

THE M3 HEAVY PLASMA RIFLE: HOW COOL IS YOUR NERF GUN???

■ BY STEVE VANDEMON



THE STOCK GUN

One thing I have always loved is science fiction movies and TV, and the main reason is the special effects and cool props. Most people are unaware that in quite a few productions, everyday, readily available items are commonly used. Sometimes these props are heavily modified or cleverly disguised simply with paint. For instance, Steven Spielberg's *Terra Nova* used Nerf guns for many of the weapons in the show.

One of George Lucas' greatest contributions to the genre was giving us a universe that looked "lived in." One of the most amazing things from *Star Wars* was when we first saw the Millennium Falcon as kids thinking it was the most incredible spaceship, and all Luke says is "What a piece of junk."

The awesome thing about painting a Nerf gun is that they already have amazing design and details. You can modify them very easily with different odds and ends, but for this tutorial I kept the emphasis on the paint. They're also relatively cheap, and when you're finished you can shoot your friends!



STEP 1

First, I scuffed the entire surface with a red Scotch-Brite pad.



STEP 2

Using an Iwata Eclipse-C, I sprayed a heavy coat of Wicked Black over everything. The Wicked sticks to this plastic like nothing I've ever seen, no primer or sealer required!



STEP 3

After drying the paint with a heat gun for a few seconds, I covered all areas I wanted to remain black with 3M tape. CAUTION: The heat gun can easily warp the plastic, so be careful here.



STEP 4

I sprayed all exposed areas with three coats of Wicked Opaque Red.



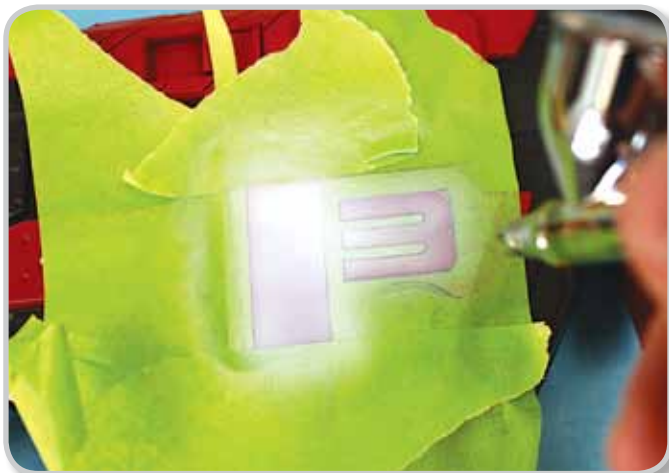
STEP 5

After removing the tape, I hand brushed all the parts I wanted silver using regular enamel model paint.



STEP 6A

Here, I added some numbers and details by simply hand-drawing the number and a cross-hatch design onto tape and cut it out.



STEP 6B

I airbrushed white.



STEP 6C

I protected the number with tape and airbrushed yellow to the open area.



STEP 6D

I taped off some cross lines and sprayed a thinned black.



STEP 7

After the details were finished, I stippled the whole thing and shaded the edges of the red and silver areas with Wicked Detail Black.



STEPS 8A & 8B

Returning to the silver I used a broad lettering quill for dry-brushing. If you haven't done this before, all you do is dip the brush in paint and remove most of it on a towel so when you rub the brush across the surface it will show only on the raised areas.





STEP 8C

This close-up shows the desired effect.



STEP 9

Another cool effect is "chipping," which is achieved by brushing in little gouges and scratches with a fine brush. It's very easy to do and is pretty convincing.



STEP 10

Last, I added a bit of Wicked Transparent Red-Oxide to a few areas to create a scorched effect.



FINAL DETAIL 1

So there you have it, a cool sci-fi weapon that has obviously seen some serious action. It took about three-and-one-half hours to complete, it was all fun (my kids love these), and it still fires!



FINAL DETAIL 2

Till next time, Steve Vandemon... ■



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Steven James Vandemon, born and raised in Southern California, is best known for his insane graphics and flames on hot rods and choppers. Having absolutely no formal art education, Steve has developed a unique approach to his work, which is seen and known worldwide. Using various faux finishing techniques and unorthodox drawing and painting methods, he has developed a style that is quickly identifiable. In addition to custom paint work, Steve is also noted for his paintings and sculptures. For more information or commissions, you may reach Mr. Vandemon at steve@vandemon.com.