Last Month's Demonstration: Making Weld Lines Using Slater's Rod

by Scott Bregi

One of the simpler ways to improve a model's detail and accuracy is to add weld lines. Welds are common and prevalent on nearly all armored vehicles from all eras. The following is Scott's method that he learned back in the 1980s but it still survives the test of time.

This technique is best for the welds found on smaller vehicle fittings or in panel corners. Check your references - the rough and thick welds of WW2 Soviet armor would require a different technique.

Materials

- Slater's Plastikard Rod in .010" diameter
- Divider, for transferring measurements from the model to the rod. Scott prefers a model from Weems & Plath because it has a locking wheel.
- Brand-new single-edge razor blade
- Precision Tweezers
- Hard surface for precise cutting
- Tamiya Extra Thin liquid cement OR Tamiya Airbrush Cleaner
- Tamiya Extra Thin Quick-Setting liquid cement

Technique

- Use the dividers to measure the length of the weld you need. You can also use a good ruler but the divider is faster.
- Cut the Slater's rod to the dimension you found by using the dividers. Cut on a hard surface with a new blade to make a clean cut without distortion. Beware that small pieces of rod may fly off after the cut breaks if you don't hold it down.
- Loosen the cap on the Quick-Setting liquid cement and then pick up the rod segment using tweezers. Use your other hand to transfer a small amount of liquid cement to the location on the model where the weld belongs.
- Immediately place the rod segment on the location wet with cement. The cement will dry in a few seconds so make sure the rod is aligned.
- After about 15 seconds or so, switch to the Extra Thin (standard set) and flood the rod with a moderate amount of cement, but not excessive. If capillary action doesn't wick the cement down the entire length of the rod, touch the dry sections with more cement. Keep a fine-tipped knife blade handy to push the rod into place, but do not do anything else to the rod. As the cement reacts with the rod it will melt and distort it in a way that mimics the look of a weld bead in real life.
- If desired, reapply liquid cement after a minute or so. It should not need any more than that.
- Apply multiple rods if that matches your references, just be careful not to apply too much cement.
- Curl the rod by gently drawing it across a sharp edge. Use this rod for curved or circular-shaped welds.
- Putting a weld on a flat panel can be done by scribing a groove first. Apply the rod as you would normally.

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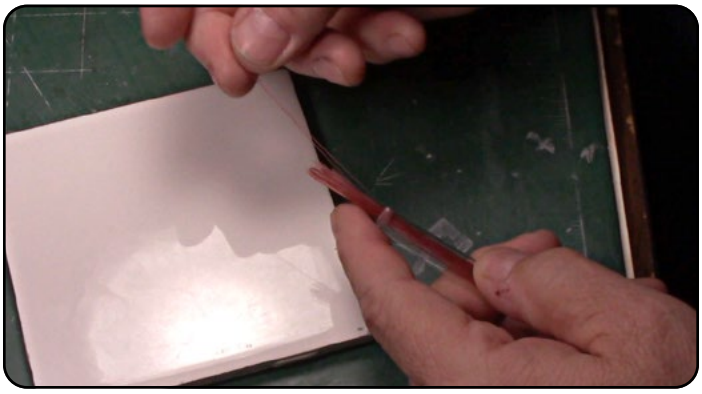

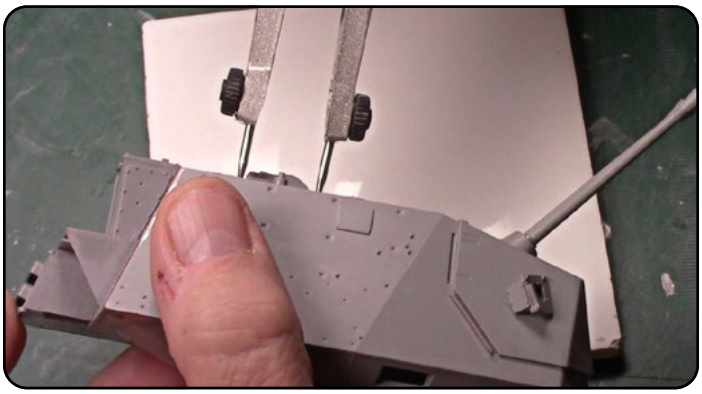
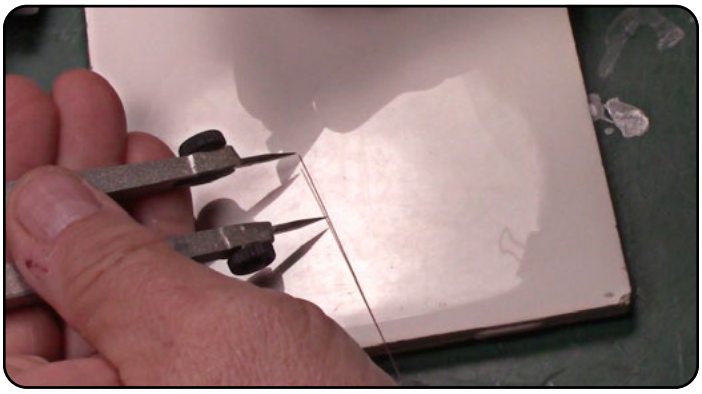
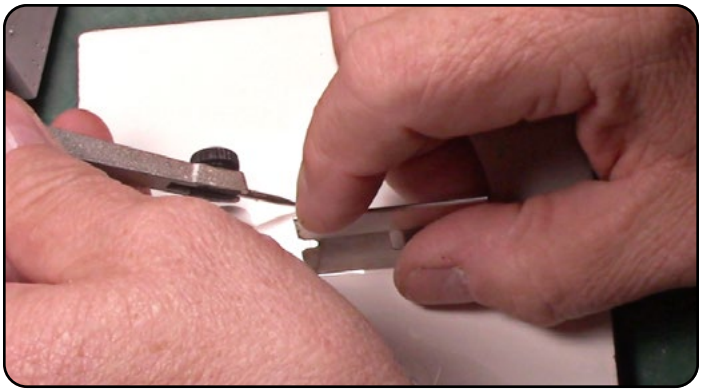
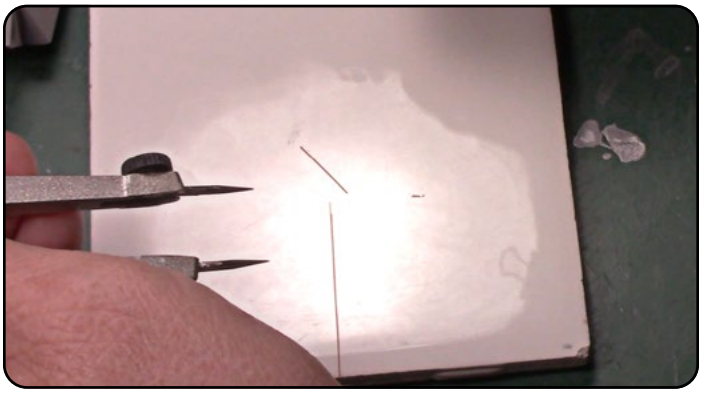
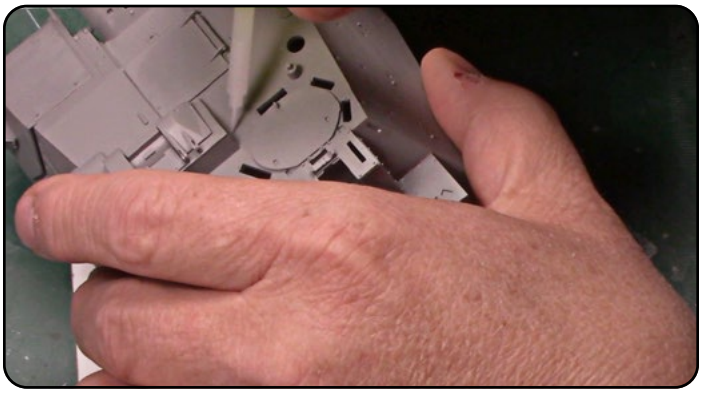
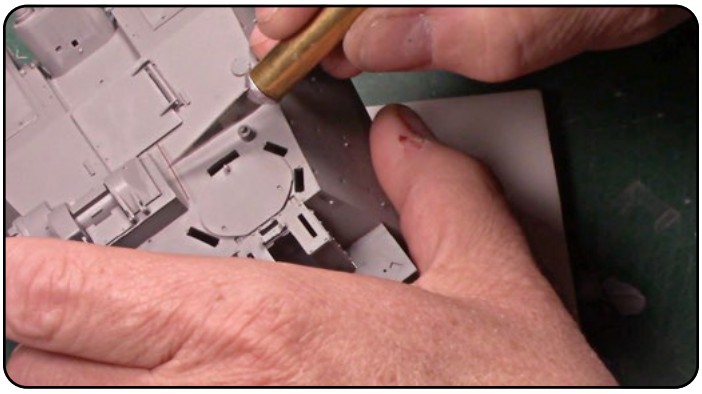

1. Scott keeps his Slaters rod is a tube to prevent damage.
2. Cut on a hard surface to avoid distorting the rod.
3. Use dividers to measure the space that needs a weld.
4. Transfer the dimension to the rod.
5. Use a single-edge razor blade for perfect cuts.
6. Cutting result.
7. Tamiya Extra Thin Quick-Set for tacking the rod.
8. Place the rod in place.

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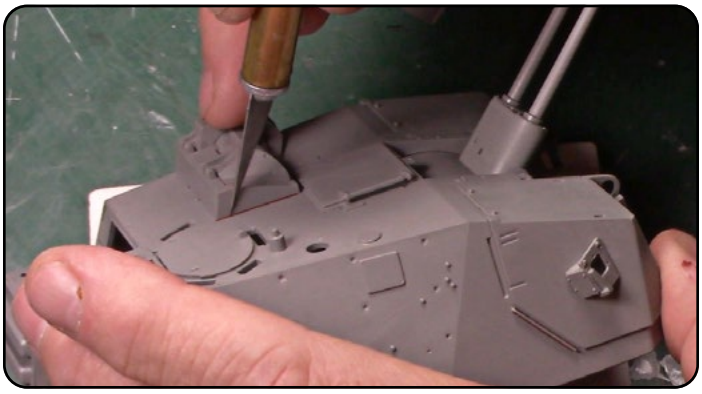
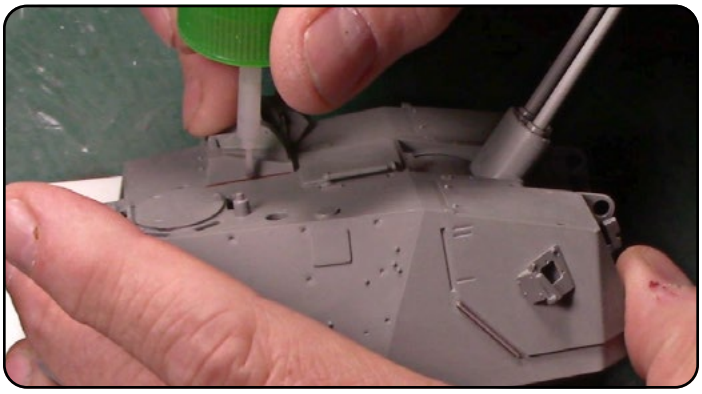
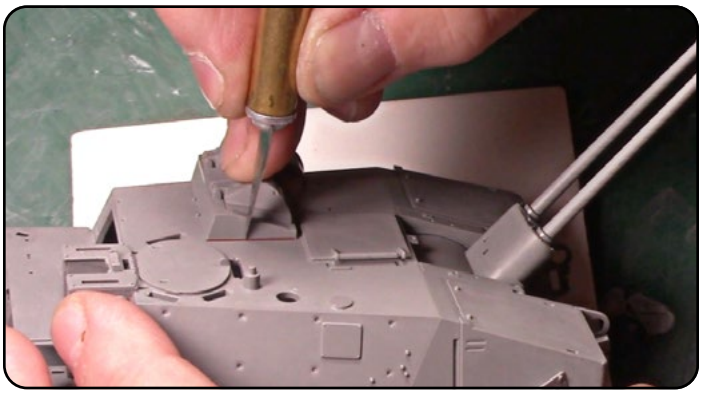

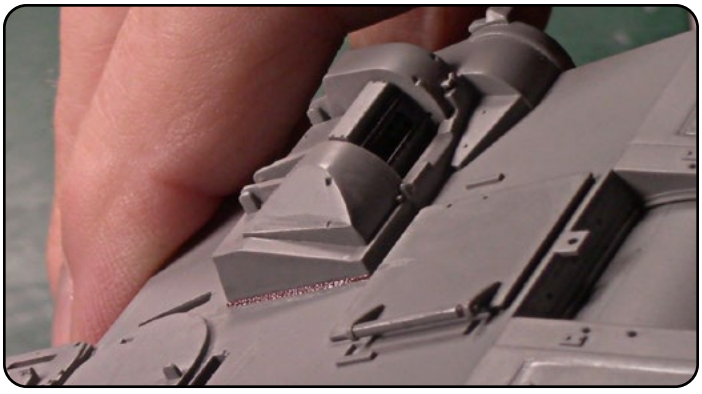
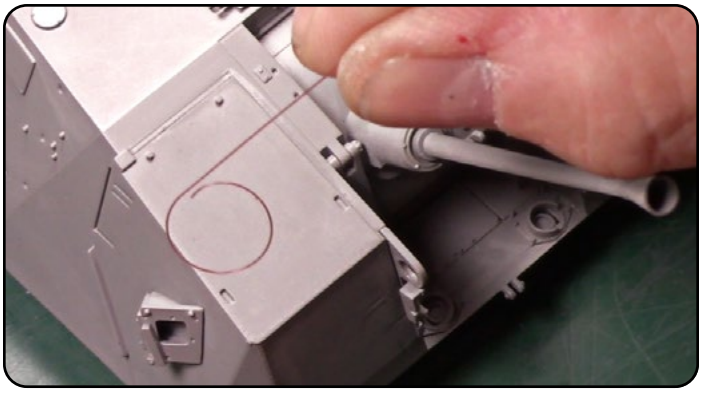
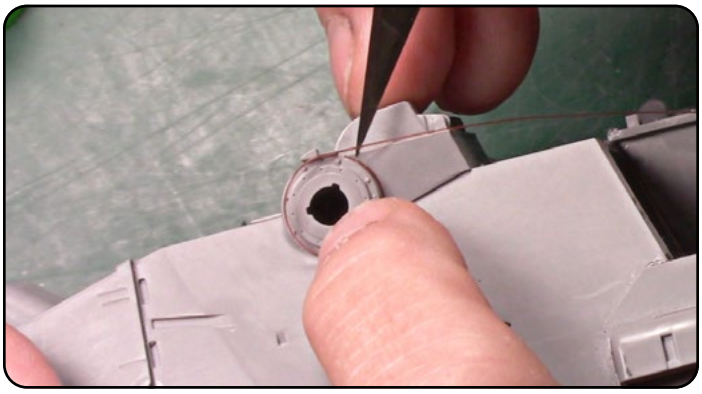


1. Position the rod and push it into the wet plastic.
2. Apply Tamiya Extra Thin liberally without brushing.
3. Check the placement again and push out any bulges.
4. Apply a second coat of cement. No more than three is sufficient.
5. Results after a few minutes of drying.
6. Curl the rod for applying around curved objects.
7. Tack as before, position and apply more cement.
8. Final result.