

Notes on using *Archer's* Surface Detail Decals

Modelers familiar with our modeling are probably aware by now that for *The Boy's at the Clearwater Car Shops* harvesting rivets from an *Athearn* 40-foot boxcar or 50-foot gondola—be it 3 or 300—is not a big deal. We are willing to do this because we are remorseless *rivet counters* and because in so many cases the rivets being harvesting are destined for small areas and groupings like gusset plates. Asked frequently why we continue to harvest rivets when now **Archer's** sell their Rivet Decals, we do it because we are much faster harvesting and placing individual styrene rivets than we are cutting each rivet, placing it in water, lifting it from the water, getting the rivet off the paper and then finally placing the individual rivet decal.

However we also use the *Archer Surface Detail* rivet decals but with these we use them for lines or courses of rivets. Archer also sells something called *Aircraft Panel Line* decals in three sizes for the various scales of model airplane kits. We have used the narrowest of these items to model weld lines for a couple of projects. Other surface products include tread plate and louvers. In the course of using these surface details we have learned some things that might help other modelers so we offer you these tips based on what The Shops have learned to date. Here goes.

—We use a pair of *Fiskars* “EasyAction” 5-inch Micro-Tip scissors for cutting the decals. They are very sharp and easy to make straight cuts with. A spring opens them and the grips are very comfortable.

—We have found the clear Acrylic floor finish from the *S. C. Johnson and Son* company, the name of which always seems to be flux that we call “Future/Pledge whatever they call it now,” to be a very reliable substrate over which to apply Archer's surface details, particularly on unpainted styrene and resin. We brush this on by hand in a couple of thin coats. It dries quickly. After we have “set” the decals, we brush on another coat or two of this floor finish to provide a protective coat when washing with *Dawn* detergent and then when I slosh on 91% Isopropyl Alcohol just before painting.

—The clear carrier film Archer uses is very thin and barely perceptible once it is set in place w/*Microsol*, their red label product. We did not know this when we started and tried to cut the decals very

closely. This is not necessary and actually makes applying the decals more difficult because the clear film helps to keep the decals straight.

—Both the Blue and Red label *Microscale* decal solutions work perfectly with *Archer's*.

—We find that it takes just a few seconds for the adhesive used to hold the decal to the paper backing to release so we lift it out before the backing releases in the water. Release time may vary.

—It is important to pay attention to which side is up.

The Boys



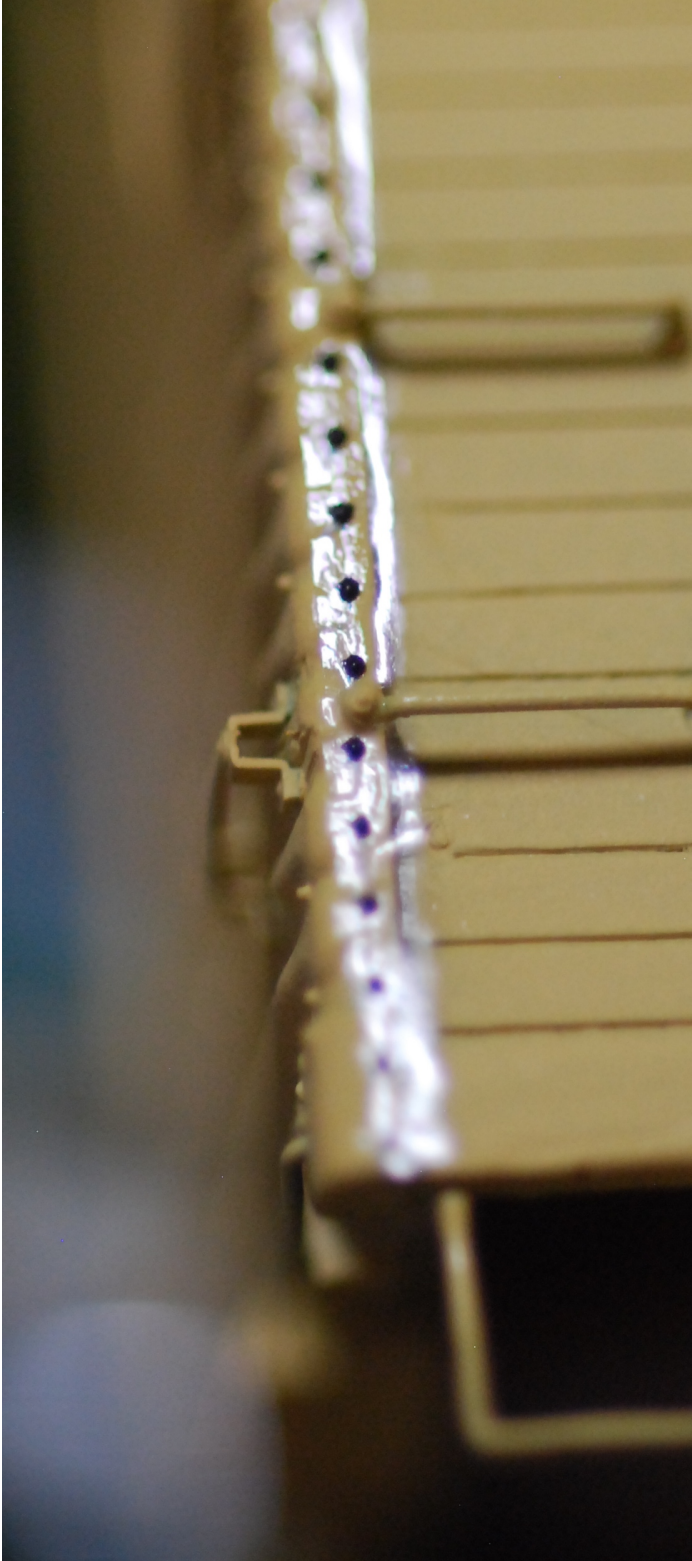
Fiskars "Easy Action" scissors.



Experimenting to
create a uniquely
riveted car side.



Here is a WABASH *War Emergency* boxcar with two courses of Archer rivets in place. Harvested rivets are in place of the diagonal braces. Notice how the carrier film virtually disappears.



Here is the Carrier Film before applying the setting solution. This is an example of how much film can be left when cutting the decals.



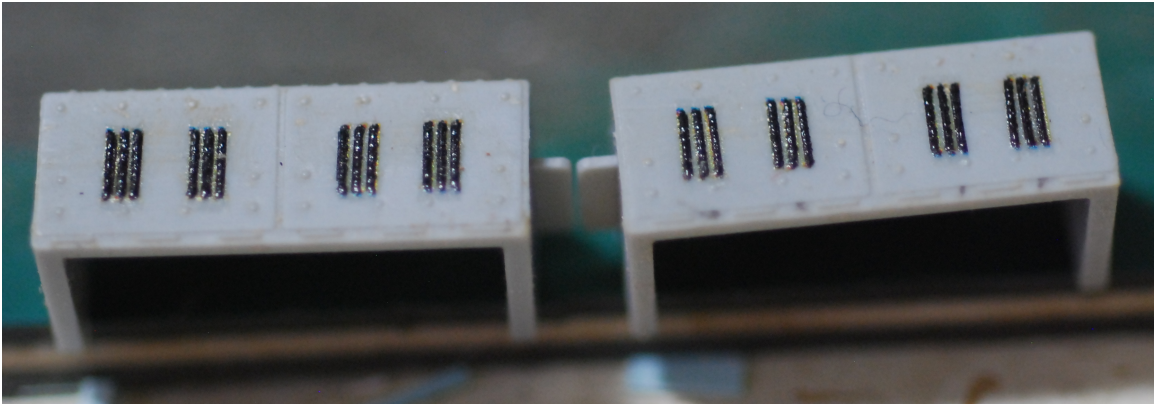
The Carrier Film virtually disappears when the setting solution is applied and allowed to do its work. The Acrylic Floor Finish has been applied to protect the decals.



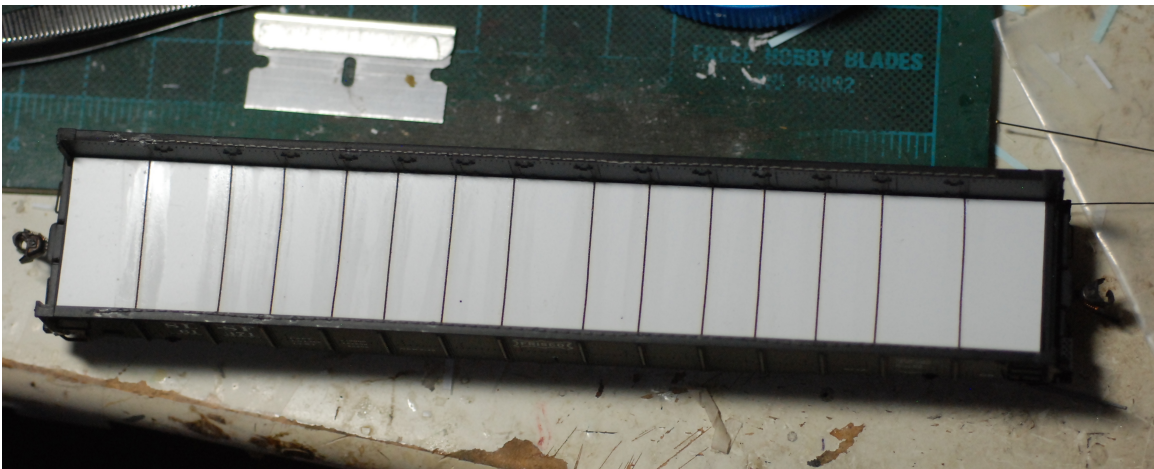
When applied the rivets appear larger than they do when they are painted with the final coat.



With the application of paint the rivets are transformed.



We have gradually been building two Phase I Tennessee Central ALCO RS-3 diesels and used some of the Archer Louvers to correct the Battery Boxes.



We created a new “welded” floor for a Frisco or SL-SF 52-foot *Greenville* gondola based on the *Life-Like Proto 2000* model using the narrowest or smallest *Archer* “Aircraft Panel Line” decals to represent the welded joints.

#