

THE LITTLE AVIATION MUSEUM

Workbench notes

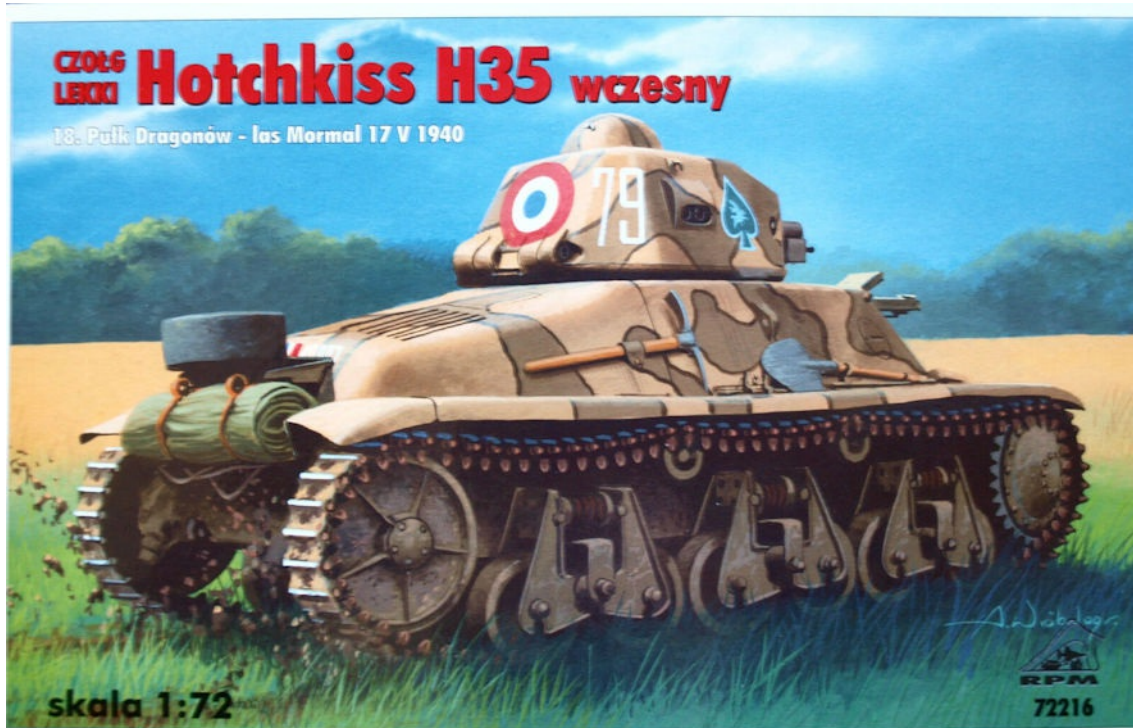
HOTCHKISS H35 IN 1/72 BY RPM & PANZERKAMPFWAGEN III AUSF F IN 1/72 BY ATTACK

(July 2010)

You know that conceptual game; which one would win if Godzilla fought Mothra or a shark fought a polar bear? Not so conceptual in 1940 was the question of what would happen if a French Hotchkiss H35 fought a German PzKpfw III,

The last time I made a model of a German tank was back in the 1970s when Bandi released a superb range of 1/48 armour kits. The first one I saw was a Pak 40 and from then on it only got better with an almost complete range of German armour, and then things like T34s and Matildas. And then they just disappeared. I wonder where they went? Since then, I've exercised the kind of self control that even Pythagoras would have been proud of and a German tank has not touched my work bench.

Having a certain weakness for French armour I've made just about all the 1/72 kits of French tanks including most of those in service at the beginning of the Battle of France. They all look very pretty, but if they were that pretty how come the French lost? To find the solution to this important question I decided to buy myself a kit of a contemporaneous German tank which, a quick Google showed, was an early model Panzer III. Another Google search showed that *Attack* made a kit of the





Panzer III Ausf F in 1/72 which was the major model in service at the beginning of the Battle of France.

Having almost completed the Panzer III model it is now possible to put one beside the other and ponder on that important question. You will notice that one is bigger than the other and that it has a much bigger turret. You will also see that while one is painted in jolie colours the other is a sombre, intimidating, dark grey. If I imagine myself into the turret of the Hotchkiss H35 I find myself facing this ugly but business like looking German tank, trying to see what's going on through the little vision slits, trying to load and aim the gun and tell the driver what to do while he is struggling with the controls, all at the same time. In the meantime, over in that grey tank the three man crew in the turret is taking its time lining me up in their sights and laughing cruelly at my





predicament. Having given my situation due consideration I'm desperately looking through my collection of signal flags (no wireless communications here) trying to find that white flag. No cowardice here, just a sensible desire for survival.

RPM make some very nice kits these days . Some of their most recent include two versions of the Renault R35 and three versions of the Hotchkiss H35. The mouldings are very nice and accurate and the pieces fit together well. There is a very nicely formed interior which I didn't bother with, and the tracks are formed as part of the running gear. In an earlier life I was not keen on



moulded tracks because of trouble painting them but I've been converted because of the nice sense of reality with the droop along the top.

The Attack kit is not as nice to work with. The pieces are not as well moulded and the bits and pieces don't fit together as well. The instruction sheet also is a bit vague in places and most annoying and frustrating of all were the tracks that were a real bugger to get right. Fortunately for me, I'm not likely to have to make any more Attack kits, since they make lots of German armour.

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