

Clear Doped Linen Technique - Paul Carpenter

I have been asked to write something for the modellers in our society which will be of interest to those of you who, like me, cannot afford their own replica aircraft factory and so are forced to content ourselves with the next best thing.

My passion is for aircraft of the Australian Flying Corps, but rather than bother you with my particular interest, I hope this will be of interest to the broader membership.

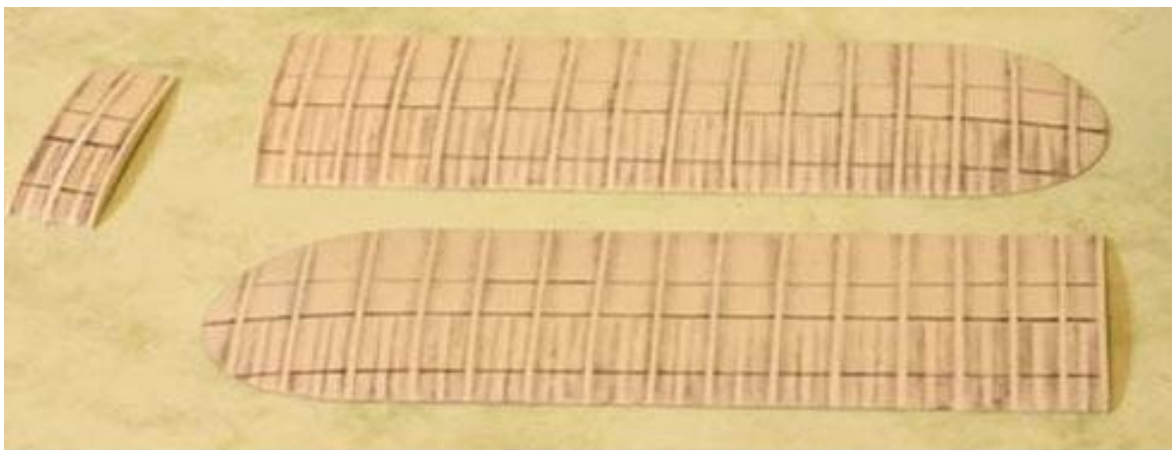
Clear Doped Linen (CDL) is basically a creamy white colour which, if applied to a model as a single layer of paint, lacks a certain something. This is how I go about making a more interesting finish and if it looks like something which would look good on your models, give it a try! I will outline techniques you can use if you have an airbrush or if you use a good old fashioned paint brush.

For wings there are two effects I try to reproduce. Firstly, rib tapes on the upper surfaces of wings and secondly, the shadow of ribs cast on the lower surface by the sun. This second effect is often seen in photographs of all-over CDL aircraft.

I start off with a basic coat of creamy white. French CDL is more yellow than British, so mix yourself up something which suits the country of origin.

For the upper surfaces, mask each rib with a thin strip of masking tape to depict the rib tape. If you are using a normal paint brush to paint your models, crush yourself up some medium brown pastel chalk. (You can get these from any art store and most big newsagents.) With a stubby, chisel shaped paint brush, 'paint' this chalk dust by brushing strokes along the rib tape trying to 'feather' the edges into a gradual colour transition. Remove the masking tape and voila! Experiment with how much pastel you apply to get the result you want. Seal the whole thing with a coat of satin clear varnish to seal the deal.

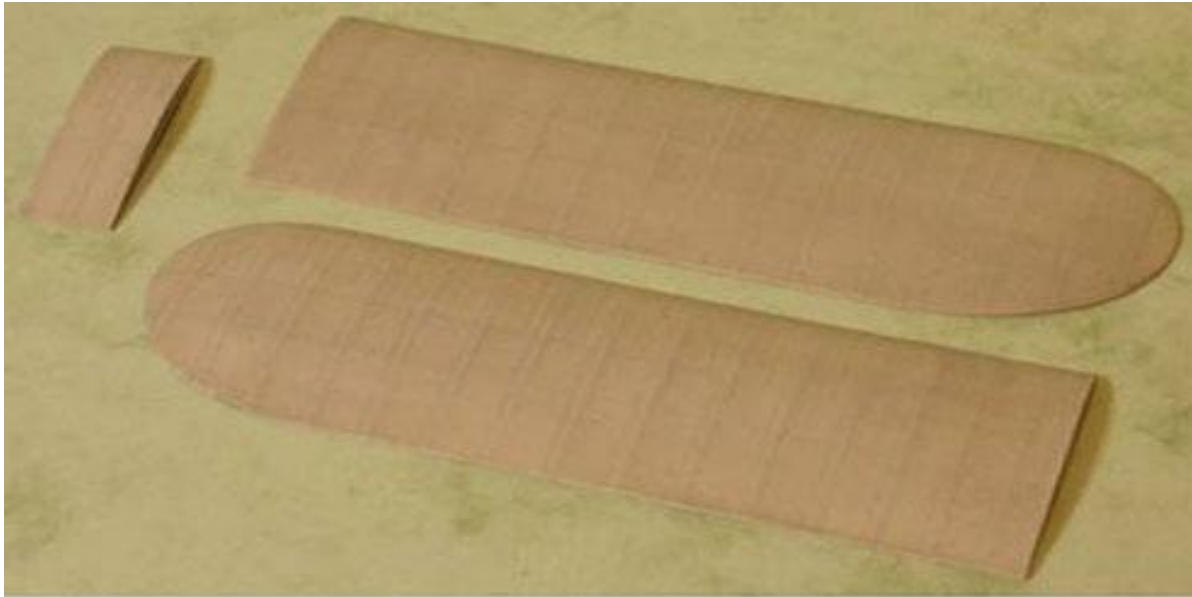
For Airbrush users, you can do the same thing as above only apply a lot more pastel, or spray these areas in with your airbrush to get the desired feathering. You can use black or very dark brown for this process. You may also mark in any wing spars or other such structures that you wish to show at this stage. These are best done by masking either side of the proposed spar and painting in with solid colour.



Wing upper surfaces pre-shaded with pastel chalks.

Once done, remove the masking tape and overspray with your chosen mix of CDL. Keep this coat thin enough to enable you to just see the pastel/airbrush shading underneath.

After this, I weather the CDL to give it some age. A very thin wash of sepia drawing ink over all will dirty up the finish – try not to let the ink pool too heavily or you will get watermarks which spoil the effect. When this is dry, I dry brush the entire wing with Titanium white artist's oil paint.



Wing upper sections after overspraying with CDL mix, a sepia ink wash and dry brushing with titanium white oil paint.

On CDL lower surfaces, the ribs are masked out the same way as the wing spars detailed above ie mask either side of the ribs and spars and paint in solid colour.

On the lower surface of an aircraft with an overall CDL finish, photo's taken on a sunny day will show that the upper wing cockade is visible on the lower surface of said wing.

This too can be rendered in pastels as per the picture on the left. Mask over the ribs so that the red and blue do not cover them and then mark out very faint circles with a normal draftsman's compass. Shading doesn't require a hard edge as we are trying to represent a diffused projection of the upper cockade

Experimenting is what modelling is all about – so give it a go! If you have any questions, don't hesitate to drop me a line. Carpo1@iprimus.com.au

Paul Carpenter

PS. 10 points if you can guess the aircraft to which the wings at the top of the article belong to.

All photos courtesy of Paul Carpenter.

