

Natural Metal Finish Using Floquil Silvers

By Phil Hale

I've tried all the NMF products available on the market today and in the past. I've even tried Floquil "Old Silver" with mixed results. I didn't thin the "Old Silver" as much as I do now and that was most of the problem. I had done a Monogram F-100D in the painted aluminum scheme seen in the early part of Vietnam. Most of the photos that I saw showed a weathered dull aluminum look to the plane and I was trying to achieve that look. I got the look I wanted but it took forever for the "Old Silver" to dry. It stayed "tacky" for over a week. I had some bad experiences with Alclad and I tried it several times. Then you have guys like Roger that tell you "I just mist Alclad directly on the plastic with no problem. If I tried that I would be holding a glob of Alclad colored plastic. Well, I've learned that if you thin either Bright Silver or Old Silver with Metalizer thinner and you use about 70-80 percent thinner to paint, it works just as good as any commercial product. Since, Floquil is now enamel paint, it is safer than the lacquer based products.

Preparing the surface

I sand the model as normal but then I use some extremely fine grade sandpapers for the final finish. It doesn't have to be glossy but it can be if you desire. I'll use 2000 or 2500 grit as my final sanding grade. This will produce an extremely smooth finish but it'll still be somewhat dull.

Tamiya Gloss Black

I then use Tamiya Gloss Black to restore the gloss finish to the plastic. I thin the Tamiya Gloss Black with Metalizer Thinner as well. I use the same mix ratio 70-80 percent thinner to 20-30 percent paint. I start out slow and don't try to cover in the first few passes with the airbrush. It is not extremely important to get maximum coverage but you can. Tamiya covers very well and very quickly. You'll be able to build up a good gloss black coat and you'll not fill in even the finest of panel lines. Get it as black as you want, just make sure that you have an even finish overall. Tamiya Gloss Black will be dry in just a few minutes but if you can let it dry over night, it will be rock hard and ready for the silver paint. Once the black is dry, you're ready for the silver.

Applying the Floquil

Thin the Floquil either Bright Silver or if you wish Old Silver with 70-80 percent Metalizer thinner and thin spray it on. Light coats at first and then gradually build it up. Floquil covers quickly but don't get too close when spraying. You can build it up too quickly and it'll look funny. If this happens, just back up a few minutes and let that area dry and then re-spray the area and it should blend in just fine. I spray both the Gloss Black and the Floquil silvers at about 25-30 psi but you can spray at a lower pressure.

The colors are so thin that it really won't matter too much. You will want to be careful and watch for paint runs at the lower pressure. Floquil dries quickly and in an hour, it will be dry to the touch. Again, let it dry overnight if you can. This will just make it even harder.

Here are pictures of my 1/48 Hasegawa Sabre Mk.6 finished using this technique.

