FOAMING YOUR OSPREY

J. Dale Wilson, Madison, WI

I don't suggest you use sheets of foam on your hull, as you cannot fit the foam tightly enough into all the corners. If you have a slight leak or there is condensation, the water tends to seek these small voids and rot will begin. Either get an insulator to foam it for you, or pour your own. I preferred to do it myself as I wasn't ready for all the foaming at once. I got the foaming resin at a dairy equipment manufacturer and I used about 4 gallons (2 of each part) on the Osprey. Since that time I have found ever so many uses for the foam. Don't get any more than you'll need for the immediate job, because the resin tends to crystalize when kept too long.

Mix rather small batches at a time (maybe a pint or so) and really whip the resin with a drill motor and a wire beater. I used 2 quart milk containers about 5-6 inches high for the mixing pot. You need something disposable easily cut down and easy to pour out of. I got about three batches from one container. Try to do the foaming when the temperature is over 70 or the bubbles will be too small and the resulting foam will be heavier,then too keep it below 90 or the density and strength will suffer. Stir until the foaming just starts, then pour into place. Rather than letting the foam expand where it wants too (usually into a boobie shaped lump) control the direction of expansion by laying a sheet of polyethelyene film (garbage bag) over the foam and directing,not pushing the expansion. Just use your hands to hold the poly down to a point just above the level you want to achieve. You will use less foam material and will make sure the voids are filled.

Wait until the foam has cured to remove the film, or you will break the foam bubbles and it will get really gooey and crusty. Too bad money does not stick to our hands like the liquid resin. Wow, the only thing that helps is Lava soap right away. Don't wait till dinner time to wash, and wear old pants to wipe your fingers on. If you get a batch which does not expand correctly cut it out and make the pour over, I used a *hot wire (watch out for the fumes, they are toxic)* cutter made like a bucksaw, with .032 stainless safety wire and an autotransformer for power. It requires about 12 volts for a 24 inch wire. I didn't try a 12 volt battery but it should work. You don't want the wire to be red hot, just warm enough to cut about an inch per second.

When sanding the foam,I found a surefoam file or plane to work the best for rough shaping, *then sandpaper* on a board for the balance. A quart jar with the paper glued on is just right for the wing to hull fillets.

When you glass, if you are using Polyester resin BE CAREFUL! The Methyl Ethyl Ketone Peroxide hardner is extremely toxic. Make sure you have good ventilation it might get to you. Between the hardner and nitrate dope, I spent *two months of daily puking before a week* in the hospital. SO WATCH IT, if you feel lightheaded quit and get out! If you aren't happy with the shape or the surface of the first layer of cloth, or if you have any depressions caused by foam collapse, cut it out, refoam and glass it again. Do NOT leave it and figure to fill it with resin, its too heavy. Keep the amount of resin to a minimum, use just enough to fill the weave. Fill the pours with *ultra light body putty. I tried resin and microballons* but had trouble getting a good light mix. I tried 2 different batches of Stits micro putty at $7.95 a quart but it was too hard to mix, could hardly get it out of the can. The light weight body putty is only 7.5# per gallon while regular Bondo is 12#. The only problem is a slight skin on the dried surface. You have to break through this skin before you can sand easily. I worked and worked to sand the darn stuff, getting really frustrated at the slowness of the work and the sandpaper filling up in 30 seconds. *It made no difference if I did it by hand* or used a orbital sander with 80 grit paper. I stopped at body shops and they told me to just put extra on then sand it off. NO WAY, you need to know where the cloth is so you don't injure the glass fibers in sanding. Finally, the vocational school instructor had me try an inline body sander with 40 grit paper. Worked! At noon I bought one for $70.00 along with a dozen sheets of 40 grit paper. By 6:00, I had rough sanded the entire Osprey, filled the low spots again, resanded, and done about half the finer sanding. I was so dammed happy, I took the wife out for a big dinner, then we came home and celebrated some more.

After you have the glassing and filling completed, you should spray on a coat of dark grey primer. This will show all the many imperfections you were unable to see before. You can use Featherfill as the Vari-Eze's do, but that stuff is $28.00 per gallon (takes 2). This is mighty expensive and I'm not sure it's any better than the regular DuPont dark grey sanding primer. As I could not get near the paint solvents, I had a local body shop squirt on the final primer, fill the little pits then apply the white IMRON. I kept trying to impress on them the importance of keeping the weight down, but I guess they just thought I *was being cheap. A Varieze used 3 quarts of IMRON, so* I figured double that or 6 quarts would be plenty. When I came back, the painter was so proud, he had put on 3. Three. THREE GALLONS!!!!! I was so damned mad I would have hit him if he hadn't outweighed me by 150 pounds. Needless to say, I have very good coverage and a numbe or runs in the paint. Nothing I can do now, you can't sand down IMRON and you can't use paint remover as it attacks the polyester fiberglass base. Dick Borremans of Green Bay, WI tells me he used only 2 quarts of dark and 3 of white IMRON.

If you are going to farm out your painting, be sure your painter understands the importance of saving weight. My Osprey weighs 1025, 20 of which is excess paint - Dammit! Perhaps I should take all the excess foam resin and fill the front seat of the painters Thunderbird.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

We sadly report the death of J. Dale Wilson on Nov. 14th. We shall miss Dale, he was an avid Osprey enthusiast and a great supporter of our newsletter. Our prayers are with his family and friends at this time.

Cause of Dale's accident at this time is unknown except that it definitely was not propeller or structural failure. We shall keep you informed as details become available to us.

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I LOVE

#1

Buttons

#2