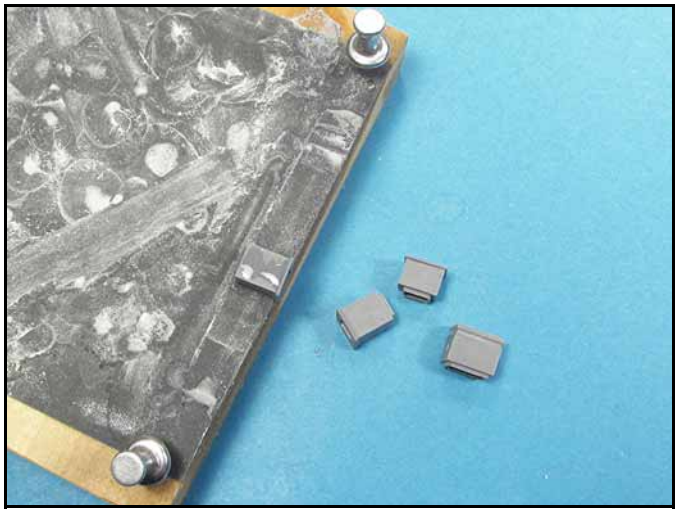


The exhaust and intake parts now look better as the corners appear to be at 90 degree angles. I applied thin beads of super glue along the seams in the hopes of not marring the surface detail. Unfortunately it didn't work.

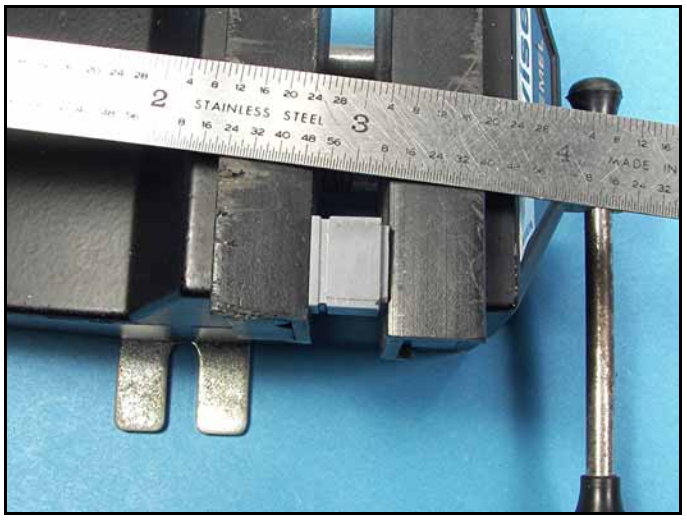
Test fitting the stacks and the pilot house revealed more fit problems. I also drilled out the guns which greatly improved their appearance.



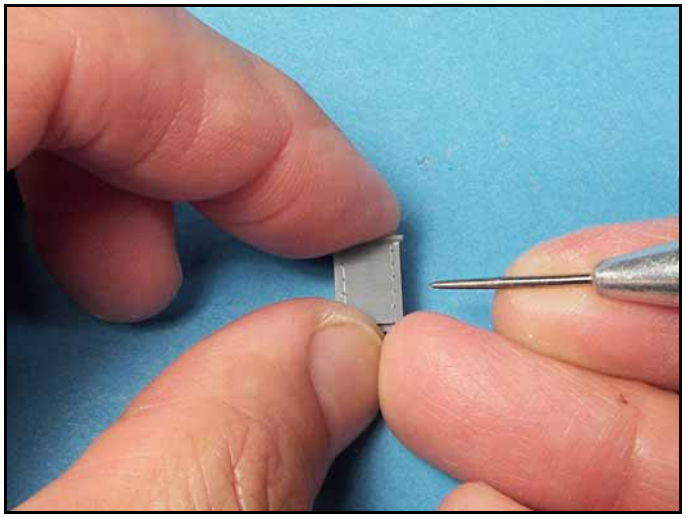
The dimples on the pilot house were drilled out and rod was super glued into the holes, and sanded smooth. The surface detail on the pilot house was lost as a result of sanding the surfaces smooth.



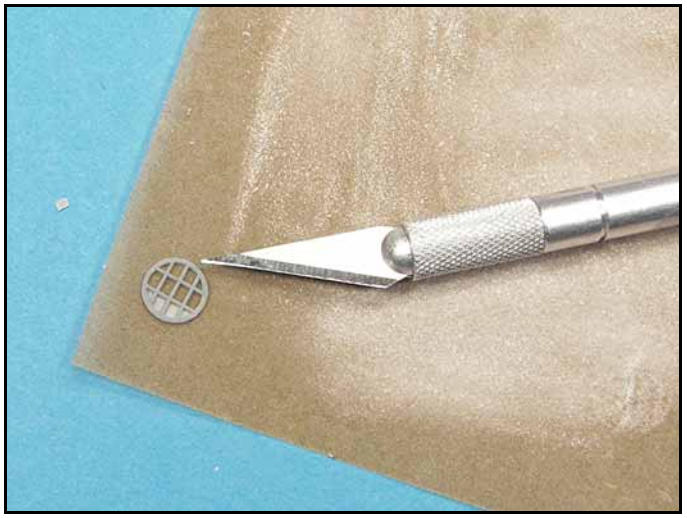
I could not clean up the seam lines along the edges of the smoke stacks and the air intakes. I ran the sides across sandpaper to smooth out the surfaces and fix the corners. Several coast of glue were needed to finally fix the seams.



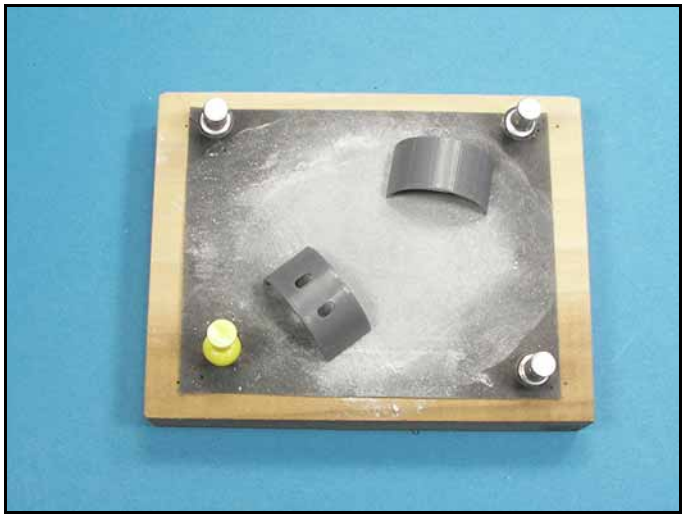
I restored the rivet detail on the stacks, air intakes, and the pilot house. I drew lines and marked off the rivet locations. After I added the rivet detail the surfaces were polished with 0000 steel wool.



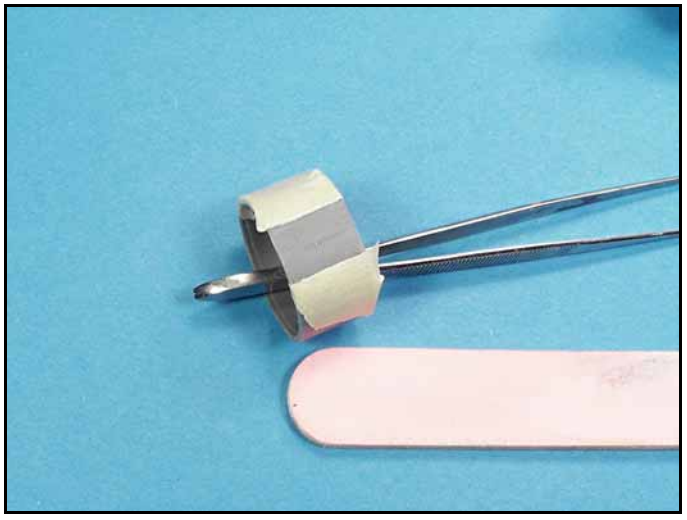
I added the rivet detail with my handy plastic punch. Only slight pressure was necessary to get a tiny indentation. To get a better fit on the hull I should have sanded the bases flat so that they would sit flush with the deck.



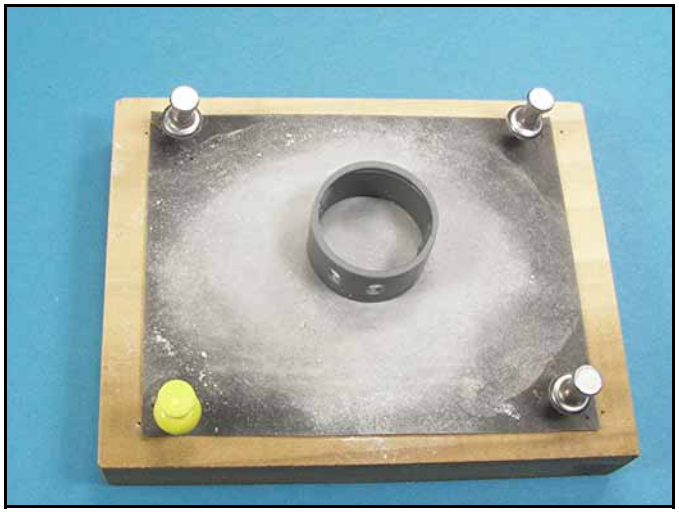
To improve the appearance of the anchor cover I ran the part across sandpaper to remove bottom layers of plastic. When the plastic was paper thin I removed the residual with a number 11 X-Acto blade.



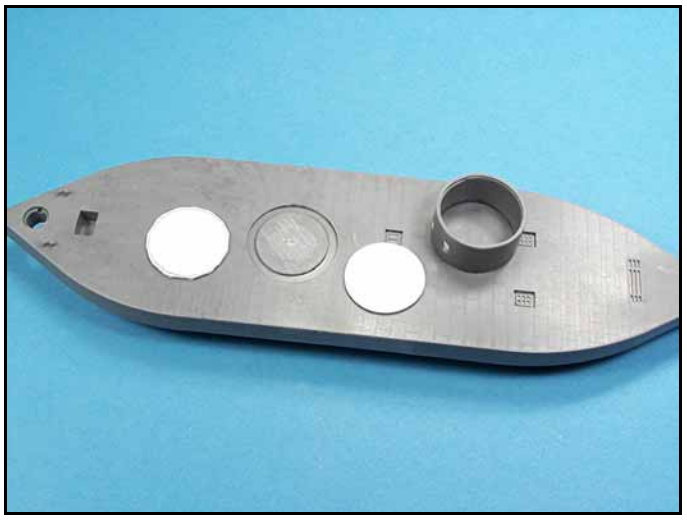
I ran the turret halves across sandpaper to flatten out the gluing surfaces.



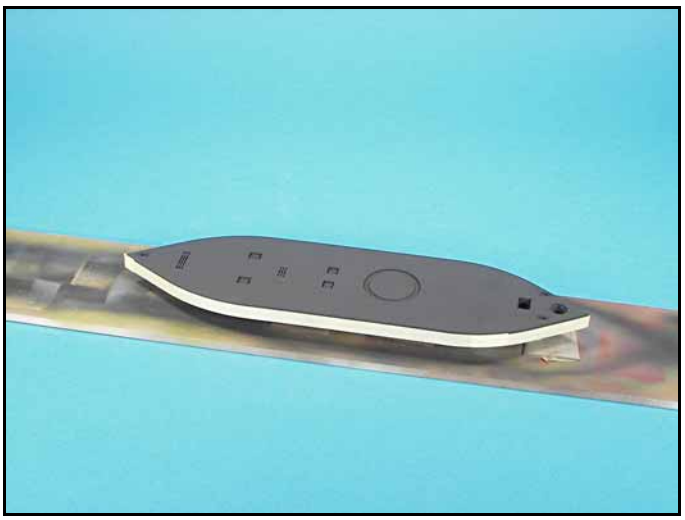
The turret halves were super glued together and I carefully sanded the seams with a sanding stick. Masking tape protected the surface detail. Careful sanding is a must otherwise you will distort the shape of the turret—like I did!.



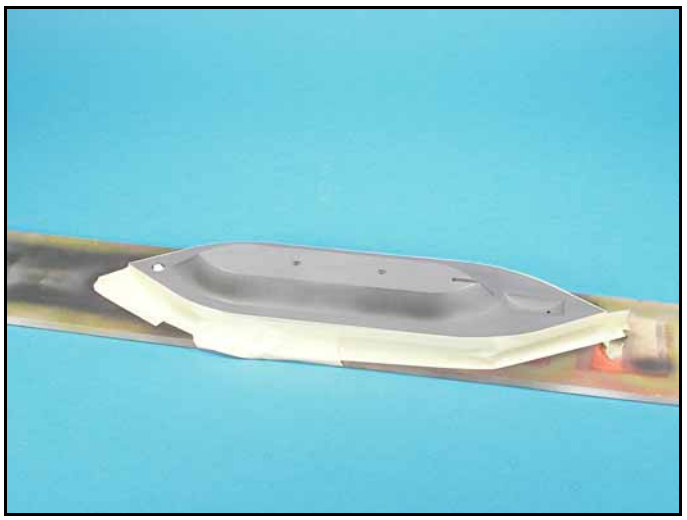
I flattened the top and bottom surfaces of the turret so that the top and bottom pieces would sit flat. I also restored the surface detail and plating lines, but I cut the lines too deep.



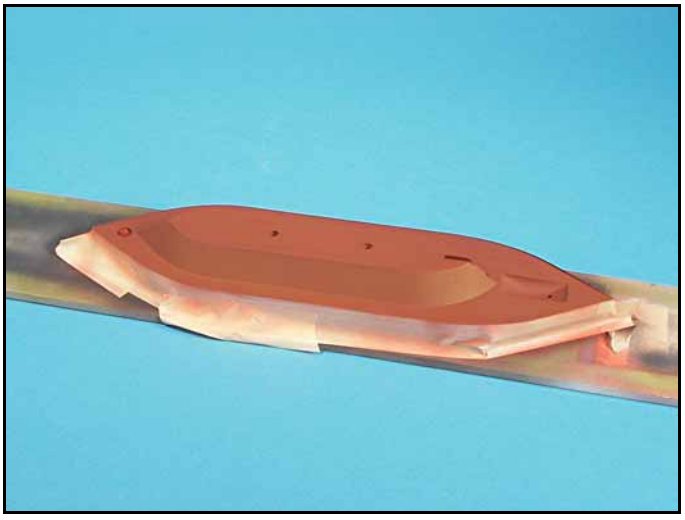
The kits bottom piece did not fit very well so I made a new one. I did not close up the turret until I painted the interior white. I also decided to paint the guns flat black.



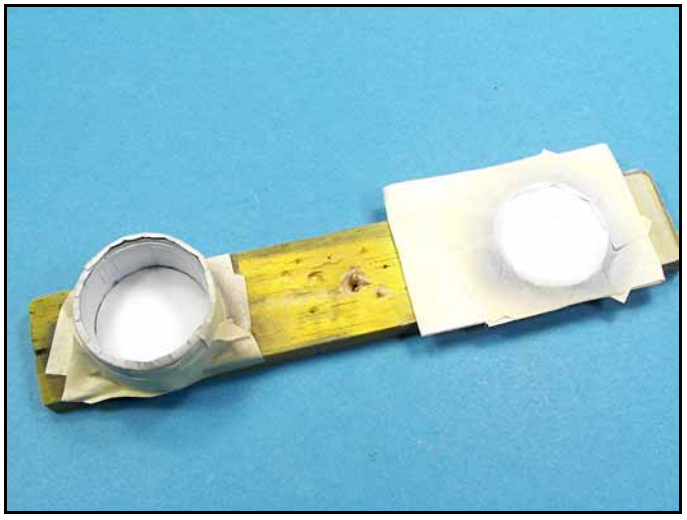
I painted the upper surface Testors flat black with some flat white added to lighten up the color.



I then painted the lower hull and the skeg assembly Testors flat red with some flat black added to darken the color. The propeller was painted with Testors brass.



Careful masking always give you very sharp demarcation lines between colors.



The turret top did not fit very well. I tried to improve the fit by removing plastic from the underside of the turret top so there would be some room to adjust the fit.