



As we move along this month, I'd like to open the newsletter with a big thanks to our members who are working their tails off preparing for our up-coming show this June and making our club an interesting monthly event for everybody.

Tony Abbott and Tim Darrah are keeping things on track for our contest with the Sumter IPMS folks and selling vendor tables and soliciting raffle donations. (BTW: Tim has already sold over 40 of the 94 available vendor tables, and this is before even sending out his batch mailings!)

Jeff Nelson is doing his usual superlative job with our promotional materials, designing and printing our contest posters and hand-bills, and Scott Amey is keeping a close eye out on the balance sheet and our expenses.

On a different note, Dave Varettoni is moderating our next group build (see the details below), and Ralph Nardone is presenting the second part of his airbrushing demo this month.

If you get a chance, take a moment to tell these guys "thanks" for all their hard work.

But, you know, they're not the only ones who contribute. Our little club relies on all of us participating and attending the meetings to keep it running, to keep it relevant, and to make it interesting. Without all of you, we would cease to exist as a group leaving us all alone and isolated in our individual work rooms.

Last Meetings' Minutes:

Our last meeting was held at 6:00 pm, Jan 09, 2013. We had 17 members in attendance with one guest (Jeff's stepson Derrick). Members brought in 11 models to show and tell.

During the meeting: we reviewed the final draft of our contest flyer; Tim Darrah gave us an up-date on raffle donations and vendor table sales; everyone was reminded that annual dues are \$12 and should be paid as soon as possible; finally, I asked for volunteers to support show operations at the AMPS International Show this coming April (no commitments, but keep it in mind guys!).

Ralph Nardone presented part 1 of his 2-part airbrushing demonstration. This part focused on the different types of airbrushes, considerations for selecting an air compressor, and a discussion on the pros and cons of various types of paints.

Next Meeting Agenda:

Our next meeting will be at 6:00 pm, Wednesday, 13 February, 2013 at the HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road, Columbia.

6:00 pm (1800): Meeting starts / Admin Business – This month's business: Annual membership dues, \$12 for adult members; report on contest preparations (Tony Abbott and Jeff Nelson); Dave Varettoni discusses Group Build; Discuss and arrangements for travel and meeting in Atlanta this weekend.

6:10 pm (1810): Ralph Nardone will present part 2 (of 2 parts) of an airbrushing demonstration.

6:50 pm (1850): Break / Shopping / Mixer

7:10 pm (1910): Reconvene: Show & Tell: Builds and WIP's

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 2nd 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:

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

Feb 15-17, 2013: Atlanta AMPS Regional Show, Atlanta Marriott Century Center Hotel, Atlanta, GA.

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

Mar 16, 2013: Catawba Valley Scale Modelers Contest, Hickory Regional Airport, 3109 9th Ave. Drive NE, Hickory, NC.

Apr 10, 2013, 6:00 pm (1800): AMPS meeting at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

Apr 18-20, 2013: AMPS International Show and Convention, Atlanta GA. Venue is the Atlanta Marriott Century Center Hotel (same venue as the Atlanta AMPS Regional Show).

May 08, 2013, 6:00 pm (1800): AMPS meeting at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

Jun 12, 2013, 6:00 pm (1800): AMPS meeting at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

June 21-22, 2013: AMPS Central SC contest co-hosted with IPMS Sumter/Gamecocks at the Sumter County Convention Center, Sumter, SC. This will be the IPMS R-12 Convention with AMPS handling all of the armor categories IAW AMPS judging rules and procedures with separate AMPS awards.

Jul 10, 2013, 6:00 pm (1800): AMPS meeting at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

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.

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

Nov 09 (T), 2013: Plan date for the AMPS All-American / Lafayette Scale Modelers show in Fayetteville, NC.

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?

Club Campaign Build Theme

Dave Varettoni is going to moderate a Club Campaign Build. This build will work like the group builds or campaigns that many model forum websites run. There is a theme (described below) that the models must adhere to in order to qualify. If you complete the build by the specified time (also below), then Dave is prepared to make special "campaign awards" to each participant.

The theme is based on a time period:

"The Cold War, often dated from 1945 to 1991, was a sustained state of political and military tension between powers in the Western Bloc, dominated by the United States with NATO and other allies; versus powers in the Eastern Bloc, dominated by the Soviet Union with the Warsaw Pact and other allies." Wikipedia

For this build, any vehicle that was used during this time is qualified. The build will start this month, February 2013, and the model must be finished in time for our show in June. There will be a special award for everyone that completes a model. If you are going to build a tank that was use during WW2 and then served after, you must document your build according to the rules for the AMPS Research Bonus Half-Pont.

See Dave for more information and don't forget to bring those works-in-progress to the model club meetings to share!

Two Quick Reviews

Tim Darrah, AMPS #2545

I have two quick reviews for you of two companies you might not know of.

First is Celticwerks (www.celticwerks.net). I saw a thread on the AMPS Forum about this company and thought that I'd contact them for a possible raffle prize for our upcoming joint-contest with the Sumter IPMS club. We were kindly sent their # CW35001 "T-55 Stripped Engine Compartment for the Tamiya T-55A" with a retail cost of \$29. What you get in the box are 5 pieces of finely cast resin and a 4-page instruction sheet with black-n-white photos.



The resin is some of the best casting I've ever seen. The part with the fan shroud is unbelievable as it is undercut and super thin. If Dragon did this in plastic, it'd be two or more parts; they would never do it in one piece of fine resin!! The level of detail is outstanding. The instructions are very well done as they show exactly what needs to be modified on the Tamiya kit. The only fault I see in the instructions is the photos are a bit faded and grainy, but they are still clear enough to see what they are talking about.

If you go to their web site, you'll find another simple conversion for a T-34T Post-War Tank Retriever, 6 street diorama bases, and some columns.

I really love the Uneven Cobble Stone road which I'll have to get soon. For a new company, their customer service is outstanding and the products look great.

Next up is a new English model magazine called "Steel Masters N.A." I think that it is the English version of a Spanish (?) magazine. The first two issues are out, and both are 62-pages long, in full color, and with very little advertising.

Each issue has a color profile, two-page article showing different items. In issue #1, it is I.SS-PzGren-Div showing Tigers, Panzer IVs, a Stug III, Wespe and a 250. In issue #2, they show British vehicles in German service 1940-1942: A9 Cruiser, Dingo scout car, Churchill, Bren Gun Carriers, and Matilda II all in Panzer Gray. Both issues are very interesting. The articles themselves are short on text but high on detailed color photos of the construction, detail work and painting. What is cool is they list the kit and any figures and accessories used, which is very helpful. What they don't provide, however, are the exact stock numbers of the parts, but that's OK.



In issue #2, they build the Bronco Models Buffalo MPCV, and you get 5 pages of color photos of the actual vehicle. Very useful for detailing your kit. They don't do this for each model, but it's a nice feature. If I had to, I would consider this as a MMiR-lite magazine. (I still love MMiR. It's too bad they don't keep up with production of their magazine, but that's a different story.)

For contact info, please go to www.defense-house.com. The magazine costs \$42 for 6 issues, and they take US checks, Money Orders, credit cards and Pay-Pal. They also have a free on-line magazine called "e-Steel." I have signed up for this, but at the time of this writing, I haven't gotten anything, so I can't comment on the quality or content of the on-line magazine.

The Celtic Works T55 engine compartment set was sent to us as a raffle donation for our June show, so if you're interested in it, buy plenty of tickets!

What is "Pre-Shading"?

Mike Roof, AMPS #1632

What is "pre-shading"?

I recently had a discussion about this with club member Trevor who asked me that. It's a good question with a complicated answer, and I'll try to share with you my answer to him. Keep in mind as you read this that these are my personal opinions, and in the end, we each should build and finish our models to suit ourselves. There are no absolutely right or wrong techniques, especially when it comes to the stylistic aspects of how we each interpret our subjects.

The first thing you should understand is that there are two major "schools" of model finishing. There is a very large group of model builders who believe that the colors that models are painted MUST be EXACT matches for the colors that the prototypes were painted in. For the sake of discussion, let's call these folks "technical purists" (and avoid some of the less tactful descriptions!). The technical purists agonize and argue endlessly about how close a match this or that brand of paint is for the "original" prototype color. They live and die by the color chip and paint standards (FS #, RAL #, etc).

At their worst, technical purists believe that the only "correct" finish is one that precisely matches the original color. Nothing else is acceptable to them.

Then there is the second school of model finishing which believes in an "artistic" interpretation of the OVERALL finish. Now, just to be up-front, let me say that I fall into this second group.

Intuitively, the technical purists understand that models painted according to their standard don't look very "real" even if they are painted to match the prototype, so most of the technical purists will use washes, dry brushing and other techniques all the while denying that they are actually changing that pure, exact base color into something different... an artistic interpretation of the original color. They usually justify this as part of their weathering. This common and oft repeated rationalization is one of the things that cause quite a lot of confusion among modelers when they try to really understand what's going on with their finishing efforts. Too many modelers call a technique "weathering" when the effect they're trying to achieve is really some sort of artistic interpretation of shading.

Of course, when you undertake to make an artistic interpretation of anything, those interpretations are as varied as the people making them. So, the next thing you should understand is that there are no absolutely right or wrong ways to make those interpretations. There are only techniques and methods that get you closer to your own interpretation. This is why we model-builders have so many different techniques and methods that we use.

Another concept that we should understand is that of "scale lighting." Most model builders accept that there is such a thing as "scale lighting" even if they don't fully understand it. So what is it, really? "Scale lighting" is the way that light appears to illuminate a scale subject differently than the same amount and kind of light illuminates the same prototype subject.

(Note that some model builders define "scale lighting" as the actual effects painted on the model in order to make it appear as if it's lighted the same as the prototype. However, I think that the issue is easier to understand using a definition about how the light actually works. So far as I know, Webster's dictionary doesn't offer us an "official" definition.)

Because the light does not illuminate them both the prototype and the scale subject in the same way (or more precisely, it doesn't APPEAR to do so), the scale subject will look different (usually much darker) than the prototype subject. The trick is to paint and finish the model (the scale subject) so that it APPEARS to look the same as the real (prototype) subject when the prototype is observed at the same apparent distance.

(Yet another definition! The further away the real subject is, the smaller it appears, until it looks to be the same size as the scale model. This is the "apparent distance" which is sometimes called the "scale distance" when this idea is applied to the model instead of the prototype.)

The most familiar way to imagine scale lighting at work is with model figures. Ask yourself, "Why do we have to paint in shadows and highlights on model figures?" A technical purist would tell us that it's enough that we paint the figure's uniform in the exact colors of the prototype uniform. If we do that, then the figure should look real. Of course, this is rubbish. The figure will not look real. It will instead look very two dimensional, toy-like, and lifeless as well as being very dark.

Why is this so? The answer lies mostly in how real light illuminates scale subjects - scale lighting.

When we reduce the size of the prototype down to the scale of the model, we're also reducing the surface area of the model that light falls on and from which it is reflected. A larger area (like the prototype) reflects more light than a smaller area (like the scale model). The more light reflected, the

brighter that surface appears; the less light, the darker. The intensity of the light perceived by the viewer is changed by changes in the surface area available to reflect the available light.

We need to understand how apparent distance changes the intensity (color saturation) of the prototype's finish. Light is also diffracted (spread out) over distance and moves around air molecules and is blocked by dust, moisture, and other things in the air. This means that the further away an object is, the less intense (or saturated) its colors will appear. There is, in essence, less volume of the prototype color's light reaching the viewer's eyes. Move closer, and the color appears more intense. Move away again, and the color appears faded. Did the color change? Of course not. Only your distance has changed, but the prototype color APPEARS to have faded as the apparent distance has increased.

These two things, light intensity and light diffraction, work together over both apparent and scale distances to create the differences between how the prototype and model appear to the viewer. They are what cause the effect of scale lighting and both change the amount of light that the viewer sees.

Now you can see what is happening to the scale figure. Its surface area is only a minute fraction of the surface area of a full-sized human. Light cannot reflect from the scale figure in any amount close to the amount reflected from the full-sized human, the scale figure looks overall dark, and the shadows and highlights that allow us, the viewers, to discern details and shapes do not exist.

But wait, you say, "If I hold my model figure under my desk lamp, it will look like it has 'normal' shadows and highlights." This is true, but why? It is because you are "concentrating" a large amount of light onto the small area of the scale figure by holding it close to a light that's brighter than the ambient light around you. In essence, you are "forcing" the smaller surface to reflect more light than it normally does. As the size of the scale subject is reduced, the amount of light required to make it look "real" is increased, but unless we display our models under strong lights, this extra light is not available. We have to do with paint and color what we cannot do with light.

With paint, how do we make this happen? We do this first by lightening the prototype colors so that on the scale subject they appear less saturated like the prototype at the apparent distance represented by the scale of the model. Generally, we add white to the prototype color to make it a lighter shade of the same color. However, white is not always the best color to use since it will "bleach" out the color, so we often use yellows or grays or tans. For Trevor's question about an OD color, I use dark yellow to lighten OD to a "scale color." (OD is made up of black and yellow ochre, so dark yellow makes it brighter but not faded.)

The other way we use paint is by adding painted on shadows and highlights. This same idea that we accept as quite normal and desirable for scale model figures can (and in my opinion, should) be applied to our model vehicle subjects. One of the techniques that can be used to do this is "pre-shading." (Finally! I did tell you that the answer was complicated!)

In pre-shading, we start with a darker shade of our desired final color. We paint this into the "shadow" areas (or "planes") of the model – hence the term "pre-shading." Next we use a mid-tone shade and paint the "neutral" planes. Finally, we use a lightened shade to paint the "highlight" planes. (This entire process can be done in reverse starting with the highlight color and working to the shadows and is then called "post-shading.") Just like with our figures, we attempt to replicate the effects of zenithal lighting.

(Definition time again! "Zenithal lighting" is a fancy way of saying that the subject is lighted or illuminated from a source directly over it - like the sun at its zenith or high noon. This is desirable since our models are usually viewable from all around, so they should be shaded all around.)

The trick is, of course, to make this shading look as realistic as possible - How dark to start? How much to lighten for the mid-tones and how much for the highlights? What color to use to lighten the prototype color or do we even start with the prototype color? How best to get the transitions from the shadows to the highlights? Etc, etc, etc... You must also factor in the effects of any weathering. How will the weathering change the pre-shading? How about the effects of any color modulation?

Pre- (and post-) shading are not the only techniques used to overcome the ill effects of scale lighting. We can also use (as mentioned) general washes and dry-brushing to emphasize details with tightly painted on shadows and highlights. Color modulation, especially the "oil dot" method, can be used to darken and lighten various planes to accentuate shadows and highlights as well as to vary (modulate) the shades and tones of the base colors to add interest and life. Color modulation using wash-type "filters" or glazes can be used to fade and lighten highlight areas or to darken shadow areas. Weathering can be used to build-up dark earth tones and add textures with paint, pigments, or artist mediums creating shadowed areas under the hull or sponsons or inside nooks and crannies in suspensions and drive trains. Chipping and bare metal can be used to highlight edges and other points emphasizing details that might otherwise be too dark and hidden. Dust, dirt and rust streaking can be used to highlight or emphasize details by creating surrounding tight shadows or color contrasts. Pin washes can also be used not only for grime and grunge effects but to create tight shadows to emphasize details.

In short, it's the totality of the finish, the combination of all of the techniques and methods employed which create the illusion of realism and combine to overcome the problem of scale lighting. Pre-shading is just one of those.

And there are as many possible combinations of techniques and methods as there are model builders.

“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!

Well fellers... That's about all for this month.

Hopefully most of you can break away from home and work and get over to either of two large AMPS shows coming up in Atlanta.

The Atlanta AMPS Regional Show is this coming weekend, February 15-17. It's well worth the drive to check out the vendors, and if you can enter the show, it's a good "tune up" for the AMPS International Show. Give the judges a chance to look at your models, get scored and receive your written comments, and then see what you can do to fix any small things you might have missed before the "big show."

(BTW: Yours truly will be presenting one of the seminars at the Atlanta AMPS Regional – Bases and Groundwork – on Saturday, February 16th. I don't have the time yet.)

Of course, the main event will be the AMPS International Show, April 18-20. I know that so far there's at least one tour scheduled to go to the Fort Benning Infantry Museum and the Armored Cavalry

Museum's Motor Pool on Thursday, April 18 (0800-1700). They've already sold out their vendor tables, and they always have some outstanding seminars. Check out the AMPS website for the latest information and to pre-register as an entrant and for the tours.

See ya Wednesday! Happy modeling!

Mike Roof

Chapter Contact
AMPS Central SC "Wildcats"