



Oh, the dog days of summer... I know this time of year is probably the hardest for me in regards to model building. It just seems like there's so much else going on – yard work, gardening, family events, etc – that it's hard to not feel guilty about sitting down at the workbench.

Still, summer is followed by the traditional fall model contest season in our region, and coming soon, those shows will be upon us before you know. This autumn we have local shows coming up in September, October, and November. To be sure, only the November show is an AMPS event (AMPS All-American, Fayetteville, NC), but even if IPMS-style competition is not your cup of tea, the other shows offer opportunities to shop the vendors, visit friends, and look at models.

Of course, you can't enter if you don't have anything built, so even with the distractions of summer, a little time at the workbench will pay dividends as the leaves start to turn and the weather gets cooler.

#### **Last Meeting's Minutes:**

Our last meeting was held at 6:00 pm, July 10, 2013. We had 14 members in attendance, and those members brought in 4 models to show and tell.

During the meeting: We received show reports from Tony and Mike covering AMPS and IPMS operations, the raffle and the vendors – Operationally the show was a success for both clubs. All problems were minor and were resolved on the spot (name tags, joint registration tracking, etc). Scott provided a post-show treasurer's report – We approximately \$3570 in the treasury after receiving our share of the show net from IPMS Sumter and after expenses. We discussed and voted to approve a \$25 Awards Sponsorship for the Armorcon show 27-28 Sep in Connecticut – Scott will send the check. We discussed and organized volunteers for the "Toy Soldier Show." Our website's hit counter passed 74,000 hits the month of July.

#### **Next Meeting's Agenda:**

Our next meeting will be at 6:00 pm, Wednesday, 14 August, 2013 at the HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road, Columbia.

6:00 pm (1800): Meeting starts / Admin Business – This month's business: Brief discussion of the failure of our plans for participation in the "Toy Soldier Show" at the SC State Museum; Discuss and review tentative name tags and new club shirt orders; Discuss up-coming show calendar; Tim Darrah has a carton of donated kits that members can browse through and take any that they want – (Note that Tim does not want to take any of these back with him, so look for stuff even to just put into you spare parts.)

REMINDER: The HobbyTown USA store will close at 7:00 pm (1900). This means that all purchases at the store must be made before then so that the cash registers can be closed.

6:15 pm (1810): Demo / Discussion – Resin Kits and Conversions by Keith

6:50 pm (1850): Break: Shopping & Social Mixer. Cash registers close at 7:00 pm.

7:10 pm (1910): Reconvene: Continue demo / discussion followed by Show & Tell: Builds and WIPs

8:00 pm (2000): Meeting ends (officially – but we'll carry-on as long as the store will stay open)

*Regular meetings are held on 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesdays of each month at 6:00 pm (1800) at the HobbyTown USA store, 10120 Two Notch Road, Suite 5, Columbia, SC 29223, (803) 736-0959.*

### **Up-coming Events of Interest:**

**Aug 14, 2013, 6:00 pm (1800):** AMPS meeting at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

**Sep 11, 2013, 6:00 pm (1800):** AMPS meeting at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

**Sep 21, 2013:** Piedmont Scale Modelers show at Byrnes HS, 150 E. Main Street, Duncan SC.

**Oct 09, 2013, 6:00 pm (1800):** AMPS meeting at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

**Oct 26, 2013:** Spartanburg Scale Modelers "Plan 9 from Spartanburg" show, Parkway Freewill Baptist Church, 3615 Parris Bridge Road, Spartanburg, SC.

**Nov 09, 2013:** AMPS All-American / Lafayette Scale Modelers show in Fayetteville, NC in conjunction with IPMS Lafayette Scale Modelers.

**Nov 13, 2013, 6:00 pm (1800):** AMPS meeting at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

**Dec 11, 2013, 6:00 pm (1800):** AMPS Christmas Party anyone?

**Apr 3-5, 2014:** AMPS International Convention, Fredericksburg Hospitality House (Convention Center), Fredericksburg, VA. Convention theme: "Hollywood Tanks."

### **Finishing and Weathering: Orthodoxy versus Artistry Part 1 "Philosophy"**

**Mike Roof  
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The importance of finish and weathering cannot be overstated when it comes to model building. After all, what the viewer actually sees when he or she looks at a finished project is not the raw plastic, brass, resin or aluminum, but the top layers of the finish and weathering. Some modelers even feel that the most important aspect of the entire project is the finish. Personally, I take a more balanced view, believing that no matter how nice the finish is, it can't compensate for poor construction. However, I can't argue that the finish is what gives the model subject its life, and finish is what turns that model into a scale replica of the prototype, putting the subject into the context of time, place and circumstance. Finish is also the area where the individual modeler has the greatest room for artistic expression to create his or her own aesthetic vision of the subject.

What I intend to present over several issues is a philosophy of finish and weathering that I hope will help you to understand, plan and execute any type of final look to your own work. In this first part, I'll describe my perspective on the issue and explain why I don't believe that it's possible to create a dogmatic, orthodox finishing and weathering sequence that is appropriate for all possible finishes and results. In later parts, I will define and describe the many various finish and weathering techniques that can be combined on any given project, I'll discuss in detail, how particular techniques are used, and finally, I'll try to walk you through an example that puts it all together. The objective here is not to teach you to do what I do to finish and weather. It's on learning how to think through the problem to achieve your own, unique solutions that fit your needs and aesthetic vision.

As model builders, we're used to cracking open a kit, perusing the instructions and then constructing the model according to the sequence and instructions that are provided. Oh, to be sure, we sometimes vary the assembly sequence or otherwise deviate from the manufacturer's recommendations, but in general, we're used to relying on those instructions to tell us how to build the kit.

However, finishing and weathering are different. Yes, the instructions probably have some color call-outs for various details, and there're always some camouflage and markings profiles and recommendations, but there are no instructions that tell us how to create that suggested finish. Maybe some paint numbers and brief instructions on how to cut out and apply the kit supplied decals might be included, but that's it.

In our search for some familiar instructions for finish and weathering, we can find numerous lists and finishing sequences online and in books, but these formulas often leave us scratching our heads trying to figure out just how the modeler who has offered them got the subtle and realistic finish that he did. They're usually not very detailed and often just say something to the effect of: "Do this technique first and follow it with that technique." Exact materials are usually not specified and little to no information is offered on how the specified technique is performed.

Even more confusing, we'll read one list and look at photos of a model finished according to it, and then we'll read another list by a different modeler that's not even close to the first list. Well...?! Which way should I finish MY model? Which techniques are better? Which sequence should I use? Should I gloss coat and then apply a wash, or do I have to use acrylic washes over enamel base coats? Do I have to use turpentine, or should I use mineral spirits to make my washes?

The ultimate confusion comes when we read a list and look at build photos by a modeler and then read a completely different list written by the same guy. Of course, none of this helps if we envision some different kind of finish for our own build – Where's the list that tells me exactly how to get the finish I want for this model?

This desire for some formula or dogmatic instructions is one reason why there's been a boon in proprietary weathering "systems." After all, if (insert famous modeler's name here) gets those beautiful results, then all I have to do is slather on his company's magic potions and my models will look just as good. Oh, if only it were that easy!

The truth is: There is no single all-encompassing finish and weathering list or "system" that will create every kind of final results that we might want to achieve. The best, most comprehensive and detailed list can only ever help us replicate a single final result, the one that was created using that particular list. No matter whose name is on the bottle, that proprietary product is really nothing more than what you could make your self, and the instructions for its use are limited to a single application. Most of us know this in an intuitive sense, but still, we often want some set of "instructions" to tell us what to do.

Now, to be sure, you can find lists and finishing sequences that will give you acceptable results and follow them for each of your builds, but in the end, what you'll wind up with is a collection of models that all look the same. It's only quite natural that if you always do step 1 followed by step 2 and so on, the end results will always look the same no matter what the subject is. To avoid this, what you need to do is to understand what each finish and weathering technique can and can't do and how to freely combine these techniques to achieve a final result that matches your mental image for your build.

The first step in achieving a particular finish is to have a clear mental image of the final desired result.

Before you start painting (or maybe even before you start building), you should try to develop a picture in your mind of what your finished model will look like. Perhaps some research into the historical circumstances will help you understand if the operational environment was muddy and wet, or dry and dusty. What time of year was it? What was the season? How long had your subject vehicle been in service? Was it a nearly new vehicle, or was it a veteran campaigner? Was the camouflage factory or field applied? The answers to these questions and others can usually be found in research, and even if you can't find the exact answers, research can provide you enough clues to make an educated guess about your particular subject.

Of course, as you progress through your build and spend more time researching and reading about your subject, your mental image, that picture in your mind about what your finished model will look like, might change too. That's OK. The questions then become: How has that image changed, and what is the new final desired result? The point is, in order to figure out the finishing sequence and techniques that you will need to use, you must have an idea of what the final outcome will be. You can't know how to get to where you want to go until you know where that is.

This might seem like just so much babbling, and it's probably so self-evident that you might wonder why bother stating the obvious. Hopefully this will become clearer as we progress.

The next idea that I submit to you is this: Finish and weathering techniques and steps produce incremental results that build upon each other, creating various opaque and semi-opaque and transparent layers that all combine to produce the final result. Here's the key: These layers can be built up upon each other in an infinite variety of different sequences, and each change in that sequence alters the final result – the way your model will look when it's finished.

This is why there is no single, all-encompassing finishing and weathering sequence that will create every possible desired final result.

What is necessary is to understand what each available finishing and weathering technique does, how it works, and how it effects or alters the earlier techniques. You must conceptually isolate what you're doing at each stage of the finishing and weathering process in order to mentally build each layer, one on top of the next, until you've achieved that desired mental image of your finished model. Once you've done this, then you can understand the sequence of finish and weathering techniques that you will have to use to achieve that final look. That's the sequence that you should use for your model, and not some list off the internet or out of a book.

So, what are the various finish and weathering techniques that we can combine and layer on top of each other? In the next part of this series, I will list, define and describe some of the most common finish and weathering techniques and methods.

'Til next time.

## **“The Day Room”**

*In the US military, most company-level units have a “day room” in the barracks where the troops hang-out, relax, and BS. When you want to learn the latest in “rumor control,” you swing by the day room and chat-up the Joes and Janes hanging out there. They might not always get it right, but they’re always willing to tell ya just what they think! So, welcome to “the Day Room...”*

Huh... I guess as Robert Burns put it, "The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men // Gang aft agley..."

And so much for my plans for an expanded club display at this year's "Toy Soldier Show" at the SC State Museum. Not only did we not get a larger footprint with added participation by our IPMS friends from Columbia and Sumter, we didn't get a display at all!

I'm still a bit stunned and not really sure what happened. Things were looking good. I had made contact early with the museum staffer I thought was the key decision maker, but for some reason, and at the last minute, we were denied use of the single location in the entire show area that was suitable for our purposes.

Maybe like the poor field mouse in Bobby Burns' poem, our planned little nest was turned over by some greater metaphorical plow pulled by some larger established group. Who knows?!

However, unlike poor Bobby Burns, we won't let this set us back and crush our spirit. It just means that we'll try again next year. The "Toy Solder Show" promises to be a great opportunity for all of the modeling groups in our region. The public exposure and the potential to recruit new members are both excellent, so establishing our place in the event is well worth the time and effort.

If anyone has any ideas or any contacts that might help us out next time around, please don't be shy about it. Obviously, my approach this year didn't work, so a different approach or trying different contacts are both certainly worth considering.

Hope to see y'all at the next meeting.

'Til then, Happy modeling!

**Mike Roof**

Chapter Contact  
AMPS Central SC "Wildcats"