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5 steps to paint FANTASTIC FACES

Finish figures like a pro – in minutes!

BY JIM WECHSLER

Jim added crew to AFV Club's 1/35 scale M5A1 Stuart with Verlinden, Alpine, and S&T figures – all precisely painted with Jim's quick-and-easy face-painting technique.



Though I don't consider myself a figure painter, I love to put figures on my armor models. A finely painted figure provides armor with a sense of life, historical context, and, in some cases, scale. Conversely, a poorly painted figure can mar the best of models.

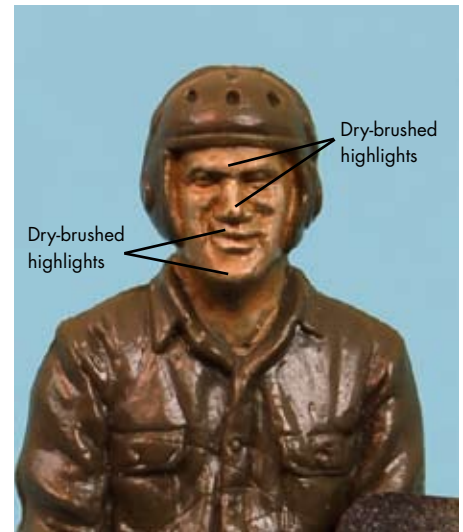
I've never had a problem painting military clothing, which is often captured with the same colors as armor. It's the figure's face, vital to the success of a model, that's trickier to depict.

I've tried a lot of face-painting techniques, many of them complicated and time-consuming. So I came up with a five-step technique of my own: It's easy to learn, quick to use, and works on all types of figures. I'll walk you through the steps with a 1/35 scale Tamiya plastic figure. Then, pull out those unwanted kits and practice – you'll be painting like a pro in minutes!



STEP 1: Base coat

After you've painted the rest of the figure, brush-paint (don't use an airbrush!) the face with Model Master enamel wood. Flesh-tone colors work well on civilians, but they're usually too pink for war-weary soldiers. Don't worry about completely covering the face.



STEP 2: Dry-brushing

Next, I pick out highlights with Model Master enamel tan, which contains a hue of pink perfect for this application. With very little paint on the brush, drag it over the high spots: lips, brow, cheeks, jaw line, and the bridge of the nose.



STEP 3: Detail painting

Using Model Master enamel Italian dark brown, I draw a fine line along the brow to represent the eyebrows, then mark a tiny dot on the eyes. A word of caution: You're better off without a dot than with a pupil that's too big! Don't use any white on the eyes – it's much too stark and creates bug eyes.

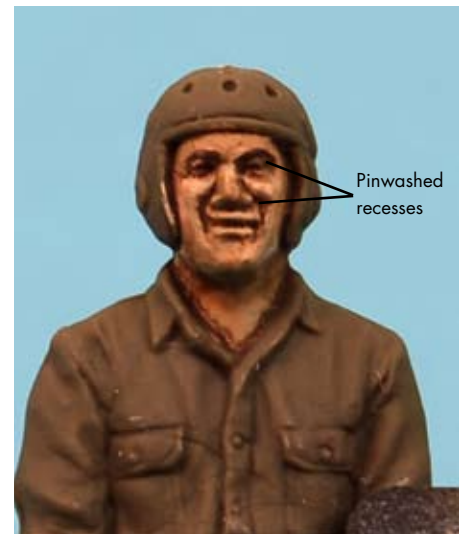


STEP 4: Flat coat

I give the entire figure a flat coat by airbrushing Testors Dullcote. To get the most mileage out of the airbrushing session, I flat-coat my latest armor project at the same time.

Figures & armor online

At www.FineScale.com, you can purchase "Paint modern military figures" (click on "Downloadable articles") and view a gallery of Jim's models (click on "How-to Articles").



STEP 5: Pinwash

Finally, I apply a pinwash, using a mix of about 20 percent Winsor & Newton raw umber oil paint and 80 percent Mona Lisa odorless paint thinner. I'm not a stickler about ratios, as long as the mixture is really thin and runs well. After dipping the brush in the wash, I lightly touch crevices and recesses; the wash naturally runs in and adds depth to the face. If I apply too much, I use a tissue to lightly dry the brush, then touch the puddle with the end of the brush to soak up excess wash. **FSM**

Show Gallery



Experimental aircraft

Not “What if ...” but “Why not?”

Conceptual designs, visions of the future, innovations gone goofy, describe them as you will – experimental aircraft amaze and mystify, even decades after they first appear.

Although many inventions that we now take for granted were ridiculed at first sight, many more seem even sillier years later. Some prototypes make us wonder what the inventors were thinking. The Convair XFY-1 Pogo may have provided a lot of valuable scientific information, but it still doesn't look like a good idea.

However ... ignore or belittle the unconventional at your own

risk. The Horten flying wing may have looked ludicrous to some in 1945, and Northrop's YB-49 still seems like science fiction. But no one laughs at a B-2 bomber.

For modelers, building experimentals is a way to celebrate the spirit of exploration – and often requires pioneering ingenuity to create that which did not exist before. Selected from *FSM* photos taken at model shows coast to coast, here are a few designs that boldly went where no man had gone before.



▲ **BELL X-1 ROCKET PLANES**
PAUL BOYER, CEDARBURG, WISCONSIN

Former *FSM* senior editor Paul Boyer built this collection of 1/72 scale Bell X-1 rocket-powered experimentals. He used the Tamiya model for Chuck Yeager's famous *Glamorous Glennis*, the first plane to break the sound barrier, and Special Hobby kits for the enlarged X-1A and stub-winged X-1E.

◀ **CONVAIR YB-60**
JEFF THOMSEN, SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA

Convair's fabulous 1950s included the YB-60, a conversion of its B-36 intercontinental bomber. The -60 first flew in April 1952 and was turned down by the Air Force the following August. Jeff converted Hobbycraft's 1/144 scale B-36 by scratchbuilding a tail, nose, pylons, and taxi gear, and adapting Cutting Edge B-52 nacelles to wings built with parts of the Hobbycraft kit, homemade resin sections, and sheet styrene. The markings are a mix of kit and custom decals.

▼ **AVRO ARROW**
BRIAN POTTS, PRINCE GEORGE, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

Inspired by the 1997 Canadian television miniseries "The Arrow," Brian built Hobbycraft Canada's 1/72 scale model of the still-controversial Avro Arrow. Designed to patrol Canada's vast Arctic regions, the highly capable supersonic interceptor fell victim to Cold War politics and was scuttled in 1959.

