

Ultra Simple Engine Miniature Engagements USE ME

UM010

USE ME SUPPORT PACK TERRAIN BUILDING ARTICLE

**WRITTEN BY
Kurt Benson**

**Published By
Alternative Armies**

What is this Article

In the pages that follow you will see images from Kurt Benson's (author of UM010 USE ME Support Pack) personal terrain collection. These images match up with captions and also with the Terrain Building section of the UM010 Support Pack title.

Methods, materials and more are outlined for the construction of hills, mesa's, roads and other terrain. This free article can be used on its own but it is better used with a copy of 'Support Pack' and the pages on Terrain Building which go into full detail of the projects. Combine both together and you are ready for some scenic fun!

The decision was taken to publish the Terrain Building Article for free separately to the print and PDF editions of UM010 because of the limitations of space. You can get many more free files for USE ME by email request from 15mm.co.uk or by visiting Barking Irons Online where they can be viewed and downloaded directly.

Credits

Written by: Kurt Benson
Additional Writing by: G.B Syme
Internal Backdrop by: E. Jackson Photos by: K.Benson

All Rights Reserved 2012 (Electronic Edition)

15mm.co.uk, PO Box 8207, Girvan, Ayrshire
Scotland KA26 0YB
+44 (0)1465841677 sales@15mm.co.uk

'Dedicated to the poor sods who had to live it.' - Kurt Benson

15MM
CO.UK

15mm.co.uk

The 15mm.co.uk brand is a part of the world famous Alternative Armies company. The company publishes more than a dozen titles in the miniature gaming hobby including Flintloque, Slaughterloo, Firefight, Typhon, Alien Squad Leader, USE ME and many more. The vast majority of these titles are published in print and support by ranges of 28mm and 15mm scale white metal miniatures. In business since 1991 we have twenty years of experience dedicated to bringing you all the small scale fun you can handle!

We are now releasing a selected number of our titles in full and ease print PDF format for instant purchase and download. You can learn all about us and our team of splendid fellows at: www.alternative-armies.com & www.15mm.co.uk



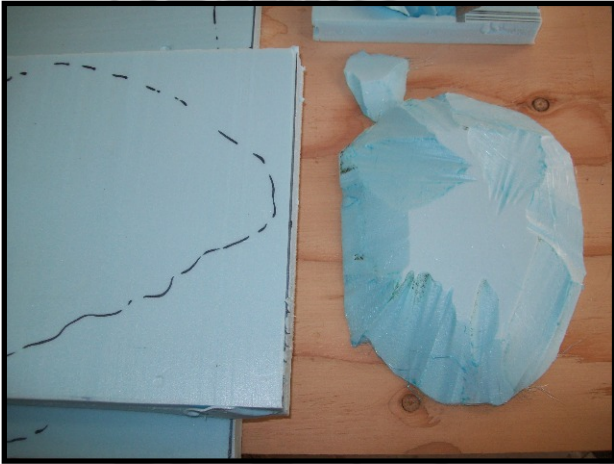
USE ME Booklets

If you would like to get a copy of this title and the others in the series in print then you can do so by visiting the USE ME page of the 15mm.co.uk website.

BUILDING THE TERRAIN PROPS

In the pictures which follow observe the images and refer to the captions which accompany them for additional information. Each set of pictures is referenced to the correct part of the Terrain Building section of the **UM010 Support Pack** title. Use the pictures and captions to add to the instructions given in the book (either print or PDF version).

The Hill 01



One of the smaller hills with the edge as cut by the hot knife. Rather than using the edge of the table to bind the lower edge I used the tape to control the top and free handed the bottom edge by trying to keep it at the corner. Not always spot on but the variance could be taken care of by sanding.

A 180 grit sanding block breaks the surface a bit but adds texture. Any coarser than that and the soft foam gets really beat up. The pattern left by the hot knife is eased but not eradicated. Practice will make for smoother edges.

A coat of water based house paint or sealer primer will protect the foam from damage and enamel paints from spray cans. A thin coat is not always a sufficient protection and make sure the latex dries before applying other paints.

Some plain old pine sawdust scrubbed between the hands and dusted over the wet paint. The wet paint works fine as glue for the sawdust.

The edge was painted with a dark green and the centre with some goblin green spray paint. You can see that the edge was etched a bit by the enamel indicating a too thin latex coat. You can fill it with flock to cover the error or treat it as I did a happy accident for more texture. The same happened later in the mesa edge and the edge looks like inclusions in the rock, as a geologist I though it looked kind o' cool.

The Mesa 01



Prior to painting make sure multi-forms fit together. The mesa has steep sides that don't need a lot of sanding to smooth. The tops were painted with a camouflage -khaki after the latex coat.

A scrap piece of wood is laid on the hills to paint the edges. A ruddy brown metal primer gives a beautiful stone edge on the foam. If you are good at pointing the can you can get by with just skirting the edge and spray-over from a bit of paint is just an effect bonus.



The 3rd level had a bit of a lip detail carved into it as another layer of rock. A light pass with the khaki camouflage adds to the illusion. Any white showing through is not really an issue for the quality of the results, it happens in nature all the time with hydrothermal deposits, leeching, all sorts of things add to the results we try for and get by surprise.

The tops were washed with a mix of one part white wood glue to one part water. A bag of play sand set me back \$3.50 and gives me enough desert sand flock and small rock for 100 times the terrain I am building. The play sand was sorted with a cheap kitchen strainer from the dollar store.



The top of the mesa was flocked with a bit of sawdust and turf flock as well as the sand as well being not quite as steep. The area on top can allow a squad of 15mm to deploy there or a helicopter to land. As a house rule I will probably limit access to units with certain combat specialties; commando, sniper, forward observer, and scout. It will take one action to ascend one level so two turns to get to the top. The layers can be stacked in several ways, 1-2 and 3-4 as two short buttes or 1-3 and 2-4 as volcanic plugs in a remnant volcano.

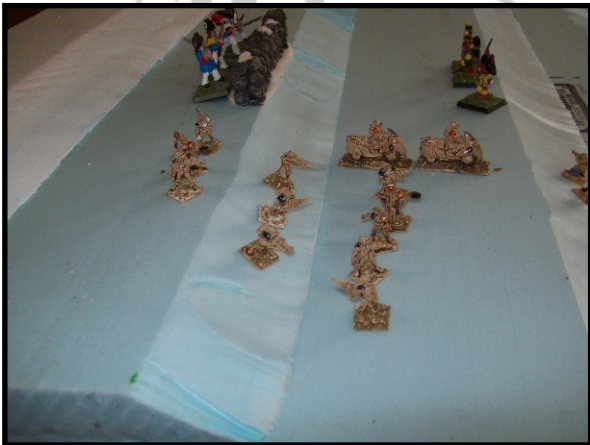
Eased Slope Edges

The eased slope edges should allow a figure to stand. A 1:2 drop works for 15mm and most 28mm but some taller 28mm figures need a 1:3 slope to stand

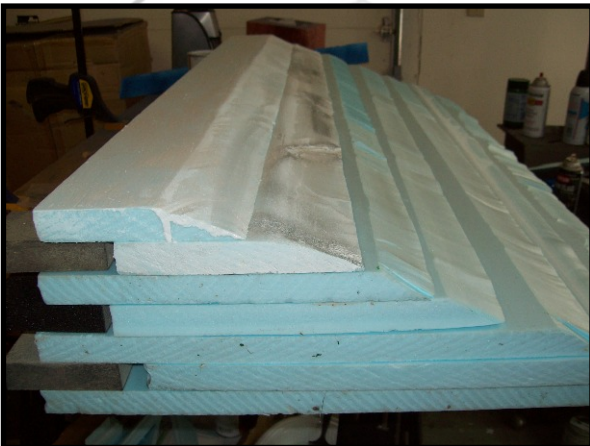
The slope material from one sheet of 4x8 foot sheet of foam insulation

Cutting the painter's tape to vary the edge varies the slope drop but gives some interest to the edge. The hot knife was run against the tape and the edge of the board I had it on.

Drag on the hot knife makes for a sloppy edge but that's okay, perfection in nature only happens when humans interfere. Hang on to some of the scrap material for odd bits. The detail on the waterfall and the cap piece on the two 6" slopes placed back to back to make a ridge were from the eased edge scraps.



The play sand I bought for flocking the terrain was a bit damp at first so I opened the bag and let it dry thoroughly. The pebbles sifted out of the sand were a bonus as you will see later.



Tools

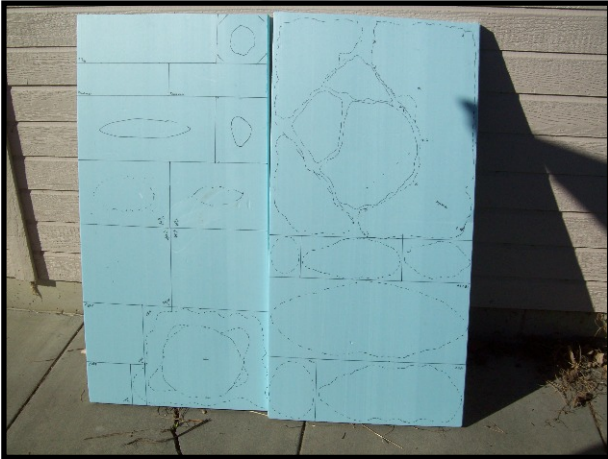
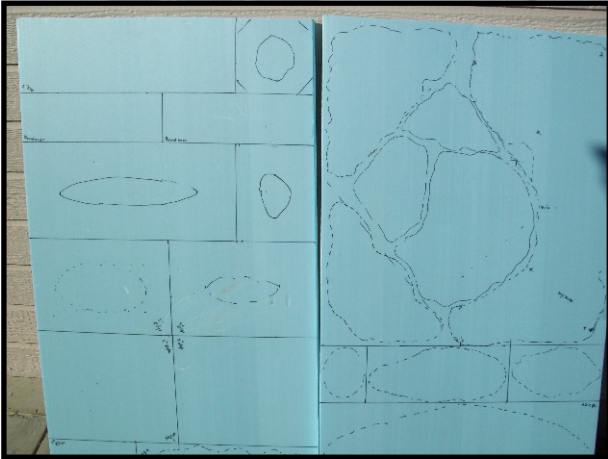


If you are using a saw a wood saw has too much cant to the teeth to make a nice edge, a hacksaw or metal cutting blade is better but will be slow and still a bit rough. A band-saw blade does better and even the wood band-saw blades cut a better edge. The smoothest edge is a hot knife but don't force it. especially when easing the edge it takes time to melt through the foam.



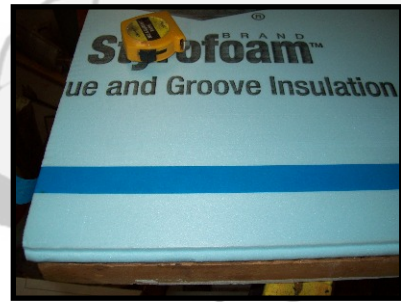
Terrain Layout 001-004

Mark your hill layouts ahead of time and give some thought to what you want. The mesa base I laid out at the bottom of that one sheet was laid out with the base, the top, and how the next piece would lay on top of it. The marker I used was a surprise, I expected it to etch the foam the way a sharpie would, but the cheaper Marks-A-Lot marker didn't etch the foam at all. A box cutter was used to break down the sheet into manageable parts for final cutting with the hot knife. Be careful when cutting that you don't force it. Once scored the foam will tend to break in a straight line unless you cut almost through. Picture 004 shows what happens when you don't think it through. I had to spread a bit of drywall paste or spackle to cover the printing impression prior to painting.



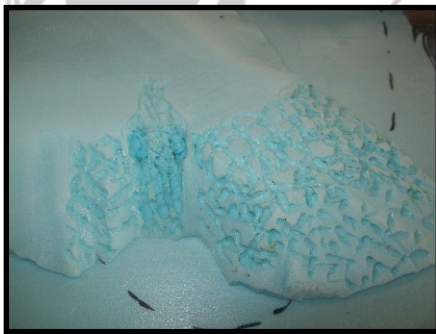
Prepping the Blocks

Using the painter's tape to lay-out the top edge of the slopes and hills allows you to guide with some precision the slope tops. Once the slopes are eased with the knife you can round over the top edge with sand paper or a sanding block.



Hill and Waterfall Detail

A sculpting hot knife was used to detail a rock-fall edge into a corner of this hill and a mountain spring. Some water detail was cut in to the corner and when I finish it I will paint in the water, add a dribble of sand flock over it and then a coat of window clear glue, the white glue used to make clear windows and headlights on models.



A small bit of scrap saved from the edging process was broken into shape with fingers and a bit of detail added with a hot knife. Glued to the top with white wood glue, any squeeze out is extra detail. When I get it painted I will add sand and small rocks to the stream bed, and cover them with window clear as well as parts of the rock carvings at the edges for water splash.



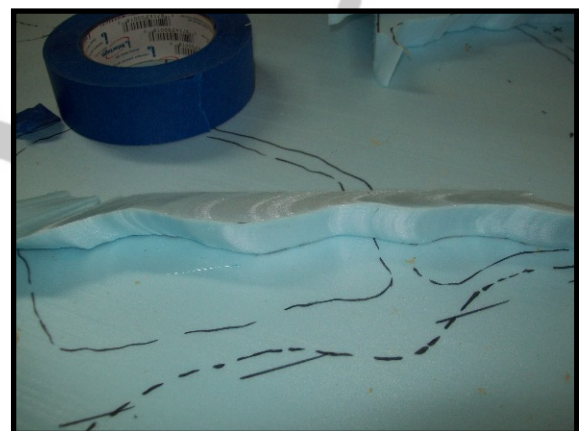
It was the way the edge turned out that provoked the waterfall detail, that knob to the right was begging for a stone rock-fall. While planning for what you want is important be open to inspiration when it hits.

Road Building 01



Brown wrapping or butcher's paper cut into strips makes a pretty good road. I laid a short (18") one lane road on waxed paper and sprayed it with poly urethane to protect it and to keep paint from bleeding through. Then a light/sparse coat of a dark flock for a dirt road. I flipped it over and painted a black asphalt road with some dark grey streaks dry-brushed for detail. The long 4 foot road was easier, I cut 4 inches off the end of the roll of paper and laid out enough so I could trim to 4" later. A poly-urethane coat sprayed on to protect and let it dry. A light spray of the ruddy brown primer is the first coat for a dirt road. Two strips of the scrap from edge easing defines the centre of the road for a coat of khaki brown. After that dries move the scraps in to define the centre line and a bit of the ruddy brown gives the road its final look. I flipped it over and made a 2 lane asphalt road the same way I did the short one lane street.

Scraps!



Take a close look at your scraps before throwing them out, I might turn this bit into a sand dune or maybe a bit of breaking surf at the edge of a beach.

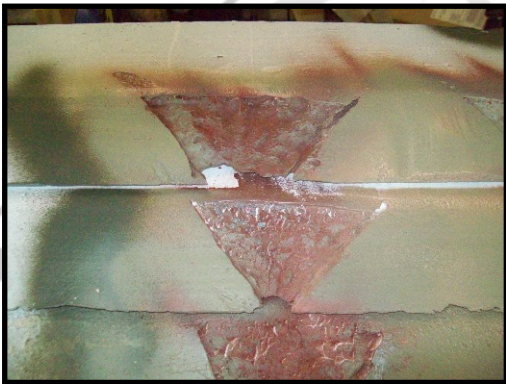
Straightening a Bowed Hill



When you ease the edge on a hill it can wind up with a bit of a bow in it that keeps it from laying flat. A heavy weight can correct this before painting. It took about 3 days to correct the bow in this piece and the axe head there is about 2 pounds.

Terrain and Flocking

These pictures wound up out of sequence as I worked on different parts of different pieces at the same time. But this does not matter as they all show method and the text is useful for all of them. We begin with slope details. I lined up details to match slope edges. I stacked all of the slopes and then marked and cut details and painted the edges to match.



The next pictures shows the application of one part glue to one part water to what will become a talus detail. Pebbles sorted from the play sand are laid on and 018 shows the finished detail. The paint under the flock is built up in layers, the detail undercoat guides the process from the edge. Pictures show the process of laying in colour.



Several different flocks are used on the slope tops, after a coat of one part white wood glue to one part water. Pictures shows the flocking process. I started with sand, then sawdust, then commercial turf flock, and last a static grass flock. DO NOT try for even coverage but try to build a set of random patches and overlap a bit as you go. Bare spots are a problem only if they bother you and be aware that the more you use the terrain the abuse and wear they get over time (to a point) will actually improve the look. The commercial flock was for model railroading and a lot cheaper than the little pots other gaming companies sell.



Pictures below show the finished slope pieces arranged. The cap piece to cover the seam on the ridge laid out using the two six inch strips back to back was a scrap saved from easing the edge of a slope.

