Painting your pilot figure starts with a good bond seam. My figures are formed with a

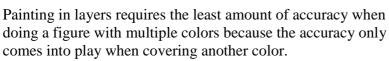
shim under the mold and are perfectly matched. Over sanding the figure to release it from the part sheet can upset this match up. So sanding the back of the part sheet until the plastic becomes thin then completing with a light cut along the edge of the figure is the best way to trim the figure.



To bond the figure apply a thin pool of glue to a flat surface and dip the edges in the glue and align the edges. You will have plenty of time for

alignment before it dries all the way. Give the seam overnight to dry so the plastic will be hard enough to scrape away seam flashing. (The small ridge) On pilots with helmets a little plastic filler will give you a

smooth paintable surface. Add a coat of good primer and you are ready to paint the figure.



This method does require the paint coats to dry completely though. Plots with helmets have better results with spray painting the helmet for a good brush free gloss paint job. The

next step is to paint the flesh tone color. You only have to be careful around the edge of the helmet here. For pilots with hair or leather helmets just brush on the desired skin tone.











When painting another color and portion of the figure, paint the color separation line first and then fill the space inbetween. When painting hair, use a coarse brush and paint away from the face to produce an uneven hair line. Stroking the brush as the paint dries and thickens will leave a hair texture behind. Adding streaks of gray is done with a dry brush applied in multiple strokes. Practicing on another surface until you get a feel for it is suggested.











When you are painting glossy surfaces like goggles or a face shield with a paint brush go ahead and do the borders with brush strokes but fill the middle by dabbing a heavy coat of paint to allow it to flow into a smooth surface. You may have to hold the painted surface upside-down for a while and allow the paint to dry a bit so the paint won't run. Be sure to give it plenty of time to dry to prevent finger prints in the glossy surface. If the helmet color is changing the color of your face shield you have not allowed sufficient time for the helmet paint to dry.

The eyes may be the most important aspect to painting a figure and gives it a personality. Start with painting an almond shaped white glossy dot for each eye, and follow it up with a colored dot for the iris. Be careful to have them pointed in about the same direction. In the center of the iris a black dot about 1/3 the size of the iris is added as the pupil. Use flesh tone paint and paint over the edges of the eye to define the eye lid shape. Light strokes with a eyebrow pencil or slightly dried out sharpie marker does a fine job marking eyebrows and lashes on larger figures.









For open cockpit pilots you might want to apply a little dirt to the face of your figure; it adds depth to the cheeks and gives it that touch you normally don't see in a pilot figure.

Cut a piece of paper to match the curve of the bottom of the goggles and hold it in position. Scribble pencil led on a page and rub your finger in it then apply it lightly to the cheeks. Don't over do it; if you can tell it has been applied before you remove the masking paper you have applied too much. Don't forget to apply clear gloss to the goggle lenses for the glass look. A thin coat of clear epoxy works well too but is hard to apply.



The torso is perhaps the largest portion of a pilot figure but thankfully may have the least amount of detail. Being the least visible portion of the figure when mounted; choosing a contrasting color to the cockpit helps it to stand out. Flat paints are generally used however satin paint should be used on leather coats and life vests. Painting a torso in layers moves along rather quickly, starting with the largest portion like the shirt gives you the widest variety of ways to hold it while the details are added.

Next would be a life vest or gloves being careful not to paint the shirt, and the same applies when painting the shoulder straps.





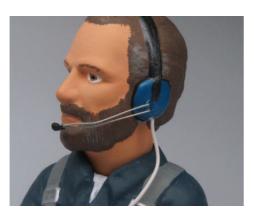


Shirt buttons are typically just a few shades off of the shirt color so mixing another color with the shirt paint is all that's needed. Adding a "T" shirt, rank insignia or perhaps a pencil in the pocket will only add to the torsos realism.



Painted wire added to the figure takes them over the top. Telephone wire or solder can be used for headphone leads and helps "tie in" the pilot to the airplane. In the case of this jet pilot a 10 gauge wire is used as an oxygen tube. When the tip of hobby knife is rotated against the plastic a tapered hole is formed and will hold the wire in place unless you overdo it. Bending a wire this size requires several test fits.

A head set microphone can be made with a bent wire as well and the microphone is made by simply dipping the wire in solder and smashing it flat after it has cured halfway.







Layer painting is easy enough for an average artist like my self however people like my friend Doug Cohen can bring it to a whole new level through shading and washes. This is a perfect example of how an identical figure can be made to look so different through the colors chosen and the ability to mix colors properly.