

## MY TAKE ON COVERING F/F MODELS

By Mike Nassisse

A long time FAC clubster's opinions and suggestions on certain aspects of how we build and finish our models – Editor.

Modern covering materials are certainly easy to use and they are available in a rainbow of colors; this is why they are so hugely popular with today's modelers. However, for some model airplanes, particularly free flight ships, they don't seem to be the "right" thing to use for the job. Somehow, they seem inappropriate, especially for oldtimer models built from the pages of vintage modeling magazines such as Flying Aces or Air Trails. I think models of this type should be covered with old fashion colored tissue using dope, thinner and soft brushes. Done in this manner, the FAC way, the ship looks the way it was meant to look when first published. The FAC also extends this line of thinking to the covering material used on present day designs, and I think this is all to the good. This specific aspect of our branch of the hobby deserves preservation.

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There are many ways to attach tissue to the individual components of a model. Some dope the framework and then use thinner to reactivate the dope through the tissue as an adhesive. Many modelers use "white" glues thinned to about 50% with water as an adhesive. I prefer to use glue sticks such as Eimers or Scotch. These are especially easy to use, and you don't get your tissue paper positioned correctly on the first try, you can loosen them by applying isopropyl alcohol through the tissue with a brush, and then shifting the paper to its correct position. It's a great advantage, when you think about it.

When the various covered parts of a model have been finished and the adhesive has completely dried its time to shrink the tissue. Modelers who have used dope or diluted mixtures of white glue frequently use an aqueous solution of alcohol (isopropyl) for the task. Since I use glue stick, I apply ordinary tap water. Don't spray the parts until they are soaking wet, just evenly moist. Then, pin them down flat to a building board with scraps of balsa underneath to allow for air flow. Don't forget that model parts, such as wing sections and stabs, have a very strong tendency to warp as the tissue dries. I, recommend that you let them dry overnight.

For final "doping" before assembly, two options are available. Nitrate dope thinned down with cellulose thinners, or the more modern approach of mist coating with clear Krylon spray. If you use nitrate dope, apply it with thin even brush strokes and pin each part once again to your building board. A couple of coats should be adequate. Allow each coat to dry to the touch before applying the next. Remember, good ventilation is necessary when using dope. Once again, let the parts dry thoroughly before assembling the model. I use thinned down nitrate dope for my ships but, on occasion (when I'm in a hurry) I use sprayed Krylon - like nitrate dope it also seals the tissue quite well.

Trimming a model that has been covered in the above fashion, can be as simple as cutting out stripes, numbers and/or letters from the same tissue you used to cover the ship and doping them onto the model. Just position the trim where you want it on the model and dope through the tissue trim piece to adhere it in place.

Regardless of which approach you use, covering with tissue takes more time and effort than covering with plastic films. For the patient modeler, however, the sense of satisfaction in doing the job in the old traditional free flight manner is immeasurable. This is especially true when an authentic look for your finished model is important to you. Give it a try, you may find yourself getting into it the way I do. ·See you in the tall green stuff, sticksters!