

### HISTORICAL MINIATURES MUSEUM

Once you have completed any aircraft or armor model, you have effectively recreated a bit of history. Indeed, you have created a museum piece. Now you have to decide just how much of your home you are willing to devote to a museum site.



*4-1 Doug DeCounter uses the bookshelves that hold his library of reference books to display the armor he created using those references. He places new models on display every month from a collection stored in clear plastic boxes in a nearby closet.*

For most modelers, the obvious place to display models is on the shelves of a bookcase. That bookcase can do double-duty because it can both house the books you used to guarantee the authenticity of the models and to display the models themselves. There's an added value when you look at the model and realize that it almost literally came out of the pages of the books behind it.

There are some other ideas you might want to consider for displaying your models. Aircraft models, for example, can be displayed so they seem to be in flight. You could, of course, hang them with clear fishing line from the ceiling; although they are out of harm's way, they are probably too high to see and they can be very difficult to reach and clean.

An alternate method is to support them on pieces of .047-inch steel music wire. You can make a floor-to-ceiling display rack from a piece of 1 x 2 wood stained or painted to match the trim in the room. Attach the 1 x 2 to the wall with three wood screws or, if necessary, drywall fasteners. Now drill a series of holes about nine inches apart in the wood with a number 56 drill bit held in a pin vise.

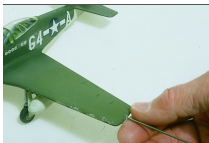


*4-2 A stained 1 x 2 is a vertical display mount for aircraft models.*



*4-3 Use a pin vise to drill a number 56 hole in the wing tip of the aircraft to be displayed.*

Drill a hole in the tip of the wing with the number 56 drill bit in a pin vise. Drill the hole as far back on the tip of the wing as possible to be nearer to the model's center of gravity. If you know in advance you are going to display the model this way, add some modeling clay to the inside of the nose during assembly to shift its center of gravity forward. Use diagonal cutters to cut off a two-inch piece of the steel wire and press one end of wire into one of the holes in that vertical display rack. Push the wing onto the wire. Add as many pieces of wire as you have airplanes to display. Do not, however, leave a piece of wire sticking out from the wall without an airplane because it can be sure to snag your skin, if not your eye!



*4-4 Press a two-inch piece of .047-inch steel wire into the hole in the wing and into the 1 x 2 vertical display mount.*

You can also use the small wooden plaques that are sold by craft stores to support an airplane from beneath. Use the same .047-inch piano wire, but drill the number 56 hole in the bottom of the fuselage. Locate the hole near the balance point of the aircraft so it will not want to rock on its mount.

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### ***DISPLAY SHELVES***

If you prefer to devote an area to a model museum, you can purchase a variety of plastic and wood shelving in both free-standing and wall-mount styles. Use the shelves either to display the models or to store boxed models. If you are more interested in protecting your models than in displaying them, buy some of the clear plastic storage boxes with lids intended for closets. The boxes will keep dust and grime from accumulating on the models and their self-stacking will keep the models from being damaged. You can see through the ends of the containers so you can select the models you wish. Some modelers use this system to keep just three or four models of a collection (that might number in the hundreds) on display. They simply rotate the models from the storage boxes to the display shelves every month or so.

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### ***A MINIATURE WORLD***

Some modelers find the appearance of the shelf distracting since it has little to do with the environment of the subject modeled. These modelers prefer to place the model on a base, in the context of a world the same scale as the model. To do that, surround the model with an environment that extends at least an inch in every direction. It's amazing how much more realistic your model will appear when you remove the distraction of that real-world shelf and replace it with a scene as realistic as the model. Modelers refer to these mini-scenes as dioramas.

## ***A SIMPLE RUNWAY DIORAMA***

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You can build a foot-square section of simulated asphalt or concrete by simply coating a foot-square wooden plaque with a very smooth layer of artist's matte medium. The matte medium is a type of clear acrylic paint that won't crack as easily when it dries as white glue or carpenter's glue. You can buy matte medium and gloss medium at art supply stores. While the matte medium is still wet, sprinkle on a thick layer of baking soda. Let it dry overnight, then shake off the excess baking soda and use sandpaper wrapped around a six-inch piece of 2 x 4 to smooth the surface. Use a razor saw to cut grooves to simulate expansion joints in concrete or use an ice pick to gouge wavy grooves to simulate the cracks in concrete or blacktop. Remember, concrete runways are generally poured in 15 or 20-foot squares. Paint the top of the plaque *#2039 Canadian Voodoo Grey* to simulate concrete or *#2101 Anthracitgrau* to simulate blacktop. Add some stains with thinned black. Rough the surface of the blacktop with fine sandpaper to produce the splotchy effect of the prototype.

Use this simple diorama to display any of your aircraft, perhaps changing the featured model every month or so. The model kit and accessory makers produce an incredible array of ground handling equipment, bombs, racks and personnel in all the popular scales. You can use these accessories to add more life to the runway scene.



*4-5 Use a tea strainer to sift real dirt over the still-wet artist's matte medium.*

## ***A TERRAIN DIORAMA***

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It is only slightly more difficult to build a patch of scale model "outdoors" to display an armored or soft-skinned vehicle using one of these wooden plaques. Choose a plaque that is at least an inch larger than the model in any dimension. You can decide if you want to dedicate the scene to just one model or to make the scene generic enough so you can rest any piece of armor on the terrain. Shops that specialize in model railroad supplies carry a variety of pre-mixed scenery-shaping materials. Permascene, Instant Paper Mache, Cellucloy and Sculptamold are brands that work well. Nearly all of these, however, will shrink more than the wooden plaque. It's a good idea, then, to cover the plaque with waxed paper while you spread the scenic material over it and up to within about 1/4 inch of the edge of the plaque. Build up any hills or dig any recesses for possible standing water. If you wish, mold a pair of ruts to match the tread width of your vehicles.

Use real dirt, sifted through a tea strainer, to simulate dirt. Hold the dirt in place with artist's matte medium. Sift the dirt directly onto the still-wet matte medium. Model railroad stores sell a variety of colors of ground foam that is an excellent substitute for scale grass, bushes and weeds. For taller weeds, use the flocking sold by the same shops. The shops that specialize in model

railroad supplies also carry a variety of ready-made trees and bushes in several sizes or you can make your own from finer-textured bushes covered with fine ground foam to simulate scale-size leaves.



*4-6 To create tall weeds, press Noch or a similar brand of flocking into wet puddles of matte medium.*

There are several books on building scenery if you want to try some realistic touches like simulating water with a simple puddle of artist's gloss medium. When you are satisfied with the diorama, remove the waxed paper.

Let the material dry for at least a week, then cement it to the plaque with a thick coat of artist's matte medium.

The earthy diorama is the place to pose those figures that are available in the scale to match the vehicle. The accessory makers also offer all types of tank traps, sand bags, barbed wire, trenches, and virtually every other detail you'd find in a real battle scene including guns and concrete gun emplacements.



*4-8 Use a stiff paint brush and alcohol to scrub grease from your older models.*



*4-7 This diorama is a simple scrap of wallboard with the edges broken to look like rock strata. The vertical posts are pieces of .125 x .125 styrene plastic strip. The model is Doug DeCounter's Italeri Crusader III back-dated to a Crusader II.*



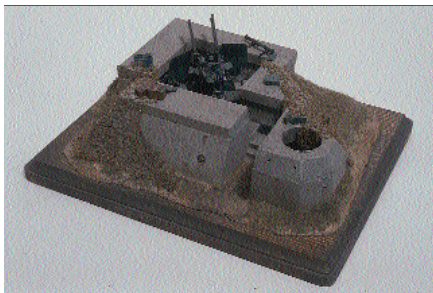
*4-9 Use Instant Plastic Adhesive and a spray of Adhesive Accelerator to reattach broken landing gear or propeller blades.*

### **CLEANING MODELS**

No matter how precious they may seem, even the best models are going to accumulate

dust and dirt. You can minimize that by keeping them in storage boxes or beneath the clear plastic display covers that are available from hobby stores. In time, though, the models will need a cleaning.

Use a soft brush to sweep the dust away from the surface of the model. When the major areas are clean, use the air brush to blow away dust from the recessed areas. If the surface is still greasy, dip a cotton swab in alcohol and gently scrub the surface of the model. If the model is really old, you may be able to restore its finish by simply spraying on a thin coat of clear flat. Mask the clear areas before applying the clear finish.



*4-10 A recreation of a single flak emplacement near Calais. Doug DeCounter mounted a Verlinden cast Hydorstone flak emplacement kit on a 12 x 12-inch stained wooden plaque. The earth textures are Cellucloy painted in earth colors, with weeds made from Noch flocking. The netting is also a Verlinden accessory and the gun itself is a Tamiya Flak Vierling.*