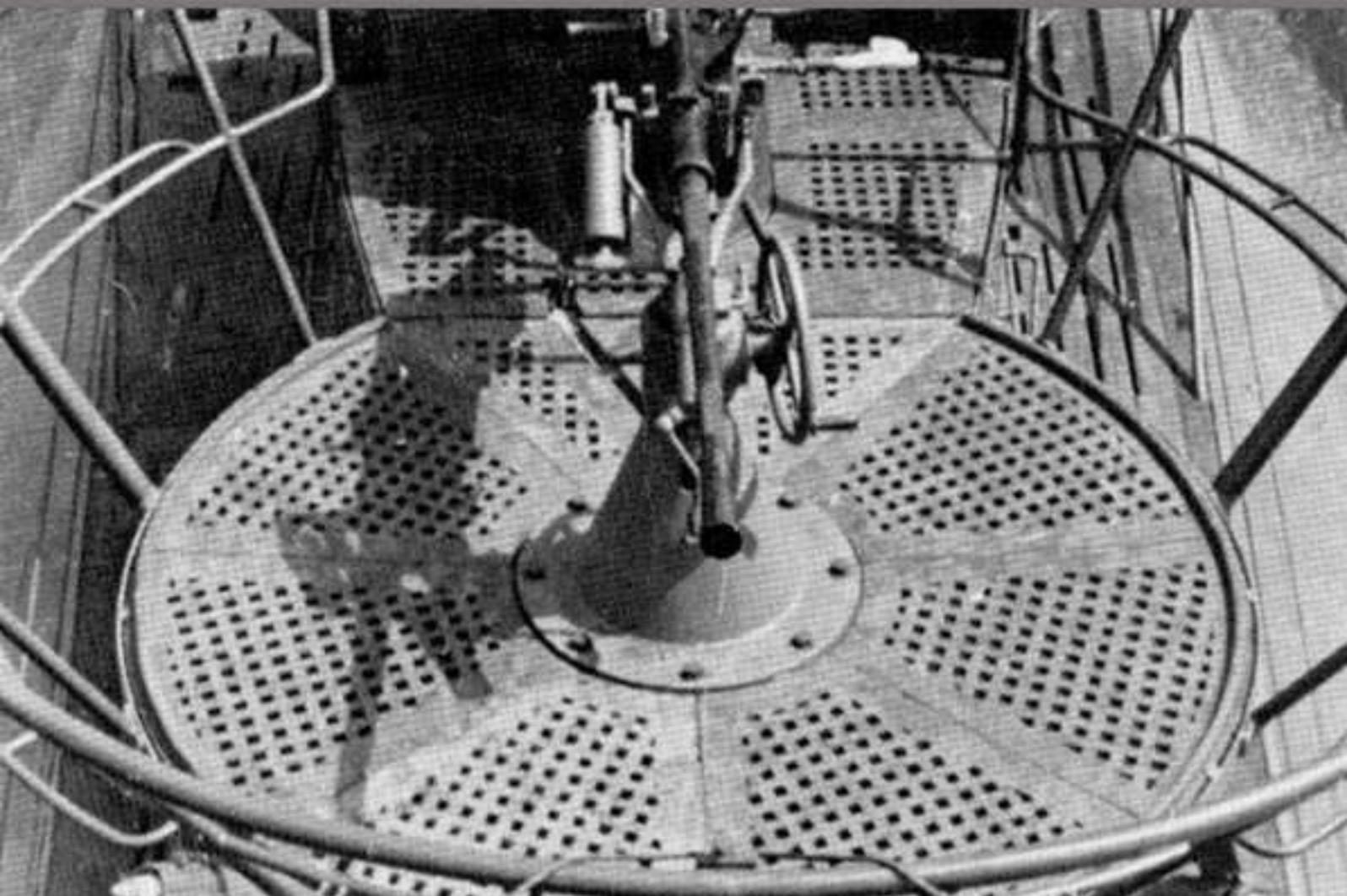




AMP Type VIIC Tower Floors

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Accurate Model Parts



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Part I - Introduction

The purpose of this article is to provide Accurate Model Parts (AMP) customers with details regarding our three photo-etch tower floor products. The first product - 72-03 - is suitable for Revell's early war Type VIIC U-boat model kit. It depicts the unique pattern of square flooding holes present in the rear area of the tower floor on early *Germaniawerft* boats. Our second product - 72-04 - is a tower floor section for the rear part of the Mittelmeerturm tower on Type VIIC U-boats. Our final part - 32-01 - is the same Mittelmeerturm design but this time suitable for either 1/32nd or 1/35th scale models. These details are summarised as follows -

Code	Scale	Type	Suitable kits
72-03	72	<i>Germaniawerft</i> boats	Revell RV5015
72-04	72	Mittelmeerturm	Revell RV5015
32-01	32 / 35	Mittelmeerturm	OTW, Andrea, Engel, Accurate Armour

Part II - Germaniawerft Tower Floor

Type VIIC tower floor

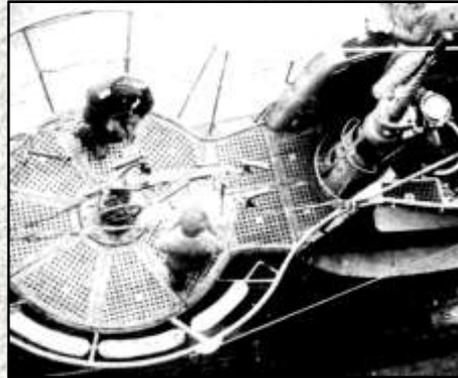
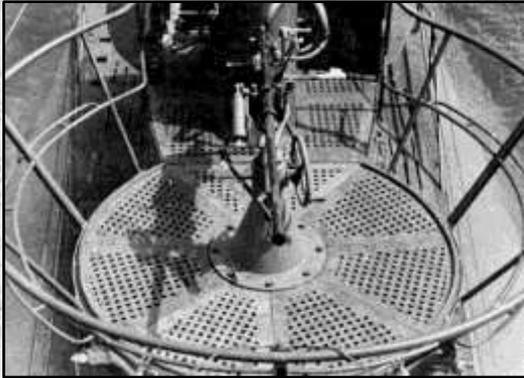
The floor of the tower on early Type VIIC U-boats was primarily made of wood, the exception being the metal section at the front end. The wooden area is characterised by numerous small square holes which allowed water to drain through. As always with Type VIIs, with over 700 boats built in multiple shipyards, there were variations between batches. The difference we wish to deal with in this section regards the pattern of square holes in the circular area at the rear of the tower. As we shall see, boats built at *Germaniawerft* had a pattern that differed from other VIICs built in other yards. Once we know the difference it becomes a distinguishing feature that is impossible to ignore thereafter. Given that some of the most popular VIICs were built by *Germaniawerft*, AMP has produced a photo-etch wooden tower floor so that modellers can accurately depict these subjects.

Typical VIIC tower floor (non-linear pattern)

We start with the typical tower floor as found on the early style of tower (Turm 0) on the majority of VIICs. As illustrated in the images overleaf, this is characterised by seven groups of square holes arranged around the 20mm Flak gun. The square holes were arranged in lines which point towards the 20mm in the centre of the tower floor. Each of these wooden sections was removable and permitted access to the tower below. Between each section was a line where the sections joined each other. The front section had an A-shaped support bar which could be raised to support the 20mm gun.

A precise evaluation of all the tower floor patterns on Turm 0 towers is not presently possible as the vast majority of photos do not show the pattern in sufficient detail. However, it is likely that

small differences existed between the typical tower floor pattern. For example, the pattern on U 86 has seven groups, with the foremost group having the A-shaped support in the middle of the group. U 586 also had seven groups but none of these had the A-shaped support within them. The Revell pattern is similar to the U 86 pattern except that there is one fewer group on the Revell model.



Above left (1): Although this image is of the VIIB U 86, it provides a very good view from the rear of the typical wooden floor fitted to most Type VIIC U-boats.

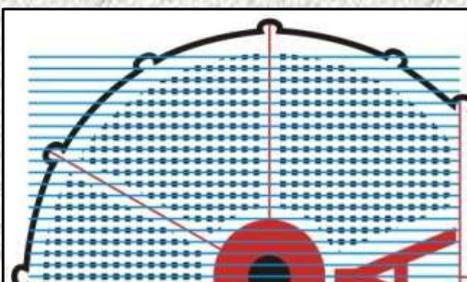
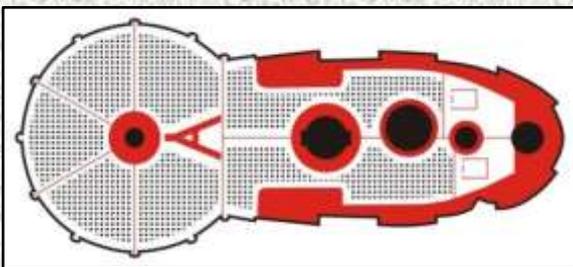
Above right (2): This photo of U 586 provides another good view of the typical pattern on early VIIC towers (Turm 0). This differed slightly from U 86 in that this pattern did not have the A-shaped support within any of the groups.

Later towers such as Turm II and Turm IV had planked sections rather than the square holes found on Turm 0 towers.

Germaniawerft tower floor (linear pattern)

Some of the most popular of all VIICs were built by *Germaniawerft* in 1940 and 1941. These include U 93 and U 94, both of which had memorable emblems; and U 201 with Adalbert Schnee's snowman emblem and wavy camouflage pattern. The most popular is surely Heinrich Lehmann-Willenbrock's sawfish-adorned U 96, as immortalised in the classic movie *Das Boot*. To accurately depict any of the subjects the modeller requires to adopt the linear pattern upon the tower floor.

Rather than seven groups arranged around the 20mm, this style consists of five larger groups which are linear in nature.



Left above (3): The linear pattern, with five distinct groups, used upon AMP's replacement 72-03. Note the corrected UZO position on the centreline.

Left below (4): The blue lines illustrate how the squares in each of the different groups were arranged in lines in the early *Germaniawerft* boats. This was not the case in the typical non-linear pattern on the boats built in other yards.



Above left (5): The three rearmost groups can be seen in this excellent image of U 201. The boat's commander, Adalbert Schnee, is relaxing on a railing bar on the port side.

Above right (6): Here can be seen the starboard side of U 69. Note how there is a long one-piece railing seat rather than three separate seats. The longer wooden seat is also a feature of the *Germaniawerft* boats and is worth replicating with plasticard in any model of a *Germaniawerft* boat.



Above left (7): Another early *Germaniawerft* boat, this time U 95, with the 20mm gun pointing to the sky.

Above right (8): Taken from the same angle, this shows U 96 with her commander Heinrich Lehmann-Willenbrock visible to the right. U 96 and U 552 remain the two most popular subjects for VIIC modellers.

AMP 72-03

The replacement photo-etch deck 72-03 should be used for the following early *Germaniawerft* boats

- U 69 and U 70.
- U 71 and U 72.
- U 93, U 94, U 95, U 96, U 97 and U 98.
- U 201, U 202, U 203 and U 204.
- U 205, U 206, U 207, U 208, U 209, U 210, U 211 and U 212.*

* The use on this batch is predicated upon the basis of photographic evidence of U 207 having the linear pattern.

Whether it can be used for the later *Germaniawerft* boats is unclear as there is insufficient photographic material to presently prove this one way or another. Therefore the choice to use or not remains at the modeller's discretion. The later *Germaniawerft* boats which may have had the linear pattern are as follows -

- U 221 - U 226.
- U 227 - U 232.

U 232 was commissioned with a planked main deck and planked tower floor and therefore could not possess the linear pattern. It is not known if earlier boats in this batch were similarly outfitted.

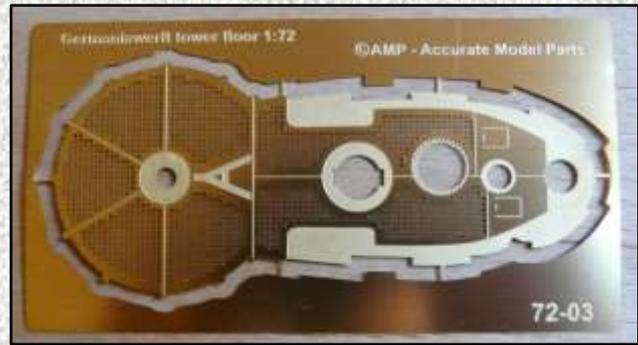
Part III - Mittelmeerturm Tower Floor

The Mittelmeerturm

In early 1942 air power was becoming an ever greater threat to the Type VII's operating in the Mediterranean Sea. While the Turm 0 towers of Atlantic boats would in time be changed to a two platform Turm (tower) arrangement, a completely different set up - the Mittelmeerturm - was fitted exclusively to boats serving in the Mediterranean. This consisted of lengthening the tower and adding two Italian-built 13.2mm Breda twin machine guns, each within their own pressurised pod behind the attack periscope housing.

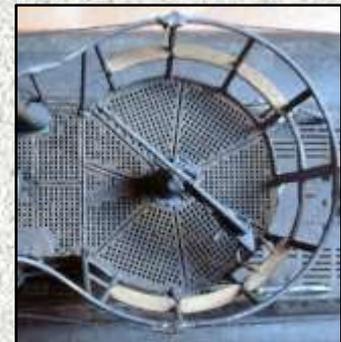
Although the area around the tower bulwark remained the same, the whole of the end section of the extended tower was completely altered.

According to the excellent article in *U-Boot im Focus Edition 13*, the conversion of boats to the Mittelmeerturm began in May and June 1942. Prior to that date, the VIIB's and VIIC's had the old Turm 0 tower. It should also be pointed out that the fitting of the new style of tower took time to fit to all boats in the Mediterranean fleet. It became apparent that the firepower contained in the Mittelmeerturm was far from satisfactory due to the inadequacy of the Breda weapons. Although better than the previous Turm 0, which contained only a single 20mm, the Mittelmeerturm might be considered a failure in terms of adequately defending boats from air attack. At best it may be described as a stop gap measure until the introduction of the Turm IV in the autumn of 1943.

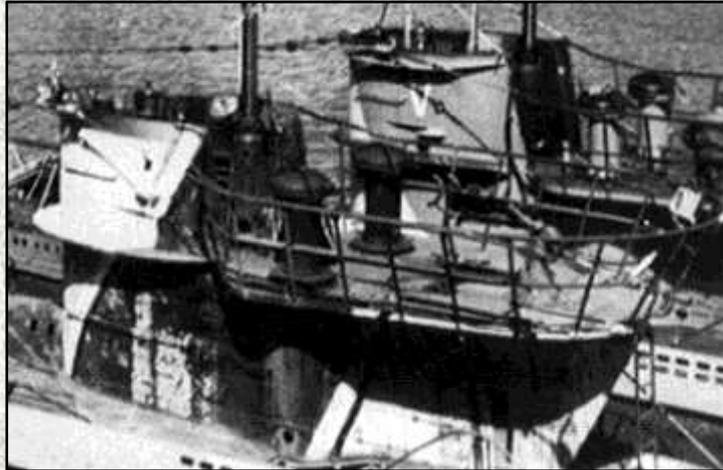


Above (9): AMP's replacement photo-etch 72-03. One feature is the UZO (torpedo aiming column) position, which is the hole second from the right in this image. The Revell kit has the UZO offset to port whereas AMP 72-03 has it in the corrected central position.

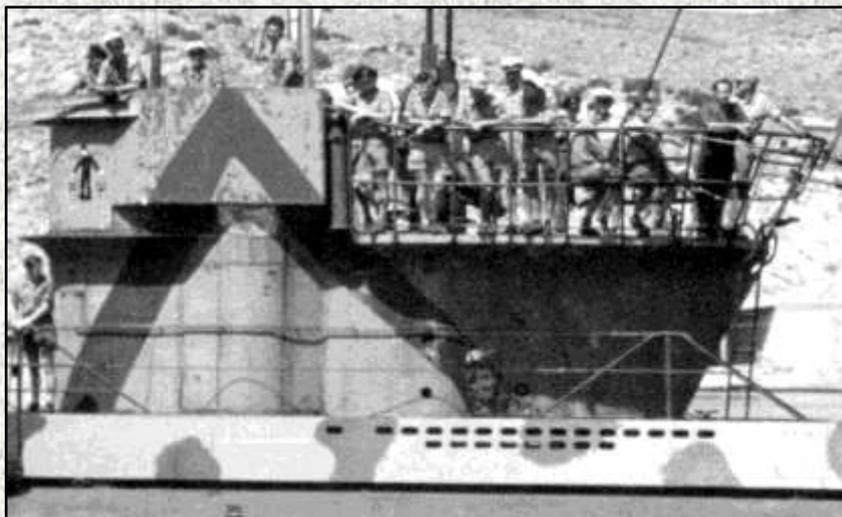
Below (10): The pattern above can be compared to this image of the Revell kit, which differs slightly from the typical non-linear pattern in having one fewer group.



Above (11): The VIIB U 83 with a Mittelmeerturm. Fitting AMP 72-04 and converting to this style of tower allows the modeller to choose from the camouflage schemes applied throughout this theatre of operations.



Above (12): The Breda pods can be seen in the extended position on U 73 (left) and U 561 (right). These could be retracted into the tower floor, with only the lids being exposed.



Above (13): A side view of U 596 with a very interesting camouflage scheme. This image shows the boat with a rectangular FuMO 30 box on 10th September 1943. The author intends to depict U 596 as per this image for his 1/32nd Type VIIC.

Tower designations

The Mittelmeerturm is also referred to as the “Mediterranean tower” or the “La Spezia tower” due to this type of tower being fitted exclusively at the Italian port of La Spezia. The question which might be asked is: was this Turm I?

We know that Turm 0 (turm meaning tower in German) was the original tower. We also know that Turm II had two platforms with a single 20mm on each; and that Turm IV had two twin 20mms on the upper platform and either a Vierling or 37mm on the lower “wintergarten” platform. It might be assumed that the Mittelmeerturm held the designation Turm I as the time frame is correct for it to

be the missing link between Turm 0 and Turm II. It is also the only tower conversion other than Turm II and Turm IV to be produced in numbers.

According to Eberhard Rössler's authoritative *The U-Boat: The Evolution And Technical History Of German Submarines*, German planners wished to change Turm 0 in favour of two twin 15mm MG151s on the top platform and a 20mm twin on a lower platform. The 20mm twin was not yet available so only a single 20mm was available for the lower platform. It was this arrangement (two twin MG151s on top and a single 20mm on the bottom) which was fitted to U 553 and designated as Turm I. The Turm I arrangement was very far from satisfactory and therefore not implemented on other boats.

Although Rössler refers to the Mittelmeerturm as "a modification of Bridge Conversion I [Turm I]" this is perhaps misleading the Turm I had a wintergarten (lower platform) and the Mittelmeerturm did not. Due to this clear difference, it is arguably better to refer to the tower used in the Mediterranean as the "Mittelmeerturm", "Mediterranean tower" or "La Spezia tower" rather than Turm I.

Mittelmeerturm boats

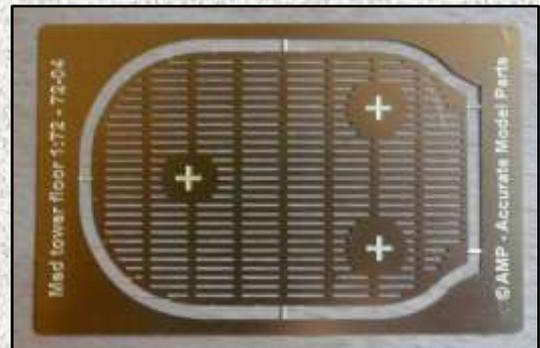
The Mittelmeerturm is known to have been fitted to the following boats due to photographic evidence -

- U 73 and U 83 (VIIBs).
- U 77, U 81, U 97, U 205, U 410, U 453, U 458, U 561, U 565, U 596, U 616, U 617 and U 755 (VIICs).

AMP 72-04 and 32-01

72-04 - AMP 72-04 consists **only of a photo-etch tower floor** and not the frontal area around the tower bulkwark. Modellers need to completely scratchbuild the rear of the Mittelmeerturm and Breda pods. This is a very interesting and rewarding conversion but obviously for advanced modellers only.

32-01 - AMP 32-01 is exactly the same design but suitable for 1/32nd scale or 1/35th scale. This makes it suitable for the large 1/32nd scale radio-controlled VIIC model kits produced by OTW, Andrea and Engel. It is also suitable for the 1/35th scale waterline VIIC produced in resin by Accurate Armour.



Above (14): AMP 72-04 and 32-01 are both limited edition products with only a very few available. Contact AMP directly to order.

Recommended reading - Modellers who wish to convert to Mittelmeerturm or simply learn further details are directed to Axel Urbanke's indispensable article on the subject: *The So-Called "La Spezia" Conning Tower On Mediterranean Boats: Conning Tower Conversion I With Two Breda Twin Machine-Guns*. This can be found on pages 6 to 19 of *U-Boot im Focus 13* (Luftfahrtverlag Start, 2016) and provides modellers with much of the research material required in such a task.

Part IV - References & Sources

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⊕ 13, cover (top)

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