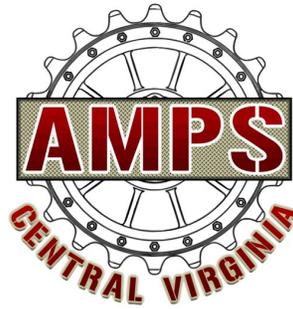# Painting Single-Piece Tracks

by Frank Blanton

Frank's method is quick and easy for steel tracks like those on U.S. Shermans and Tank Destroyers. He starts by pinning the tracks to a piece of Styrofoam and then airbrushes them Tamiya Flat Black. When completely covered, a coat of clear Flat is applied as a sealant.

Then the pigment powders come in to play. Frank likes the Light Rust color in the MIG Pigments line, but sometimes mixes two shades for a color in between. The pigments are dissolved in distilled water with a little Matte Medium added. The medium ensures the pigments stay put when they dry out. The consistency is thin, like a wash, but adjusted as necessary to paint effectively with an old brush.

When all is dry, a Prismacolor silver pencil is used to polish the wear areas that are in contact with the ground and running gear of the tank. Check references to make sure the effect is realistic. Too much sliver can look unnatural in a modeling world.
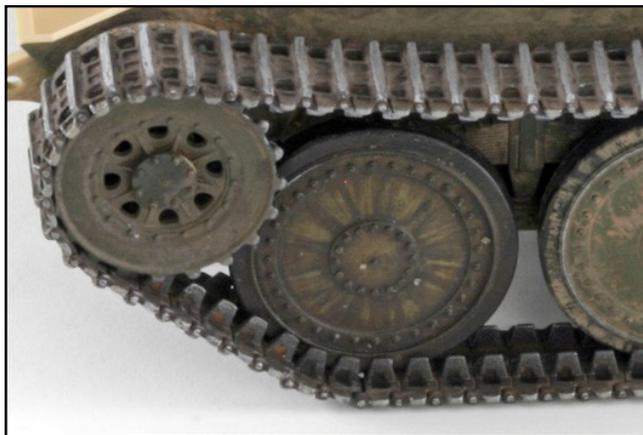
If the tracks have rubber pads or blocks, a slightly different technique is used. Instead of a thin wash of rust, a thicker mixture is used and painted around the rubber and only onto steel areas, usually the end connectors and guide teeth. The steel areas are treated as before. Sometimes an eye shadow makeup applicator is a great tool to use. Frank has recently begun to use Vallejo Oily Steel, an acrylic paint that handles very well.

NOTES FROM THE GALLERY:

- Never use enamel thinners on AFV Club separate link tracks. It will MELT the pins!

- "Walther's Goo" is a product that is like rubber cement, but stronger. It can be used on separate link tracks to get enough bite to hold but remains flexible.

- Sharpie pens now come in a metallic silver version that easily applies silver in a controlled way and seems to be very tough when dry. Then are found in Office Depot stores and of course other stores that sell office supplies.

- Pay mind to the climate the tanks operated in—rust would dominate in moist environments but not so much in desert or dry conditions. Again, check references for the time/ place your model will be depicted in.