

PAINTING VAC-FORM



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I was looking for some buildings for Science Fiction photographic backgrounds and as an HQ building for my ever increasing Zaporoskiye Brigade. I was recommended to have a look at the Amera Plastic Mouldings (www.amera.co.uk). They do a large array of plastic Vacform buildings from ruins to temples and some that suited what I wanted. So I thought I'd have a go and see what I could achieve with them. They all come in clean, white plastic, the detail is somewhat soft as you would expect with Vacform, so careful finishing is required to bring out the best in the models.

Pic 1

The first stage was to trim off any excess "edge"; I did this with a decent pair of scissors which seemed more than up to the job. I left a little bit of an edge to give a flat bit where the models touch to ground as it were. I then went over the surface of the models with very fine sand paper to roughen it slightly to give a key to the primer. The only additions that I did to the basic buildings were "steel" shutters to the turret roof, from Plasticard, and a couple of hatches in the main roof to provide "access" to that roof (still can't stop being an architectural technician after all these years!), from Old Crow. Then I washed the models in warm soapy water, (do not have it too hot as the plastic may distort), and left them to dry on the plate rack by the sink.

Pic 2

Once completely dry I then sprayed the whole model with grey acrylic car primer and left it to dry for an hour or two.

The next step was to mask out all the areas I

Pic 1



Pic 2



did not want to have a more rough concrete finish, like doors and shutters which I wanted to portray as metal. Then I sprayed

the models with a coat of Games Workshop *RoughCoat*[™] - Textured Spray. This stuff really does work and gives a nice semi-

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uniform rough concrete/render like finish. Before applying, you *must* shake the can thoroughly, and you have to be quite firm with it, and spray like you mean it, depressing the nozzle fully at times to get the full rough texture, otherwise you will just get the carrier paint. This, however, does allow you to vary the texture quite a bit over the model, which is nice. At first glance the texture may not appear *that* rough, but in the pictures you can see the marked contrast in rough and not rough areas, and it does provide an excellent surface for dry-brushing, which is coming up next! Once the models were coated I put them aside to dry for an hour or two.

Pic 3

RoughCoat dries to quite a nice mid grey, but I wanted a more worn concrete colour so my weapon of choice on this occasion was Foundry Granite because it has a touch of brown about it. Starting with the middle colour Granite 31B (the shade colour 31A being too dark in this case), I heavily dry-brushed the whole of the models, leaving a little of the under-colour showing, but trying not to clag the *RoughCoat* finish. Try not to brush all in the same direction on the model.

Pic 4

I then did a similar thing with Granite Light 31C, but this time a lot lighter coat allowing much more of the previous coat to show through, trying to pick out the rough detail, and concentrating efforts on edges and corners, making them the lightest areas. Make your brush-strokes random across the model.

Pic 5

I then added Canvas Light 8C to the Granite Light 31C, 50/50 mix and treated the models to yet another dry-brushed coat, again lighter coverage still, and again concentrated at the edges. On this coat I was less random with my brushing, often streaking the brush work downward in the direction water would stain the concrete in real life, and this is the start of weathering the models.

Pic 3



Pic 4



Pic 5



Pic 6



Pic 6

The last bit dry-brushing for the moment was a final *edge only* dry-brush of Canvas Light 8C to sharpen up those edges and give the models a worn look. Now you have a very clean if slightly rough model that needs a bit of detailing to bring it to life.

Pic 7

I decided on painted metalwork, so first I did all this in three-stage Forest Green 26. I then painted on marks where the paint has worn off to reveal the metal underneath, with Armour 35B. Try to put these in likely areas that will receive wear and damage.

Pic 8

The next step was to add weathering. Firstly I used a thin wash of Granite 31B for the main vertical water staining; you can make this quite thin as the paint attenuates very well, mix 50/50 with water. Streak it downwards in the manner that water stains real concrete. Don't let it run down; draw it down with your brush so you get it where you want it, you won't need much on your brush. Then I added streaks of Phlegm Green 28B, thinned in the same manner to represent algae staining. Lastly I added streaks of Orange Shade 5A to be rust; this was not a wash but just thinned to normal consistency. I concentrated the rust around and on the metal parts like doors. I also added some more washes to areas where water was liable to pond and stand. Like at the bottom of wall and on the flat roof. Fortunately you can't really over stain concrete as it just goes on getting more stained the longer it survives! And that's it for the washes.

Pic 9

Time to get out the MIG weathering powders! These are basically pre-ground up

Pic 7



Pic 8



chalk powders and are great for more subtle and less watery staining. I only have two colours, oily smoke which is a black powder, and light rust, which is, well, a light rusty colour. I applied them with a stiff old brush, I used the smoke principally for the shell “splashes” that you can see on the

superstructure, and rust colour for streaking rust on the metalwork and some rust streaking onto the concrete in suitable places. The overall effect was a pretty dirty and stained building! It is worth noting that the MIG powders, particularly the lighter colours, become less obvious when they

have been varnished, so you need to be quite bold when applying them.

Pic 10

The last stages are to add a scenic base, in my now familiar manner and then varnish the whole thing. The scenic base starts with a layer of sharp sand (best stuff is horticultural sharp sand from the Garden Centre, as this is washed and cleaned of most dust and salts) stuck on with white PVA wood glue, thinned to about 70% glue to 30% water. While the glue is still wet, pour on the sharp sand. It's a good idea to sieve out the larger lumps from the sand first. Shake off any excess and then leave it to dry. Once the sand glue mix is dry, paint the base with Base Sand 10A. You will need the paint quite thick around the edge of the base, but thin it down a good deal before painting the sand otherwise it could clog the sandy detail. Next dry-brush the base with Base Sand 10B and then give a



Pic 9



Pic 10

Copplestone Future Wars Mercenaries painted as Genetic Infantry by me!



Main building is Bastion Stronghold from Amera Plastic Mouldings Models are all Copplestone Future Wars painted by me and Darren Matthews



Pic 11

final dry-brushing with Base Sand Light 10C to really emphasise the rough texture. Once the texturing and painting is finished add some chopped flock nylon 'grass', also known as 'static grass'. Paint white PVA glue in irregular blobs on the base and add the flock in patches with a pair of tweezers. It looks much more effective spaced out in small areas rather than covering the entire base. Allow the flock to stand for a couple of seconds before knocking the excess back into the container in which you keep it. When the glue is dry, the grass can be dry-brushed with yellow Ochre 4B to tone down the shine on the grass.

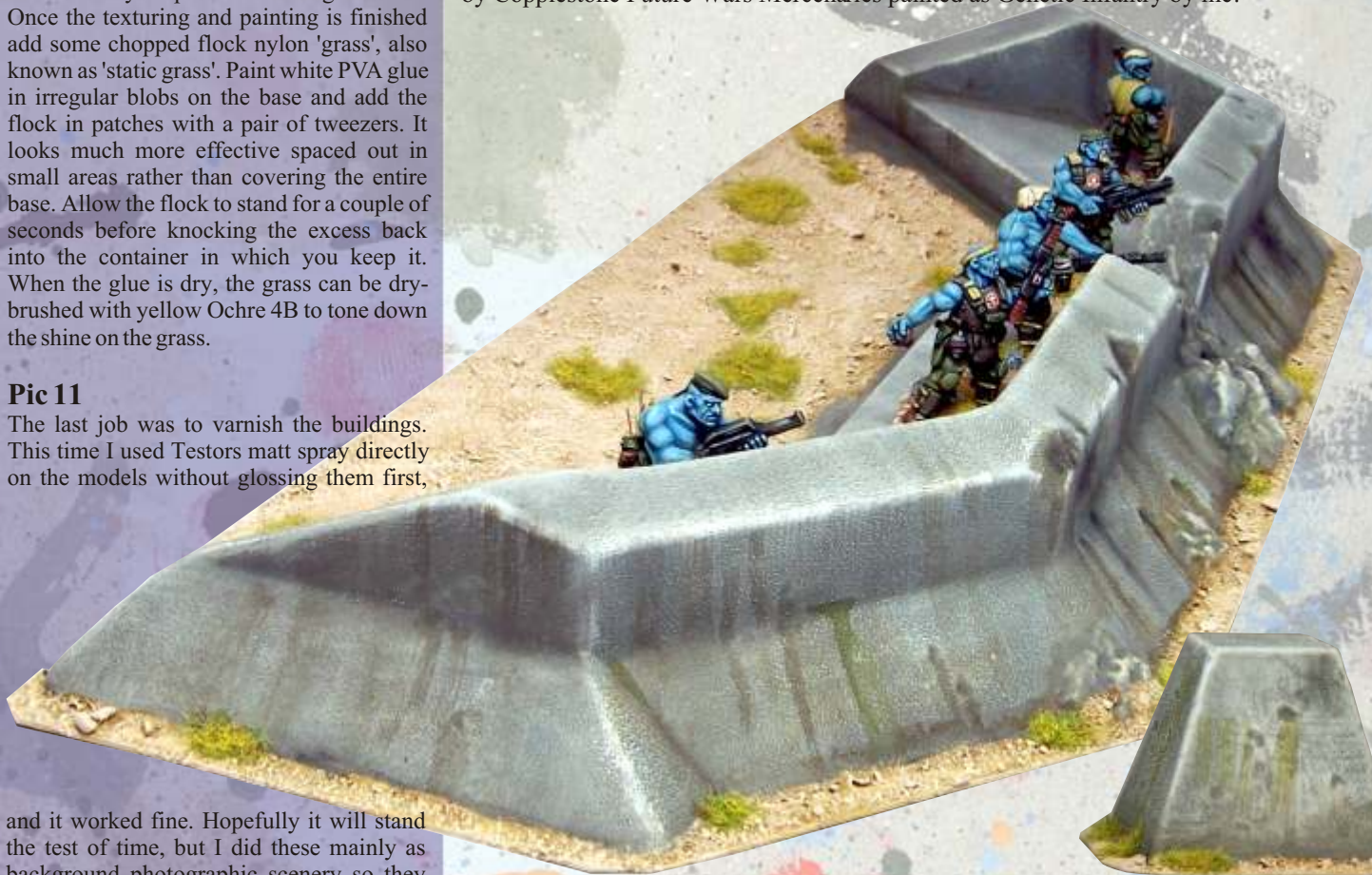
Pic 11

The last job was to varnish the buildings. This time I used Testors matt spray directly on the models without glossing them first,

and it worked fine. Hopefully it will stand the test of time, but I did these mainly as background photographic scenery so they won't be subject to too much wear and tear.

Overall I was quite pleased with the result and I think the Amara Vacform scenery comes up well, and although it does need careful work to get the best out of it, it is very cheap, easy to customise to your own requirements, looks good and won't break

Fortified Barricade (Damaged) and Tank Trap from Amara Plastic Mouldings manned by Copplestone Future Wars Mercenaries painted as Genetic Infantry by me!



your toes if you drop it on your foot! (This is a good thing if you have to carry your scenery on your back).

You can see more of my painting at www.kevindallimore.co.uk and will find a fuller description of my painting style, in my book published by Foundry, available at

www.wargamesfoundry.com. Steve Dean will occasionally have old painted models of mine for sale at www.stevedean.co.uk.



Fortified Barricade from Amara Plastic Mouldings manned by Copplestone Future Wars Bio-Chem Squad painted by Darren Matthews.

