

Assault on Eagle Trench

HOW IT WAS MADE

By Neil Thomson



ASSAULT ON EAGLE TRENCH: HOW IT WAS MADE Stage 1: Board Assembly

For portability it was decided to create eight boards two feet x two feet in size that would fit together to create the battlefield.

Each board consisted of a half inch thick wooden board cut to size with 50mm thick Insulation material wood glued to it.



ASSAULT ON EAGLE TRENCH: HOW IT WAS MADE

Stage 2: Sculpting of terrain

Shellholes, trenches, rivers, roads and hills were created using a half inch width chisel to cut out the features. Main features were drawn out in black pen on the insulation foam before hand to outline the areas to be dug out. Good planning is essential!

Each 2x2ft board had to interact with the others in order to contribute to the overall display.

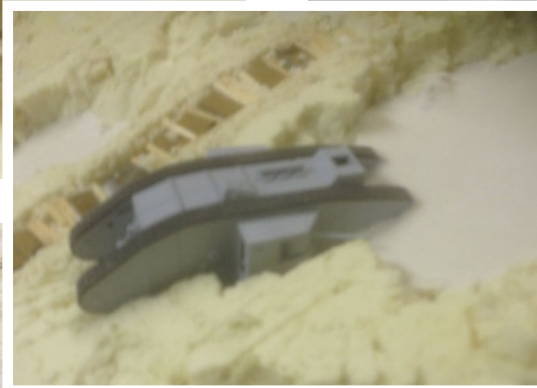
Warning! this is a very messy stage and a mask should be worn. The use of a hoover to suck up the smaller particles that would cling to the recesses was particularly useful.



ASSAULT ON EAGLE TRENCH: HOW IT WAS MADE

Stage 3: Detailing

Once the basic terrain features were created the terrain was detailed. Areas of barbed wire made from cocktail sticks and threads were created, tanks were pre built from kits and glued into position, concrete bunkers built from capaboard were fitted, various assorted wreckage, artillery and the duckboard tracks made from cardboard were fitted and wood glued into position. The most time consuming part of the whole model was the detailing of the trenches and bunkers. Coffee stirrers and cardboard was used for the sides, held in by matches and cocktail sticks. Thicker wooden BBQ skewers and sandbags made from modelling clay were ideal to detail the lips of the trenches.



ASSAULT ON EAGLE TRENCH: HOW IT WAS MADE

Stage 4: Sealing/Water effects

The whole model had a first coat of sealer applied.

This is a mixture of wood glue and water.

The shell holes and river features were created by pouring Plaster of Paris into the recesses created during the sculpting phase.

It was important to keep the Plaster of Paris as level and smooth as possible in order for it to contrast with the broken terrain of the ground.

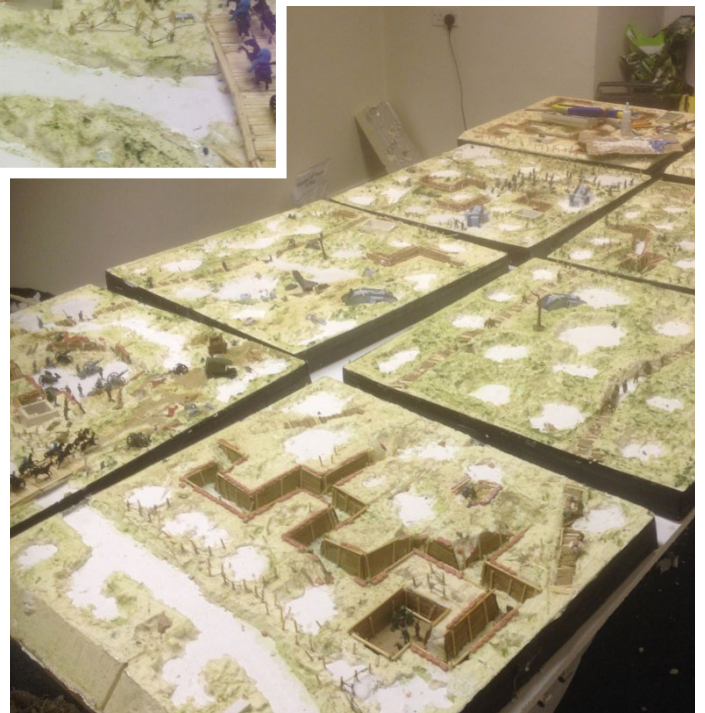


ASSAULT ON EAGLE TRENCH: HOW IT WAS MADE

Stage 5: Figure Placement/texturing

Unpainted figures were glued to the boards in appropriate and imaginative positions.

An additional wood glue/water mix was applied to the boards mixed with fine grains of sand in order to create surface texture.



ASSAULT ON EAGLE TRENCH: HOW IT WAS MADE

Stage 6: Further Detailing - Duckboards

Another layer of wood glue/water/sand mix was applied by brush in order to build up the surface texture and seal the model. It was also decided to add duckboards to the floor of the trenches in order for greater authenticity.

These were assembled from coloured lolly sticks (similar to coffee sticks) in two or three inch lengths and glued into the trenches. (The actual duckboards were created in a similar way and carried into the trenches).



ASSAULT ON EAGLE TRENCH: HOW IT WAS MADE

Stage 7: Undercoating

A layer of black undercoat was applied.



ASSAULT ON EAGLE TRENCH: HOW IT WAS MADE Stage 8: Painting/finish!

The rewards from the painstaking preparation were begun to be realised during the painting stage which brought the model to life.

The Passchendaele battlefield was predominately one colour; brown so it was important to colour differentiate between the main features of water, mud, and trenches. The water was painted a very dark brown with lighter brown swirls drybrushed in swirling circles towards the edges.

The water effect was completed with gloss varnish. The mud was created from a mix of yellow, green and black and was intended to look vile! and be a sickly yellow colour. The wood was meant to contrast against the earth and was more of a reddy brown. Figures, tanks, artillery, ruins, trenches received a dark brown wash and the whole model was then drybrushed a buff colour.

