

**“Tales of the Gunther” or “Johnny’s Walker”!  
Kit Review by Johnny Brosnan**

Dust Game “Gunther Schwere Kampf Laufer” (or “Gunther” for short) kit #D35002  
Purchased at [www.twistory.com](http://www.twistory.com)  
Purchase price: \$19.00 + s&h

“Dust” is an alternate reality WWII/sci fi graphic novel, war game, model, and action figure franchise created by Italian artist and modeler, Paolo Parente.

The Dust Game “Gunther” is a 1/35<sup>th</sup> scale injection-molded styrene model kit. Released in 2007, this was the first --- and *only* --- injection-molded model kit of an armored fighting vehicle released in the Dust line. It was followed by a figure set of “Racketruppen,” which was a set of injection-molded 35<sup>th</sup> scale Fallschirmjager figures equipped with retro- futuristic weapons and back-pack flying devices. Personally, I thought that the Racketruppen were figures of the Second World War German tennis team, but hey, what did I know back in 2007?

The Dust Game AFV and figure line has since switched over to resin AFVs and figures (again in glorious 1/35<sup>th</sup> scale!!), most of which are styled on Axis technology --- with a sci-fi twist, of course. The resin kit and figure line seems to be picking up speed with a new series of mostly-Axis walkers (Luther, Jagdluther and Bergeluther), a Russian walker (KV-47/A) as well as two new sets of Axis figures to accompany the previously-released Koshka Rudinova and Sigrid Von Thaler figures. As a side note, I own both the resin Koshka figure and Luther walker and they are fantastically sculpted and packaged --- stay tuned for a future review!!

Back to the good old styrene Gunther kit. The kit comes in a big, colorful box and builds into a cool-looking retro-futurist German WW2.0 walker with more than a little retro-futuristic Hun menace.

The detail is good out of the box, but there is a lot of room for adding your own details and modifying the original design. The kit being 35<sup>th</sup> scale and based vaguely on WWII German armor makes for many customizing possibilities.

Parts fit and vague instructions were where the quality suffered a bit, but hey, this was the first injection-molded Dust kit, so I cut them some slack. I read on the Internet that there were complaints years ago about missing parts after the initial release, but that must have been rectified as all parts in my kit were present and accounted for.

Instructions consist solely of photographs of the assembled components with no accompanying text, arrows or other help. As such, the instructions do not specify the fit and placement of certain parts and sub-assemblies, so you are pretty much on your own. Test-fit and guesstimate, pull apart, rinse and repeat. This is the main reason why I would not recommend the kit to first-time builders.

The kit plastic is soft (but not too soft) and accepts battle damage and modification via files, pin-vise, and other methods with ease. Very accommodating plastic! Same goes for filling in the few sink marks and ejector pin marks, most of which are easily dealt with via Tamiya putty and files. There was no flash present in the kit.

Fit issues are on par with some of the problems Italeri kits pose on a bad day, i.e. the problems are not enough to stop you from finishing the build, but are robust enough to slow progress and effectively annoy. On top of this, the instructions leave out the *coup de gras* and *do not* illustrate the final assembly of the walker, so even though it is somewhat obvious, this is something of a flaw and again, is a skoshi bit irksome.

Not being able to build any model out-of-the-box, I made many modifications to the kit, extending the fun. I added a rough, pitted cast-steel texture the entire hull with Tamiya putty and liquid glue, stippling some areas with the glue and a toothbrush, adding the built-up textured areas made with putty to other sections. I also added weld beads to jointed plates on the entire crew compartment and the feet (I really did *not* want to experience, "The Agony of Da Feet"). The weld beads were made from Evergreen strip styrene textured with files, putty, and an X-acto blade. Additionally, all plastic grab irons were replaced with brass rod bent to shape.

The walker's turret appears to be that of a PzKpFw II Luchs, albeit with three turret-mounted guns. There are two hatches supplied for the turret, one of which is extremely small and apropos only for a tank crewman the size of a dieting oompa-lumpa. Hatch-schmatch! I wanted a commander's *cupola*, so I dumped the kit's commander's hatch and made my own cupola from a hollowed out Tamiya Tiger I roadwheel. The new cupola's hatch came from a Stug IV gone to pieces in my spares box. And when it was done, I exclaimed, "Mea cupola!"

The commanding Commander figure is white metal Heckler and Goros figure, supplied by T.P. Schweider (thanks, T.P.!!!). In order to fit in the cupola, the Commander needed to lose some real estate off of his back porch ("Ach, too much strudel, Hans!! Vere ist der Jenny Kraig?!"). With the help of a big metal file, Hans was slimmed down to a svelte 31 waist and fit nicely into the new cupola. "*Jawohl! Mine kampfarse fitzenside das cupola, Herr Mayor!?!*"

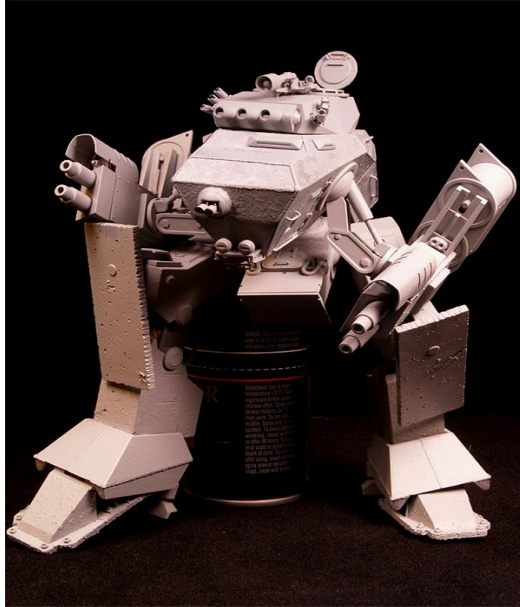
I added a night vision system cobbled together from the remainder of the resin Blast I.R. set, a small-scale truck hub for the optics, and some vinyl tubing. Caps were added to a couple of smoke dischargers, along with wiring for each unit and a tiny nurney to cover the spot where the collected wires terminated.

The crew compartment is based on an Sdkfz 222 armored car. I added a Kugelblende machine gun ball mount up front from a Tamiya Tiger I. And what is a Kugelblende on sci-fi Nazi walker *without* flame throwers I ask you? Lonely, I answer you. So I added twin MG-34s with flamethrower-type flash suppressers menacingly protruding. With this done, it was off to Starbucks for a nice Kugelblende Venti latte and a dinner of SdKFC (where I never forget to salute The Colonel!).

Wires were added to the two forward-mounted blackout headlights, along with a TV-type ground radar antennae from the spares box. The door hinges on the crew compartment hatches were incompletely molded --- a little Plastruct rod did the trick and kept the door and the crew from becoming unhinged.

The aforementioned Tamiya Tiger I kit supplied the mufflers and their armored mounts, which were added to the rear of the crew compartment to beef things out. Beneath the mufflers, I added radiators and other bits from the spares box.

To front of the lower chassis I mounted two pieces of protective Schurzen armor from the Tamiya Stug III, along with an access hatch and towing lugs from the good old Tamiya Tiger kit.



The two big arm gun housings, as I like to call them, are impressive, each containing two massive anti-aircraft cannons and two cool-looking magazines (the kind with bullets, not glossy photos of future ex-wives). That being said, I thought that some of the detail was a little bland, so, for visual excitement, I added rivets made with my Historex punch and die set. Not content to punch and die, I kitbashed each arm gun's sighting optics and their protective shields from spares box junk, Dragon ejector nodules, sequins, and shields from the --- you guessed it --- Tamiya Tiger !! I gotta say that the Tiger exhaust shields fit absolutely *perfectly* over the gun housings with no modifications whatsoever...a rare instance in the often-complex world of a kitbasher. The rear-most portion of the arm gun housings did not line at 90 degree angles, so I added big, sloppy weld seams made from Plastruct rod.

She's got legs... Along with the aforementioned Tamiya putty'n liquid glue cast texture, I added hydraulic lines to the front and rear workings of the legs, which looked truly functional while also hiding hard-to-fill seams. As with the hull, weld beads were added to the "shin" armor, covering the seam where the two parts were joined in styrene matrimony. Springs were faked from wire wrapped around the rear-most portions of the feet to put a little spring in the walker's step.

The leg assemblies are complex and really look cool, but given that they are jointed on many axis (axi???) the kit stands like a drunken sailor, that is to say, not without support. Thus, I would recommend gluing Das Gunther into its final pose only after you've figured out how you want it to stand.

*I would also recommend against gluing the completed leg assembly, big arm gun*

*housings and crew compartment to the chassis until AFTER you have painted them as separate subassemblies. Be warned, the assembled kit is a wee unwieldy beast and is easier painted as subassemblies!!* Along these lines, I also left off the four big arm cannons and three turret mounted guns for separate painting with Alclads, sliding them into their painted mounts thereafter.

Metal damage. The soft plastic took bullet hits from my X-acto blades and files with no complaints. Larger shell gouges and rocket impacts were made with small files and liquid glue, shaping the impact points via sculpting the melted plastic.

At then end of the day, what was cool and convenient about the build was that nearly everything that I added came right out of my spares box... So, with this kit, it really helps being a 35th scale armor modeler! Given the convenience of a plethora of aftermarket conversion parts in 35th scale, not to mention the healthy spares box that most modelers possess, the sky really is the limit for the good old Gunther! You can convert and detail this puppy 'til the cows come home (just make sure that they don't sleep in your bed).

The same goes for paint... Given that this is a conjectural sci-fi/WWII subject, there is no limit to the paint schemes that are possible. So Earl Scheibs, eat your heart out! Traditional German camo schemes, conjectural late-war (I've seen some very cool hard-edged "Panzer 46" late war camo schemes on the Net) camo, or something purely sci-fi --- it's all up to the modeler!!

For reference, there were some cool pix of the painted and assembled model in front and back of the instruction booklet. I also made use an incredibly helpful article by Eyal Reinfeld in Volume 5 of the British publication, "Sci Fi & Fantasy Modeller" Magazine (Happy Medium Press), which was the "Star Wars" 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition. This article provided some excellent notes on the construction and painting of a Gunther for a really nice vignette.

So, in light of the struggles with the instructions and some wonky fit issues, I would recommend this kit only to modelers with some experience. As for me, I had *a lot* of fun building and modifying this kit and would *gladly* build another one!!!

Paid for out of my own pocket!

Johnny B.