

Creating Insignia and Markings

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Colorful appropriate markings, insignia, and lettering can bring our models to life. Suitable markings may be furnished in the kits we buy or can be purchased at hobby shops. Scratch builders can generate suitable markings on home computers or at copy centers such as Kinko's, but sometimes none of these options will do the job.

This describes an additional system of creating markings that has worked on half dozen or so of my models.

Obtain a piece of plate glass 12 x 12 or 12 x 18 inches with the edges ground round to prevent cuts. Coat one side with a sudsy, soapy film of water. (I use a bar of Oil of Olay hand soap.) (Ed. Note: If advertising is to be believed, Oil of Olay will help keep you young looking too!!) When dry, spray with coats of dope. It can be clear or colored coats depending upon how you will go about creating the images.

The clear, doped glass can be placed directly over a full-size pattern of the image you are duplicating. Designs such as an Indian Head Squadron insignia or unusual lettering can be painted or inscribed directly above the pattern below using model dopes or FW Acrylic Artist ink. These inks can tolerate some handling and will not be affected by the protective clear dope overspray that will follow.

If there are large, unusual-style letters or numbers. then. spray the glass with that color. Trace the outlines on the plate and then cut around the outline with an X-Acto knife. The soapy film will act as a release agent and these images will easily lift off the glass.

Trace around where the image will be located on the model and paint that area with a very watery, thinned-out mix of Elmer's Glue and then apply the image to that area. Squeegee out any surplus glue and level out any bubbles. This application of glue sets the image to the model surface and will prevent crazing or distortions from occurring when a protective, clear dope overspray is applied to the area.

The colored dopes can be sliced into very thin strips and used for pin striping around lettering, etc. These thin strips and images you have created are surprising strong and will tolerate considerable handling without breaking.

Here's to prettier models!