

Weathering: Washes and Drybrushing

by Mike Petty

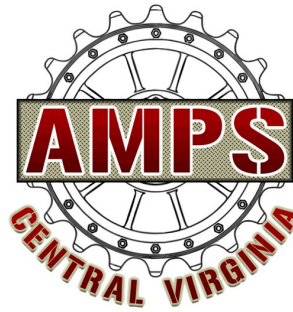
Last time Mike demonstrated the use of your airbrush to start the weathering process. Now in this installment the methods of using washes and drybrushing to enhance details will be demonstrated. This method uses artist oil paints, because the pigments are very fine and they do not evaporate quickly. The thinning agent used is Turpenoid, a synthetic, odorless turpentine substitute. If you decide to purchase this, read the label and get the bottle with a blue label.

Mike selects Burnt Umber for his Olive Drab models. Another possible color is Van Dyck Brown. Paint brands recommended by Mike are Windsor & Newton Artist and Winton lines, and Grumbacher. There are also oil paints designed specifically for the modeler, marketed by MIG Productions and called "502 Abteilung." Usually the price per volume is a good indicator of the quality. Mike uses Windsor & Newton "University" series synthetic brushes with a wide, chisel point.

Be sure that your tools and details are all attached at this stage, so they get consistent weathering as the rest of the model. Markings should also have been applied and sealed before this stage.

Mix the paint with the Turpenoid until a thin consistency is obtained; you will have to judge this by eye. Apply the mixture and coat all model surfaces. It will probably pool in places as it runs with gravity. Use the brush to wick away these areas or unsightly blobs of color will spoil the technique. When done, set aside to completely dry, which 24 hours is always ideal. Don't rush! This step will blend the contrasts created by the airbrush fading.

The next step is usually to add grease/oil stains. For this Mike uses Rembrandt's Sepia Extra, learned from figure modelers. This paint is thinned slightly, not as much as the wash, and dabbed around fluid caps and places where these stains



would likely occur. It is particularly good on roadwheel grease fittings.

A third step is to add rust stains, using the same technique as oil stains, but using the color Mars Orange. However, be careful here as rust can be overdone and most surfaces don't usually acquire it. Always check your references, or go out and buy some—your models will thank you.

During this process, keep your surface clean, and use lint-free towels with your brushes, because the lint will transfer from the towel to the model very easily.

Now, more specific areas can be treated with a concentrated wash to outline and darken the cracks and crevices. This is commonly called a "pin" wash. To do this effectively, get some clean Turpenoid and a clean wide brush. Mix up a black or dark brown wash, with a consistency

thicker than the first step outlined in this demo. Moisten (barely wet) the wide brush with the clean Turpenoid and wet the model surface, in a small area. Pick up a clean, small, pointed brush and load it with your wash and touch it to the surface. The already wet surface will keep the wash from spreading out of control if you've done it correctly. Work this around the model in small areas at a time, always keeping a slightly moist surface on the model.

So far the techniques have darkened the model, but now it's time to highlight the details and offer up a contrast to the eyes in order to simulate depth from dark to light. Before doing this the previous washes must be completely dry. Mike finds that a color called Unbleached Titanium works fine straight from the tube. The color is like that of muslin cloth or burlap. Using straight white on any model is usually not a good idea. Use the Unbleached Titanium straight without Turpenoid. Pick up some on a wide, chisel tip brush and scrub the brush tip on paper or lint-free towels until the color is almost gone. Then swipe this across surface detail with a gentle motion and continue to swipe to build up the color. The same procedure can be used with powdered graphite to simulate wear on metal areas, but use it sparingly and don't overdo it.

