



Hanzerbricks

7th Anniversary

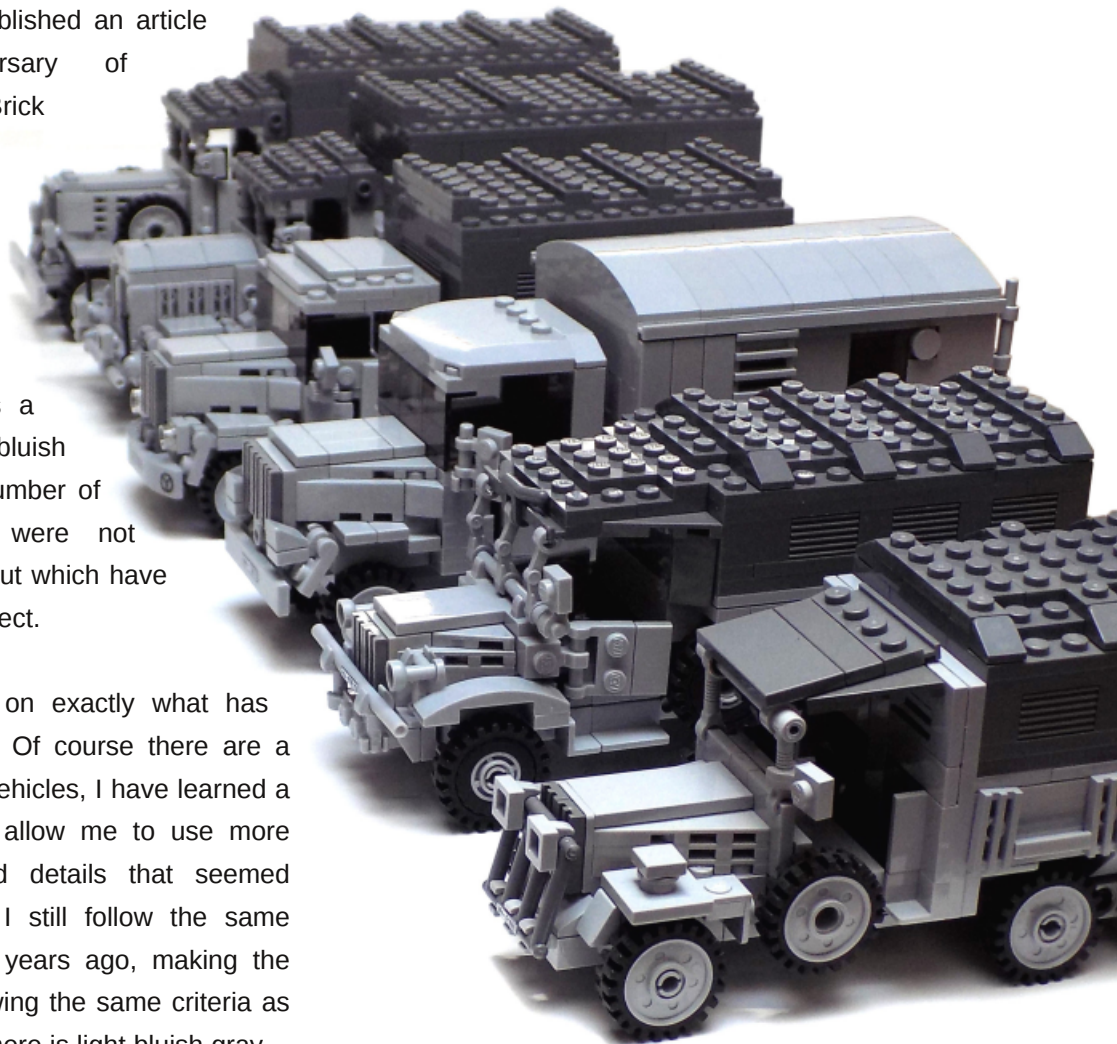


By A. Bellón (Legotron)

7 years in light bluish gray

Four years ago, when we published an article about the 3rd anniversary of Panzerbricks[1], in HispaBrick Magazine 011, I didn't think this project would last this long. Looking back, over 7 years I have built more than 115 different models and many more that didn't quite work out - which represents a considerable amount of light bluish gray pieces - as well as a number of builds and activities that were not included in the original idea, but which have been incorporated into the project.

It is hard to put my finger on exactly what has changed over these 4 years. Of course there are a considerable number of new vehicles, I have learned a lot of new things which will allow me to use more complex techniques to build details that seemed impossible in the past. But I still follow the same system as when I started 7 years ago, making the same presentations and following the same criteria as when I began. And above all there is light bluish gray... I have built most of the easier models which means that it is more and more complicated to build new models, and sometimes I fail. During the first years at most 1 out of every 10 models would never be finished, but over the last year, nearly a third of my builds have not made it into a finished model. I even have a few I have been trying to build for several years now, but a



challenge is always welcome: I just need to give it another try!

One of the things very few people know are the implications and complications related to such a long-lasting project. They are taking up an ever larger part of the time I dedicate to the project, and they are more and more necessary to be able to keep building:

- Cataloguing. It might appear to be something of little importance, but it is not just a couple of MOCS, there are more than 100, which are all carefully stored. It is taking me a real effort to remember the names of each one of them. So I designed a program to save important information for each model, whether finished or under construction, including pictures, where it is stored and the parts it is made up of. This has been very useful when I have been forced to cannibalise

some models for parts! At least now I know which models are finished or under construction and exactly where they are.

- Logistics. Another problem that is starting to become serious. Each model, whether original or duplicate, needs to be stored. There are more and more as time goes by, requiring space and new boxes to store them. When I go to an event I need to know where each model is and how many boxes I need to transport them. The boxes need to be big enough to be able to safely carry the finished models and I need to keep count so I don't take any duplicates along or forget a certain model.

- Cost. As they are part of a collection I keep all the models built. Obviously, each new model implies buying new parts, so financial planning to reduce shipping costs is essential.

- Props. This is one of the areas in which things have changed a lot in the last 4 years. The need to have a landscape or terrain elements, on which to take pictures of the finished models or to do big displays with many vehicles made me focus on a modular landscaping system: the MILS system we have discussed at length in this magazine (HBM 013, 014, 015, 016 and 017). And it would not exist if it weren't for Panzerbricks. I have also designed my first train, a steam engine with several wagons - I didn't even have a single piece of track before, but there it is. Not to mention the minifigs and their corresponding complements. It is hard to resist the temptation to get more and more! In the end it all sums up to more and more parts ...



On the other hand, I tend to update my models when new parts become available that allow improvements in certain characteristics or the overall look of a vehicle. In the last couple of years a large number of new parts have come out and many of them are very interesting and useful. If I decide to make an update it affects all the vehicles of the same family and, in some cases, that can mean rebuilding 5, 10 or more vehicles. That in turn means new photo shoots with all that entails.





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One of the areas I have tried to be involved in as well, even though I can spend little time on it is participating in communities of fans of military constructions. It can be very interesting to exchange different points of view with so many AFOLs/TFOLs. The level of their constructions is really incredible and it is amazing to see so many different interpretations of the same vehicle.



The questions I get most frequently are related to the techniques I use for building. Basically they are the same I have used from the start. I gather the necessary information about the model I want to build and look for reference images. Based on those I attempt to build a model to my taste.

I also get questions about scale. I tend to choose the size depending on the wheels and more or less in comparison with the models I have already built. But comparing them with some of the Tamiya kits I have, my models are quite close to 1/35 scale. Evidently they are bigger than they ought to be in comparison with the minifigs, but this way I can add functional elements to my builds or allow them to fit inside. After all, minifigs don't have the same proportions as real people; if you sit a minifig on a chair it is just as tall as when it stands. Or if you move their hands up they are still below

the top of their yellow heads... But rather than discussing what scale is better I believe each one builds the way they like best, just like that. After all, we build for fun.



Tatra 57K



Adler 3GD



Steyr 1500A



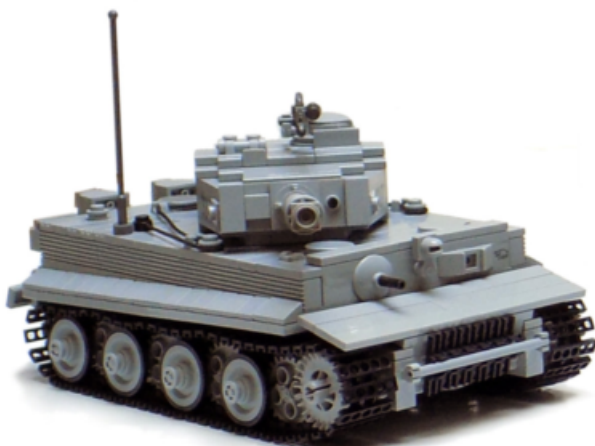
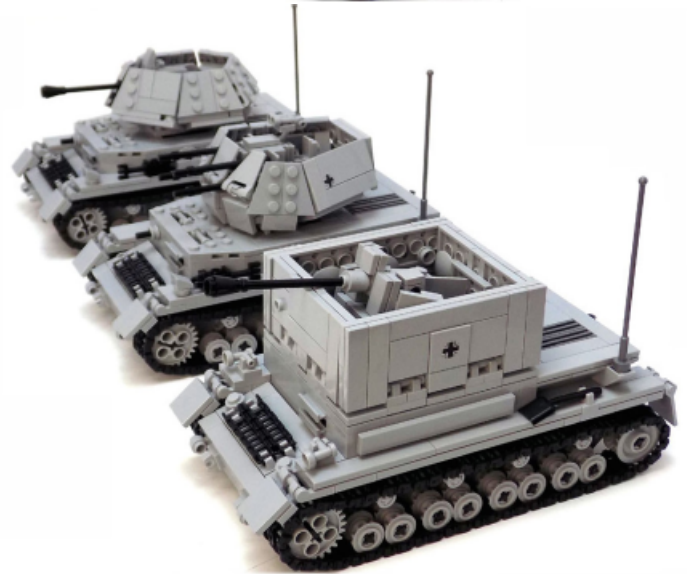
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Another subject that comes up frequently is the use of non-LEGO® parts. When I play with minifigs I am not a purist and I love all the complements I have for my minifigs. They are better and better in quality and I use them often in my photographs. However, when it comes to building I use only LEGO® parts. Even so, I don't feel I should take sides for a more or less purist option - each one builds the way they like best. Anyway, from my point of view, the more purist the technique the more merit it deserves.

Going forward, I think my level of productivity will start to diminish little by little. On the one hand it is becoming harder to find models I haven't built yet and that are attractive enough to attempt a recreation. There are still some models I would like to build with LEGO though. On the other hand, the time I dedicate to our LUG and to the magazine is increasing so I don't have as much time to build as before. I suppose that will help increase my stock of light bluish gray pieces!

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[1] Panzerbricks: <http://www.abellon.net/Panzerbricks/>