

NO FUSS MARKINGS FOR YOUR MODEL

by Mike Nassise

*An Article Published in the March/April 2006 "Tailspin," the New England Flying Aces News,
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(Ed. Note: Those readers who look with great disdain upon any article dealing with scale or FAC matters might check this one out. Even those SAM jobs can be "couthed" up using this technique to compete with Vince Burton and Al Pardue.

I love building and flying scale model airplanes, but my approach to modeling has always been to take the "low tech" road, if one exists, to achieve the results that I want. Granted this may not always garner the scale scores I would like, but life is too short to get hung up on seeking the extra point and a half by masking off and spraying civil registrations, military ID codes, insignias, etc. The way I see it, my models are for flying not admiring, so the quicker I get them to the field the better. This is not to say that I don't take pride in the ships I turn out, just that I prefer to be out in the tall green stuff on a beautiful day rather than making my blood pressure soar at my work bench.

My technique, if you'll allow me to call it that, for putting markings on a model is to simply spray paint Japanese tissue. (stretched on a frame) to the required color with Krylon or Rustoleum enamels, then cut out the shapes as usual with a hobby knife and apply them to the model with glue stick. If I'm making roundels, or other other types of insignia, I cut out the component parts and stack glue them together with the glue stick before applying to the model. For example, if I'm making a British roundel cut out three appropriately sized circles of sprayed tissue (blue, white, red) anti then glue them together in the correct order, taking care that everything is well centered. This assembly is then attached to the model, again with glue stick. You really have to look close to see how it was done. For military models I give the sprayed tissue a light coat of Testors matte coating to dull down the colors before cutting out the markings.

Thinned white glue can also be used to attach the insignia, but I'm not crazy about how everything wrinkles up while it's drying. My experience has been that sometimes the wrinkles don't disappear after everything has dried. What's great about using this approach is that you don't have to worry about a darker color showing through a lighter one. The spray paint is opaque enough, even in thin coats, to prevent this from happening. I use this technique for making markings for most of my scale ships and usually get scale scores in the mid 50's which isn't that shabby.

Lastly, as far as durability is concerned, I've got models (Fiat G.55, Heinkel He-100, etc.) that I've been flying for a couple of years now that bear markings made and attached in this fashion and they are still looking good. Occasionally, I might have to "nail" down a loose edge here and there with a dab of glue stick adhesive applied with a toothpick, but it's no big deal. Yeah, commercial decals or masked and spray brushed insignia and markings look top shelf, but don't

look down your-nose at the method just described. It's fast, easy and effective. Give it a try, you'll like it, and you don't have to be a professional com