

SNAPSHOT

SIMULATE GLASS IN MODEL AIRCRAFT INSTRUMENT PANELS

TO ADD PIZZAZZ TO A COCKPIT, simulate glass in instrument panels. Many modelers use clear paint, but that doesn't always look convincing in larger scales. Instead, try clear plastic sheet to dress up your gauges.

By Chuck Davis



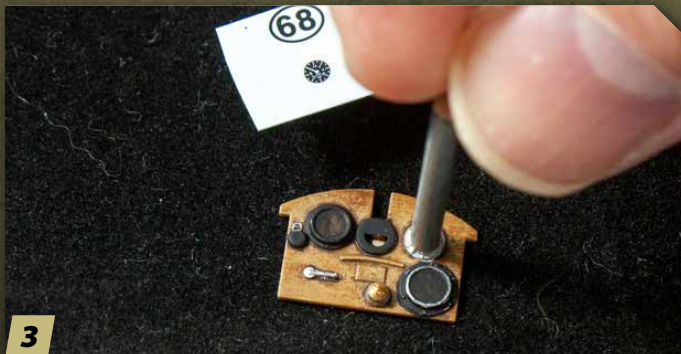
1

You'll need your favorite decal setting solution and placement tools — I find "squizzors" helpful for cutting out small decals. You'll also need a punch-and-die set, and a parts-picking pencil can be useful to handle the small gauge faces.



2

Finish your instrument panel according to your preferred method. I painted the wood grain on this Wingnut Wings 1/32 scale Sopwith Pup panel using oil paint over Tamiya Deck Tan (No. XF-55) and picked out the instrument bezels with black and metallic colors.



3

Next, select a punch that is close in size to the instrument face. If you don't have a perfect fit, find the size nearest — I usually prefer slightly larger to slightly smaller if forced to choose.



4

Insert a small portion of .005-inch clear plastic into the punch-and-die set. Sharply tap the punch with the hammer to create the "glass" part.



5

Push the punch out the back face of the die and remove the clear part. Careful, they like to run away, and are hard to spot if they get free. This is the perfect use for the part-picking pencil, which as a waxy tip that will grab the part without marring it or leaving residue.



6

Add decals to the panel per your usual technique — make sure they settle well into the bezel.

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7

Once the decals are dry and pulled down tight, prepare all the necessary gauge glass. Here, you can see the various pieces sized for each instrument.



8

As an adhesive, use clear acrylic floor gloss or your favorite gloss clear paint — Tamiya Clear (No. X-22) in this case. Place a generous dot on the instrument face decal with a toothpick or similar tool.



9

Pick up the clear part with a part-picking pencil or a precise pair of tweezers and carefully lay the glass over the correct instrument face. Tap it down to allow the clear gloss to grab it.



10

Once you've applied all of your glass, allow the instrument panel to dry thoroughly before doing anything more with it — you don't want the glass falling out!



11

Angling the panel for this photo, you can see the clear plastic simulates glass, reflecting light from each gauge. It is simple and effective, so adding glass to an instrument panel is an inexpensive way to improve any cockpit. **FSM**