# Naval
CAMOUFLAGE
MADE EASY

Getting the measure of disruptive camouflage is child's play with Silly Putty

By Ron Smith

During World War II, the U.S. Navy developed several camouflage schemes, known as *measures,* for surface vessels. Introduced in 1941, Measure 12 (Modified) was a "disruptive" scheme using large, assymetrical splotches of paint intended to break up a ship's outline and confuse optical targeting systems. It's particularly challenging to apply to models –

there are no set designs, no design sheets, and few straight lines to mask. No two ships had exactly the same pattern, and reference photos are often of poor quality. When I built Yankee Modelworks' (formerly Blue Water Navy) 1/350 scale USS *Farenholt*, I wanted to finish it in the Measure 12 (Modified) it wore in 1942. Silly Putty proved to be the perfect masking agent for the complicated scheme.
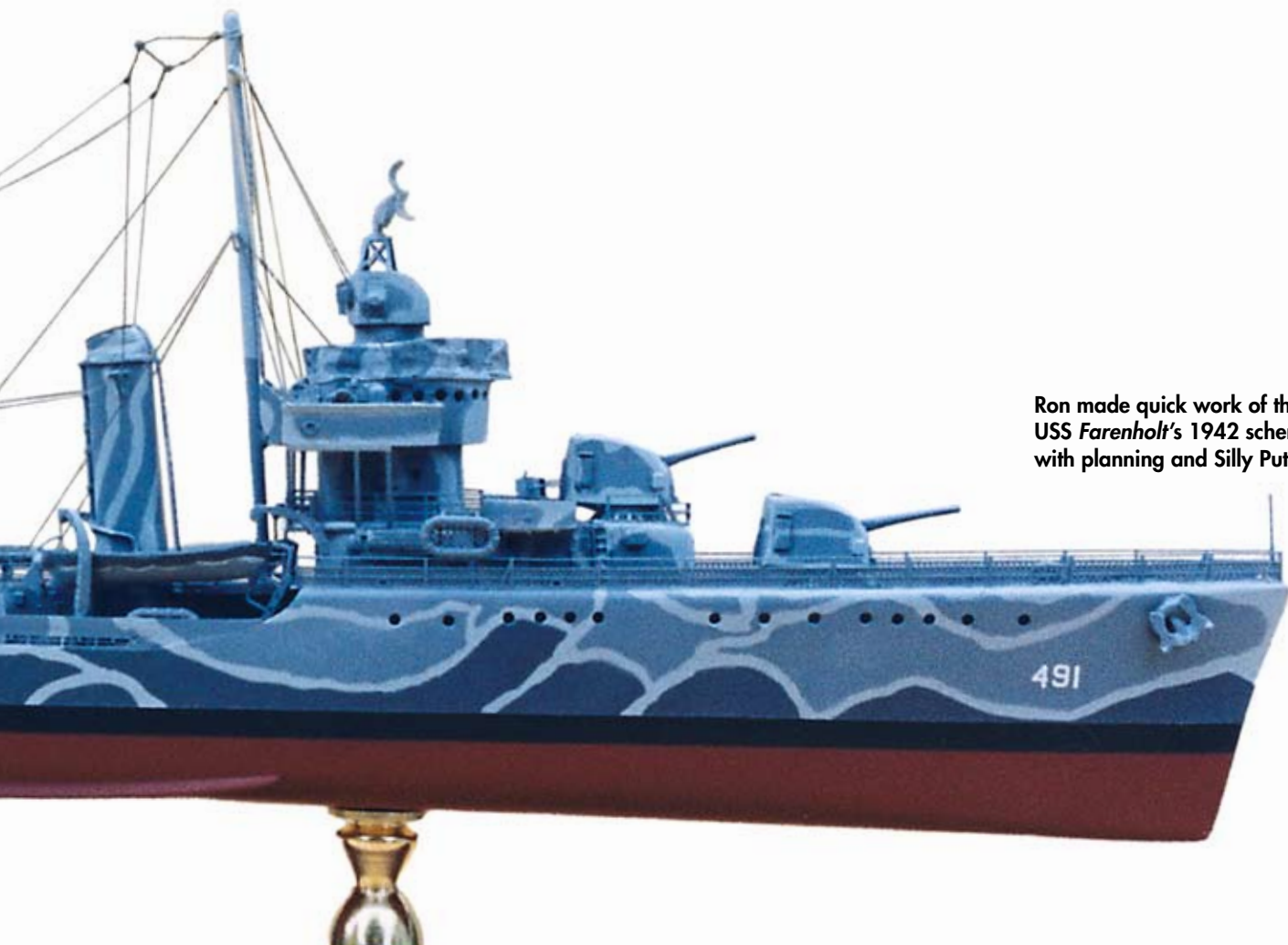
Ron made quick work of the USS *Farenholt*'s 1942 scheme with planning and Silly Putty.

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1 After airbrushing black around the hull for a boot stripe, Ron prepared the remaining parts. Then he applied Tamiya tape to mask the stripe.

2 Next, he airbrushed hull red using Model Master Acryl and set it aside to dry several hours. He left the boot mask on.

3 Ron mounted the model on a jig made of tubing slightly smaller than the display pedestals and ¼"-28 bolts. Smaller parts were attached to .020" brass rod or toothpicks for painting. After masking the hull bottom, Ron primed the superstructure, deck, and details.

4 To mask the deck, Ron applies small, overlapping pieces of tape. His tools are a circle template, stencil knife, Tamiya tape, toothpick, .5mm technical pencil, razor blade, punches, tweezers, straightedge, and a cutting mat.

5 Patience is key when masking a large deck with lots of details. Ron started with complex shapes like curved walls and gun emplacements. He used Mr. Maskingsol, a liquid mask, for small items such as bollards.

6 Ron airbrushed Model Master Acryl 5-H haze gray over the hull sides, superstructure, and subassemblies. While the paint dried, he gathered reference photos.

The short, active combat life of USS *Farenholt*

USS *Farenholt* comes alongside the carrier USS *Wasp* to receive supplies August 24, 1942, during operations in the South Pacific.

A 1,620-TON *Benson*-class destroyer, USS *Farenholt* was commissioned in April 1942. Soon in the South Pacific, she was assigned as an escort for the carrier USS *Wasp* and took part in the invasions of Guadalcanal and Tulagi.

After the sinking of the *Wasp* September 15, 1942, the *Farenholt* joined another task force and sustained damage at the Battle of Cape Esperance in October.

After undergoing repairs at Pearl Harbor, the *Farenholt* returned to action in the South Pacific and spent much of the next year in the Solomons.

Overhauled in early 1944, the destroyer took part in the Guam, Palau, and Okinawa campaigns, as well as the occupation of Japan.

USS *Farenholt* was decommissioned in April 1946 and served 25 years with the reserve fleet before being stricken from the Navy's register in 1971. The ship was sold for scrap in November 1972.

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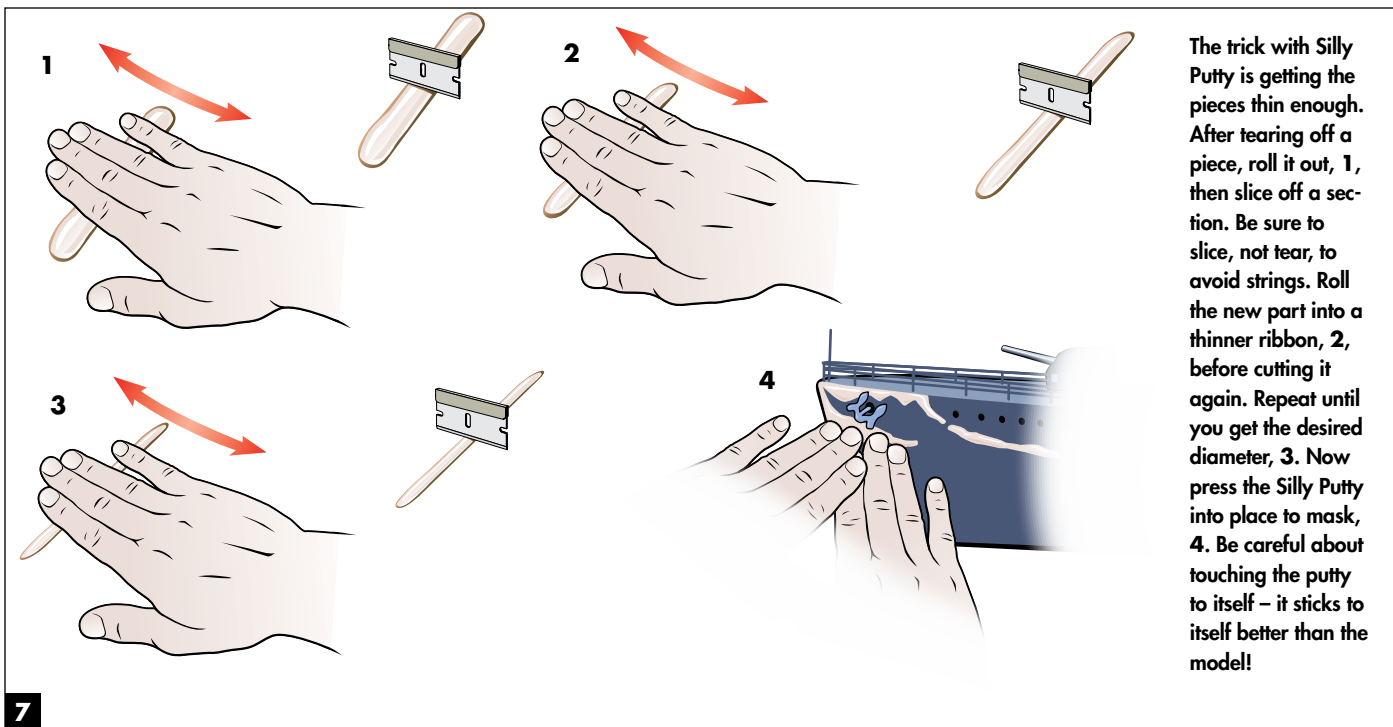
The trick with Silly Putty is getting the pieces thin enough. After tearing off a piece, roll it out, **1**, then slice off a section. Be sure to slice, not tear, to avoid strings. Roll the new part into a thinner ribbon, **2**, before cutting it again. Repeat until you get the desired diameter, **3**. Now press the Silly Putty into place to mask, **4**. Be careful about touching the putty to itself – it sticks to itself better than the model!

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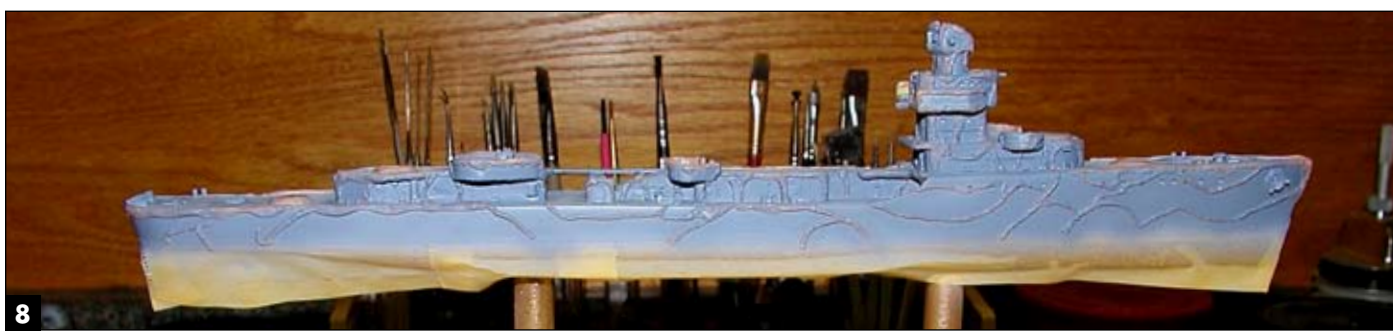
Next, Ron airbrushed Model Master Acryl 5-O ocean gray, taking care to provide an even coat to unmasked areas.

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More Silly Putty: Ron masked the areas of the hull to remain ocean gray, being careful not to disturb the previous masks. (He didn't mask the bridge because he planned to use an airbrush small enough to control overspray.)

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After spraying the hull Model Master Acryl 5-N navy blue and letting it dry about an hour, Ron removed the Silly Putty. Take a lump of putty and roll it over the masks; the putty should come right off without residue.

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Once the masking tape, Silly Putty, and liquid mask were gone, Ron attached the turrets and stacks. In spite of all the steps, it took Ron only 48 hours to paint the model to this point.
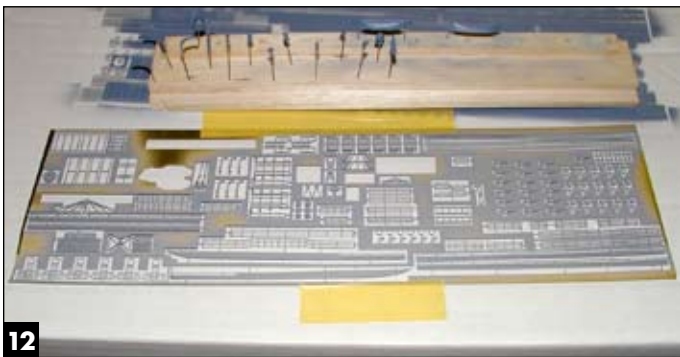
12 Ron airbrushed the photoetched-metal parts ocean gray on the sprue.

13 After attaching photoetched-metal railings and other parts, Ron continued haze gray stripes onto the parts by hand. Before starting, he mounted the model to a permanent base to minimize damage to fragile parts during handling. Ron masked the base to protect it from glue and paint.

14 Ron added remaining details and rigged the *Benson*-class destroyer, touching up the paint along the way. Decals supplied hull numbers and flags.

REFERENCES
Naval Historical Center Web site, www.history.navy.mil
USN Camouflage 1941-1945, www.shipcamouflage.com/warship_camouflage.htm
Warship Pictorial No.12: *Benson/Gleaves*-**Class Destroyers**, Steve Wiper, Classic Warships Publishing

After detail washes and a coat of clear flat, Ron's USS *Farenholt* was underway. Using acrylics, he spent just a week on the model and its eye-popping camouflage. **FSM**