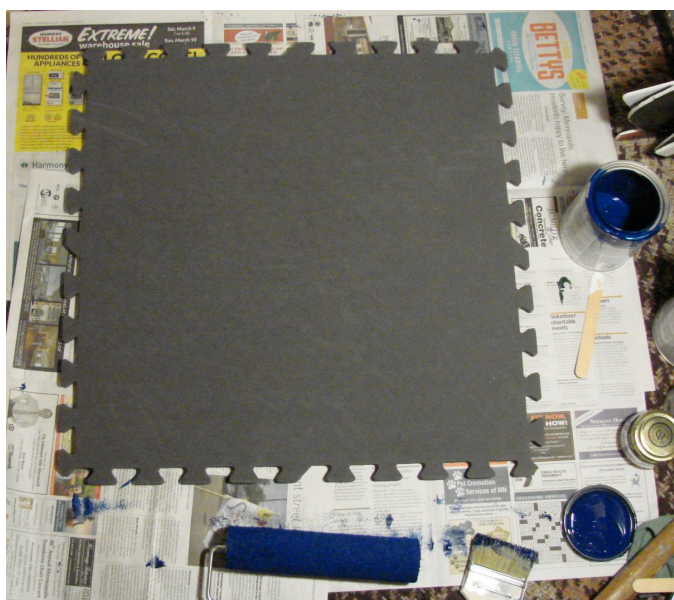


## **“SEA-O-MORPHIC” NAVAL GAMING MAT TUTORIAL**

While naval wargaming doesn't usually require much in the way of terrain, there are nevertheless several issues that come up occasionally. Among these are ease of construction, affordability, storage and the ever-present problem of Edge-of-Table syndrome, which is particularly aggravated by the fact that maneuver is a predominant factor in naval warfare. Also, as in all miniature wargames, aesthetics is important.

This is an illustrated tutorial for how I made a set of interlocking sea mats for use with my naval games that address all of the above issues.

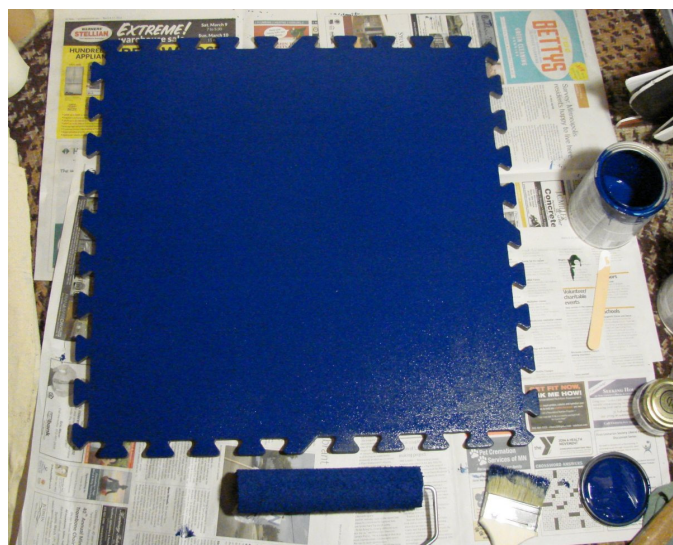
I started with a few packs of 2' x 2' interlocking foam floor tiles, commonly available at home improvement stores for workshop floors. I got these particular packs at a surplus chain store for US\$10 per pack of four. I needed three packs to create a 6' x 8' playing surface.



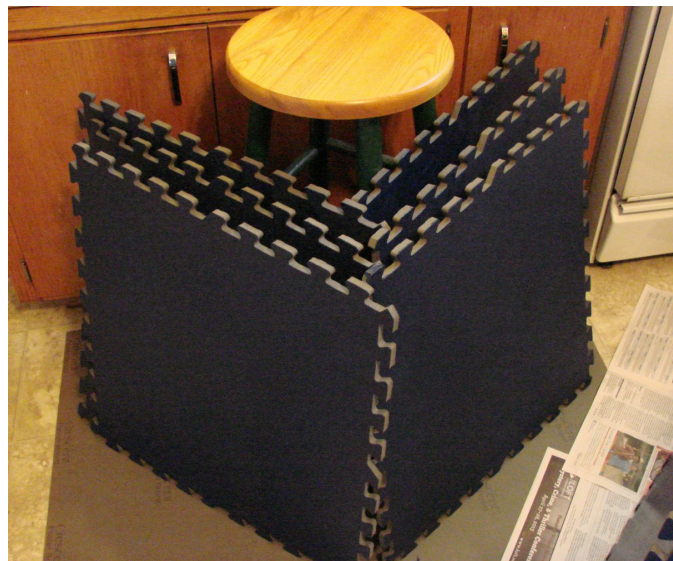
The dark gray color will help disguise the joints between the tiles when they are in use.

I also picked up a textured paint roller, a sea sponge, a quart each of dark blue and hunter green gloss latex paint, and a small tin of white.

First, I used the roller to give each tile a coat of dark blue. The textured roller gives the surface a slightly pebbled finish, which helps give the impression of wavelets on the water surface. This process takes about 30 seconds per tile.



After base coating all the tiles, I stacked them as shown below to dry, so that none of the painted surfaces were in contact with anything. Latex paint dries pretty quickly, so by the time I had finished all twelve of the tiles the first ones were ready for the next step.



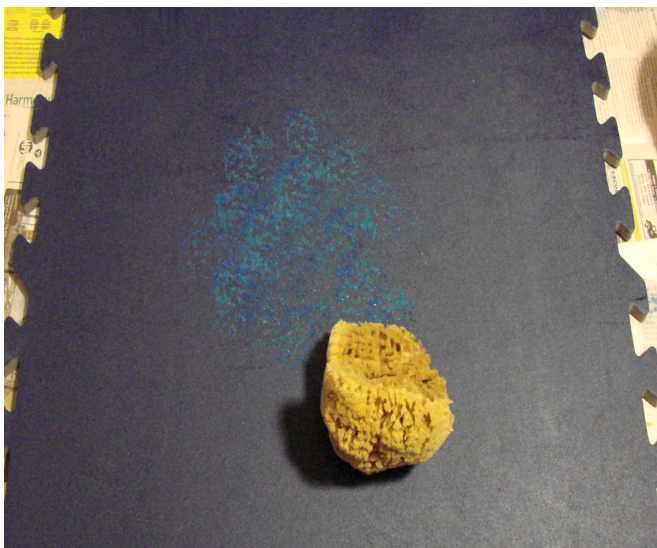
For the next step I mixed a little of the hunter green with some of the dark blue, and added a touch of white to lighten it slightly. I was trying for the deep sea-green often seen in aerial views of the ocean.

To apply this to the tiles, I poured some in the roller pan and dipped a sea sponge into the paint. To avoid getting too much paint on the sponge, I blotted it on a dry part of the pan to remove some of the paint.



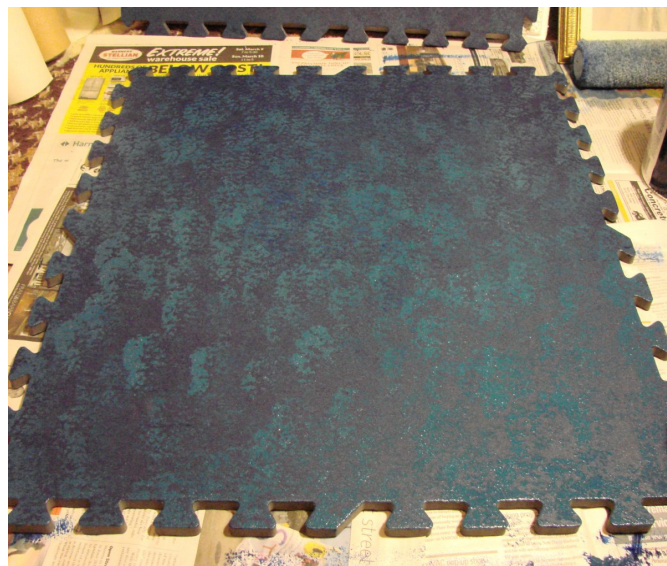


When the sponge is dabbed in a more or less random way on the base coat, it leaves a pattern somewhat reminiscent of light reflecting off the wave tops.



The pattern doesn't have to be even (and, in fact, should not be, in order to look more natural) but make sure to extend it out onto the tabs along the edges. This will help disguise the seams between the tiles when they are in use.

Remember that you can always add more later if you are not happy with the way it looks, so use the sponge sparingly at first. A tile with the second color completed should look something like this:



The second color looks a bit bold at this point because the paint is still wet. Since latex darkens as it dries, this will become more subtle over a short time.

If the action should threaten to drift off the edge of the table during a game, the playing surface can be "scrolled" by lifting the empty tiles at the opposite end, pushing the playing surface over (ships and all), and placing the lifted tiles in front of the wayward squadrons. This functionally gives you an endless expanse of ocean on which to game, even if your gaming space is somewhat limited.

The tiles in action:



See more pictures of the tiles in use on my Flickr page:

[http://www.flickr.com/photos/war\\_artisan/sets/72157633067474626/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/war_artisan/sets/72157633067474626/)

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