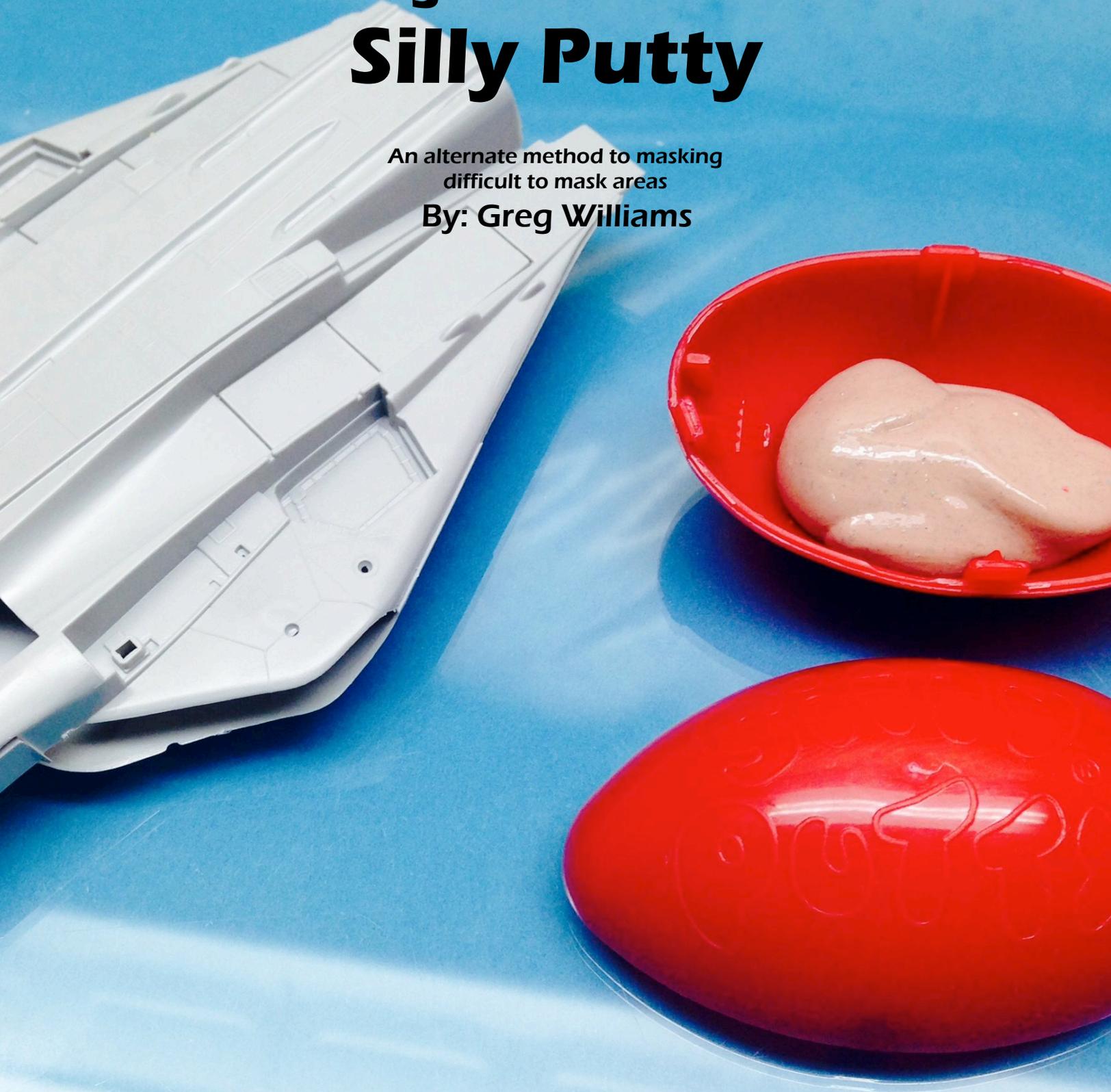


# Masking wheel wells with **Silly Putty**

An alternate method to masking  
difficult to mask areas

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Ever have a difficult area on your model to mask? Have you detailed a recessed area on your model like wheel wells and say to yourself, "how in heck am I going to mask that!" Well, I've been there myself over the years and learned a few tricks along the way that helped solve this dilemma on many occasions. If you are like me, I sometimes desire to, or maybe I have already painted and detailed recessed areas, like aircraft wheel wells and I want to protect them and keep them masked so as to go on to painting and airbrushing the rest of the aircraft. As apposed to trying to paint these areas after the main and secondary colour coats have been applied. I've tried that

previously in the past, and I have always found it difficult to keep overspray from ruining the main fuselage colours. Enter Silly Putty!

I have to give credit where its due in discovering this awesome (now) tool of my workshop...my daughter. I was toy shopping for her and she wanted Silly Putty to play with. While home watching how she molded it, formed it around intricate edges and pressed it into recessed areas of her other toys..it hit me! I wondered how it could be used for scale modelling in similar ways. I went back to the toy store and purchased a few eggs of the stuff and went to work, experimenting with spare kits.

I laid it over the painted models surface; I noticed that it was tacky, but didn't pull off the underlying colour coat! Nice. I pressed it into recesses with my fingers and noticed that when the putty was mashed against an edge, it formed against that edge perfectly and didn't warp, droop or move...woah. Now where getting somewhere! I tried the same thing, this time with a sculpting tool to press the Putty against the edges and bingo, I got a sharp, cleanly masked edge and the Putty stayed put inside the recess! Awesome. I practiced with my scale models over the years and It became one of my favourite methods for masking wheel wells, exhaust cans, canopy interiors; just about any recessed areas where appropriate.

Let me show you how its done with Silly Putty to mask the wheel well on an Italeri® F-14A kit I was working on.



Figure #1



Figure #2



Figure #3

Lets just say for example sake you just airbrushed, otherwise painted and detailed the wheel well of this F-14 Tomcat and you're ready to mask and protect it as you go on to paint the fuselage. (Figure #1) Get a portion of the Silly Putty and stretch it out to approx. the size of the area you want to mask, in this case the starboard wheel well. (Figure #2) \*Silly Putty cuts very cleanly with a hobby knife as well. Squish the Putty into the wheel well recess enough to discover or establish the edges. (Figure #3) Now, with a small, flat spatula-type sculpting tool (a putty knife works well) refine the edge by firmly burnish along the wheel well edges to remove excess Putty. (Figure #4)

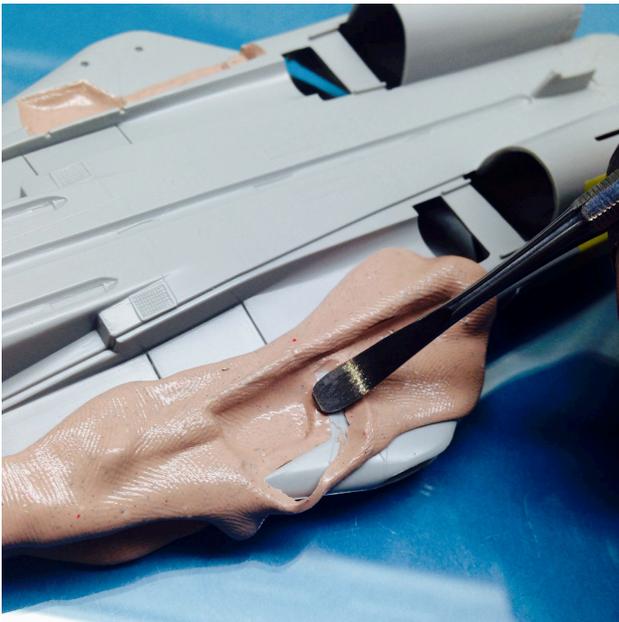


Figure #4

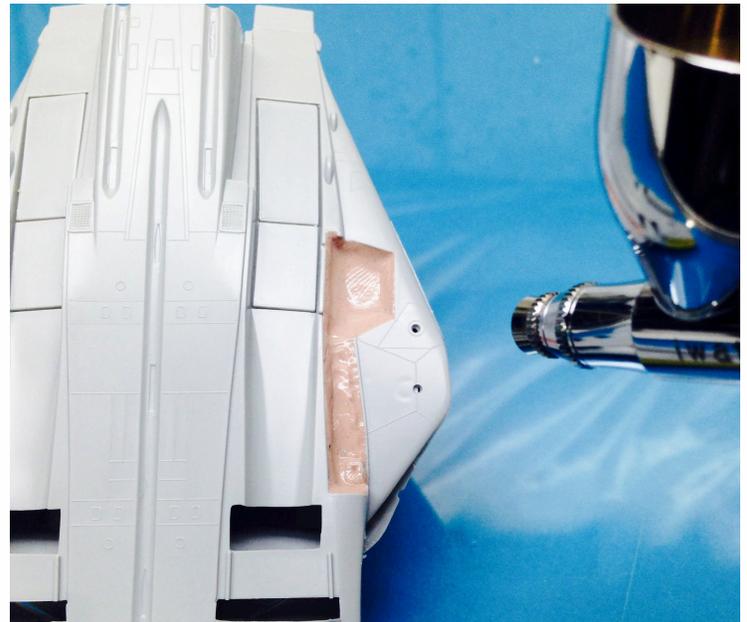


Figure #5

Doing this leaves a perfectly masked wheel well and you're ready to go ahead and paint the rest of the model (Figure #5)

Don't worry if to don't get it right the first try. Just grab up the Putty and re-apply and try again, and again, and again! I've found that it's best to airbrush the subsequent colour coats from here, as brush painting could dislodge the Putty and inadvertently distort the masked edges. I usually leave the Putty in place until after decaling the model and I'm ready to attach the landing gear.



**After finally removing the Silly Putty, it will have several layers of paint, gloss coats and etc. I discard the Putty and I'm done.**

