

Details on Silver Spray Technique

by Mark Fineman on the FFML

(Ed. Note: This was found among the files left me by the late Jack Bolton and was noted as having been printed in the SAM Speaks 86, Dan O'Grady Editor. It might be a handy solution to the color on the Ryan M-1 Dime Scale printed in the December issue of this exciting newsletter!)

In an earlier message I outlined the silver dope spraying technique. Here are some additional details:

1. Many of us in Connecticut use the techniques originated by Dave Stott: Don't use straight dope to finish your models. Instead, use a combination of dope and lacquer, the latter available in some paint stores. Make up a bottle of 50/50 dope and thinner and a of 50/50 lacquer and thinner. Use lacquer thinner for this. Works great and is relatively cheap. (Ed Note: Don't buy hardware store lacquer thinner — get good stuff from an auto paint store)
2. Using the above thinned solutions, combine the two in the ratio of 25% dope and 75% lacquer. This is your basic finishing solution, henceforth to be simply called "dope."
3. The artist's atomizer, described before, costs a couple of dollars and is available in better art supply stores. I believe that Grumbacher still makes them. Practice a bit before actually spraying a model. If you have to blow so hard that your eyeballs pop out, you'd better add a little more thinner to your spraying solution!
4. I generally spray a coat of clear "dope" on the covered and shrunken tissue surface. Why not brush it on? Spraying leaves absolutely no brush marks and creates a beautiful base coat.
5. This is followed by a coat of aluminum: Use the same "dope" mixture, thinned even a bit more (you'll just have to learn the proper proportions by trial and error). Add to it about 1/4 tsp. of aluminum powder for each ounce of "dope." Caution: a little aluminum powder goes a 1-o-o--n-g way. The powder comes in several shades. My favorite is called "bright aluminum." Again, a well-equipped art supply store should have it in stock. They may also have other metallic colors, such as bronze and copper. It is better to spray two light coats of aluminumed dope than one heavy one. Keep the finish subtle and transparent. It is easy to make this finish look thick and opaque, a no-no.
6. You can also spray thinned colored dope instead of the metallic dope in exactly the same fashion. Either way, it produces a silky, transparent surface that looks like the best colored tissue imaginable.
7. Spray only in a well-ventilated area. This stuff produces quite an aroma.