

Photoshop-Halo Skinning For the Beginner

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Version: Adobe Photoshop 7

There are tons of tutorials out there all good, but if you have Photoshop and have no idea what it can do for you, it really is pointless. So I made this tutorial to give you a better understanding of **Photoshop (PS)**, its tools, and what you can do with it in Photoshop. So for this reason I will explain as if you know NOTHING about skinning or Photoshop. **I HIGHLY recommend reading everything first so to know what to expect.**

This will discuss the process of skinning from start (taking it from Halo) to finish (i.e. seeing it in the game.), I will also try to explain some of Photoshop's core elements, not a whole lot' but just what you need to get started with that program, this should be a descent launching pad to feel out the tools. As well as a great foundation for your own Halo skins.

Please note there is a lot more to PS!!!!!! Again I will not get into graphic design with Photoshop, just give you what you need to know to start skinning your own stuff and have fun playing it in Halo.

For this BASIC tutorial I will be doing the WartHog with a few touches of Camouflage for those who asked from my 'General Desert Camo Skin' if you want to complete the camo go ahead, it is far to time consuming. But really is worth it.

Tools you will need to download

1. Microsoft .Net Framework
2. Halo Map Tools (HMT)
3. Photoshop DDS Plug-in

Get them all here: <http://www.skindeep.halocity.org/>

Gives a good tutorial at that site as well! I recommend Reading as many tutorials as possible! Everyone has great tips and you can fine tune their techniques to your own.

Research!

Load Halo Multiplayer then host a LAN so you will be undisturbed. Find the warthog and take some screenshots!

Taking a screenshot

Hit the Print Screen key for this (Prt Sc)

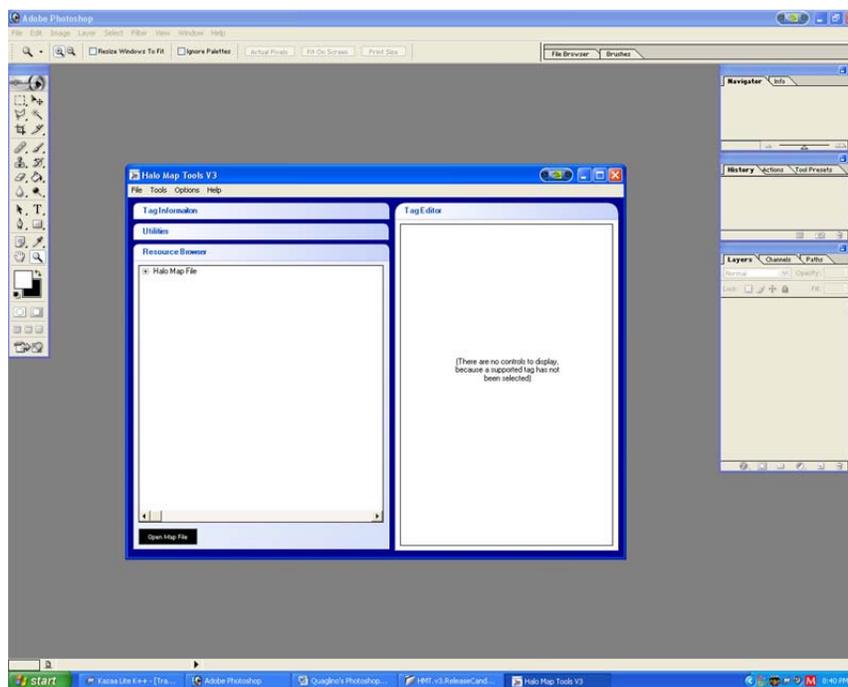
Then hit your windows key to escape to your desktop while Halo runs in the background (if you have the RAM) if not you will have to close out the game and go back. Then with Photoshop make a new document and hit Ctrl-V (paste) then save the image as a .jpeg\ .jpg

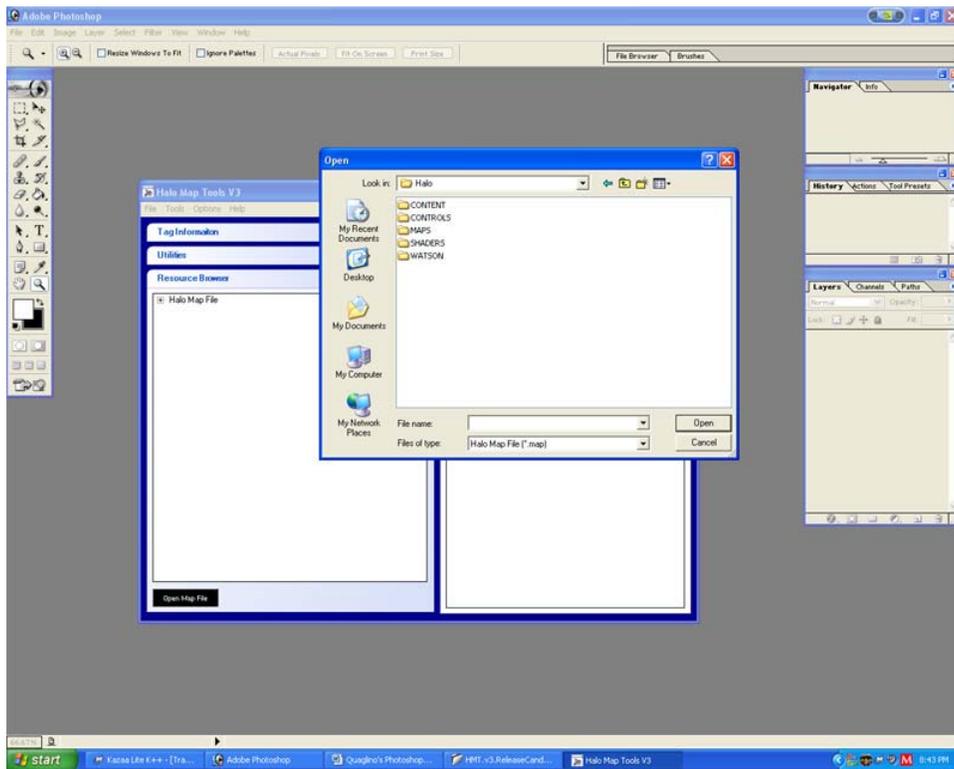
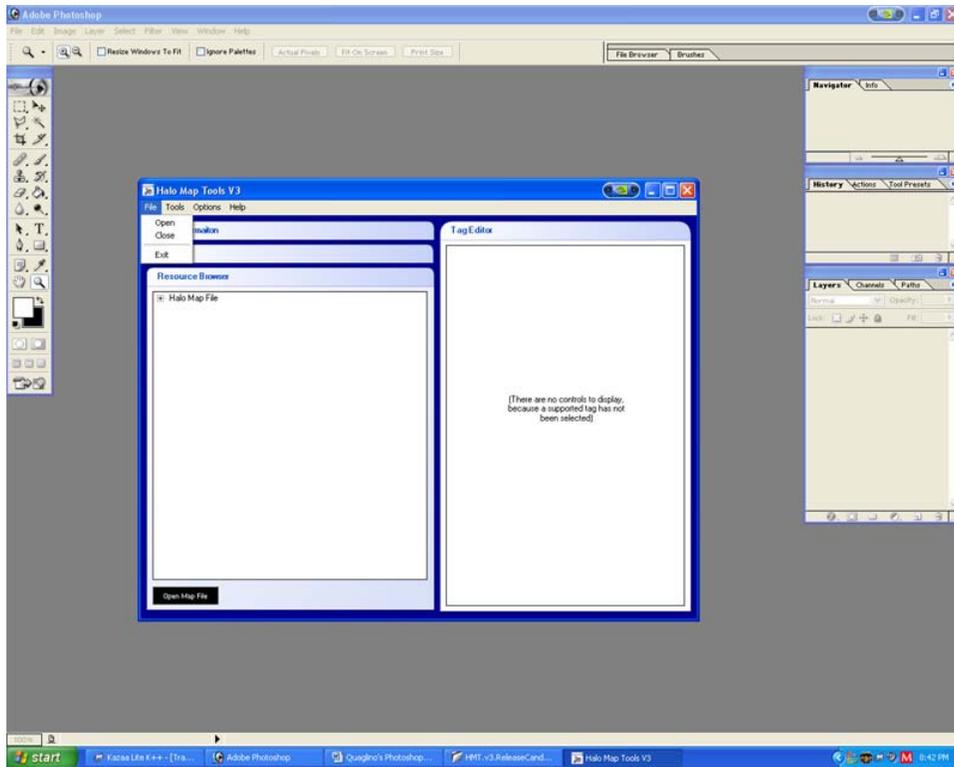
These pics allow you to see how and where the skins will lay on a 3D object since you will be skinning on a 2D surface.

Halo Map Tools (HMT)\ Export a Skin to Photoshop

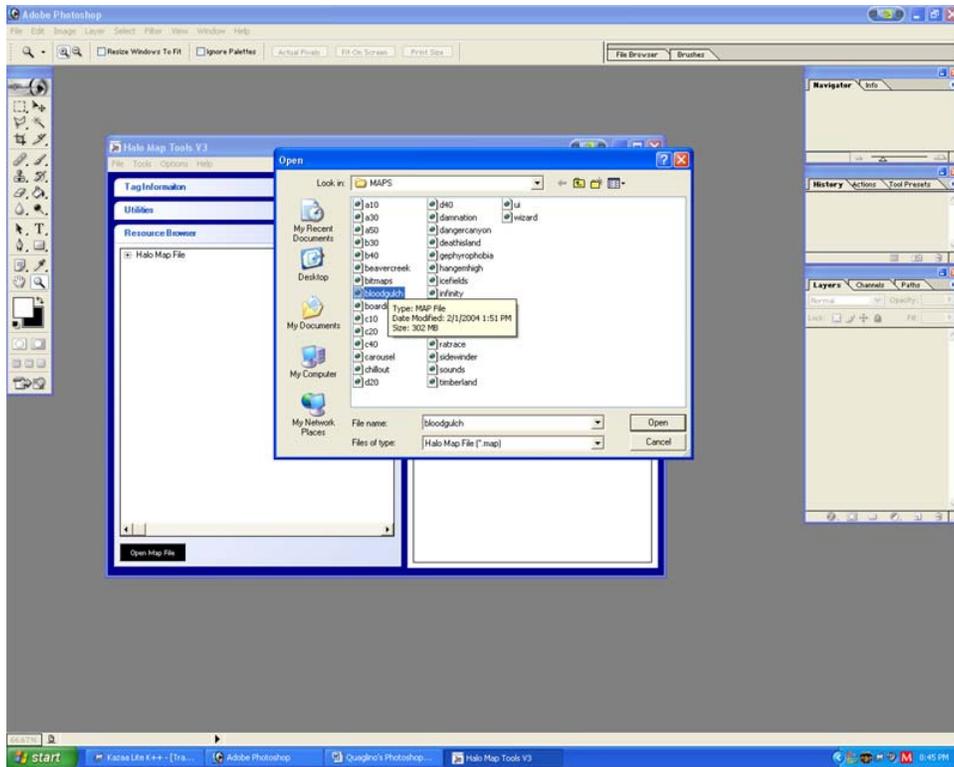
Make a Halo Mod folder to keep your files you will be working on, as well as to back up the originals. In fact make a separate folder in the Halo Mod folder called Back up copies

First you would need to make a decision on what you want to skin; we'll be doing the Warthog. So let open Halo Map Tools.

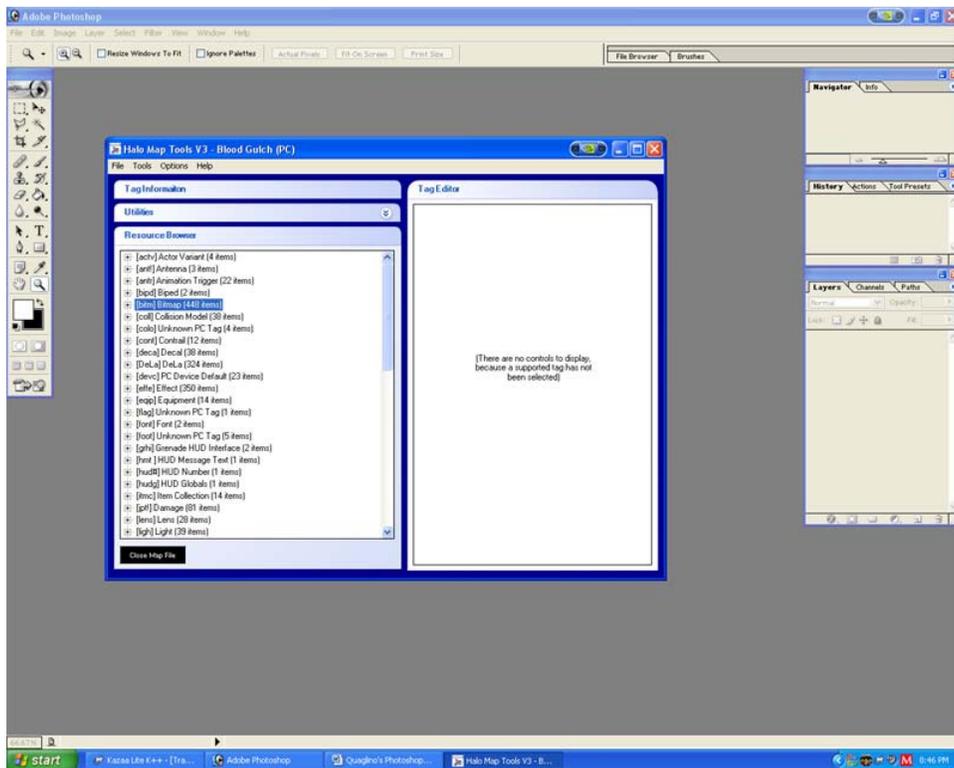


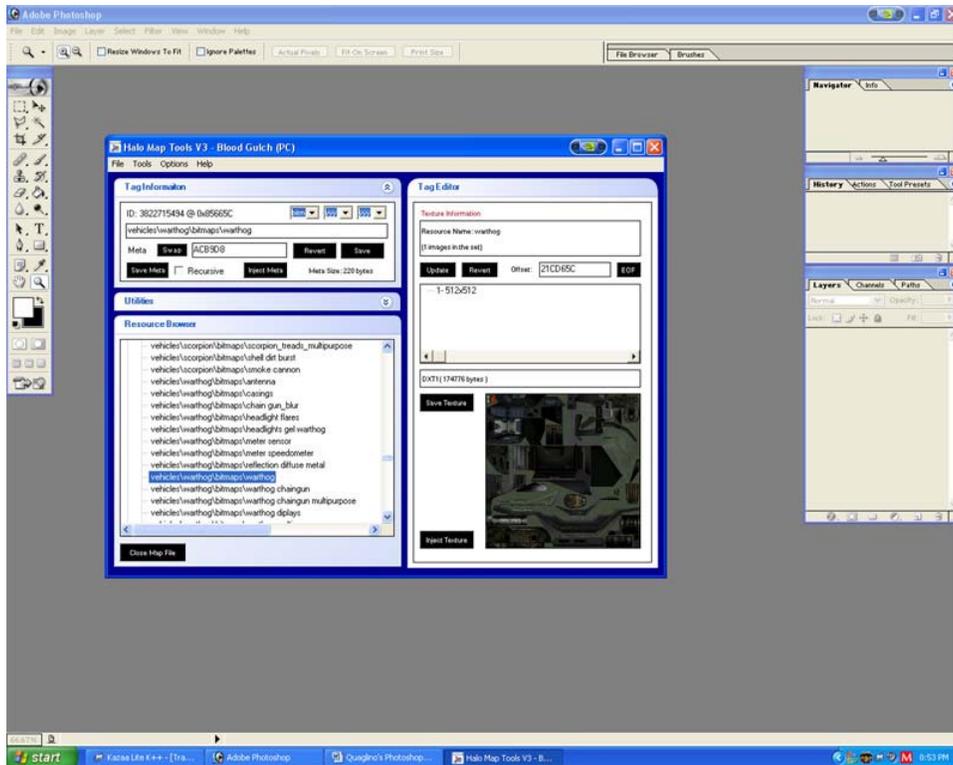


Then choose file>open>(find your program files folder)>Microsoft games>Halo>Maps>Bloodgulch



Now that map folder is opened inside of Halo Map Tools





Click on Bitmaps (445 files in that sub-folder I think.) then scroll down to: vehicles/warthog/bitmaps/warthog and select to highlight.

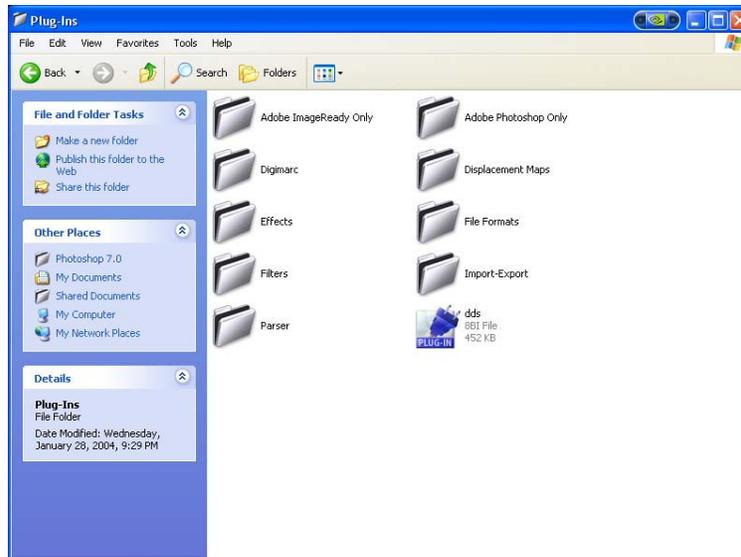
To the right you should now see the skin of the Warthog.

Click 'Save Texture' > go to your new Halo Mod folder\ Back up copies and save there. You don't have to rename it, it should have it original default name.

For now you are done with Halo Map Tools so close that App.

Time for Photoshop!!!!

With your DDS plug-in inside your Photoshop folder you are now able to open the skin.



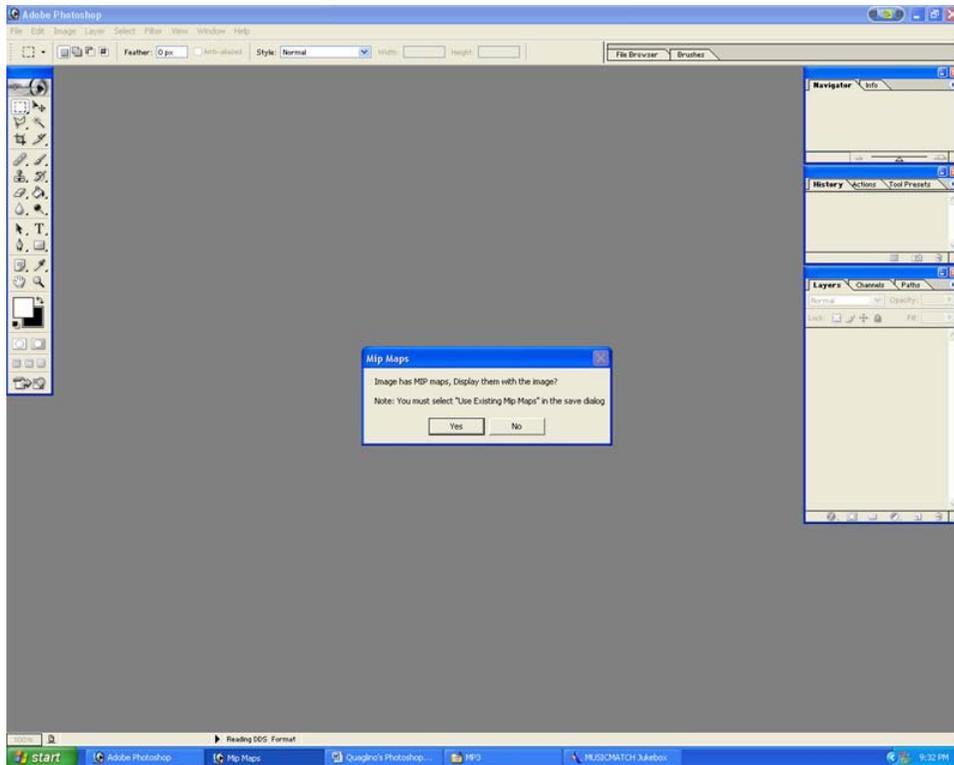
Before you go jumping in, think about what you are going to skin, think about the color scheme, and remember people will need to look at this thing.

Skinning Tip!!!!

Don't use words; try using images or odd logos w/o words! Whatever you skin will appear mirrored on the other side ex. Puma will appear as amuP, IT WILL ANNOY YOU!!! It did me.

Also, take your time!!! Don't feel rushed!!!

Then in Photoshop hit File>Open and go to your skin you saved from HMT. A Mip Maps Pop-up will come up, select '**NO**'.

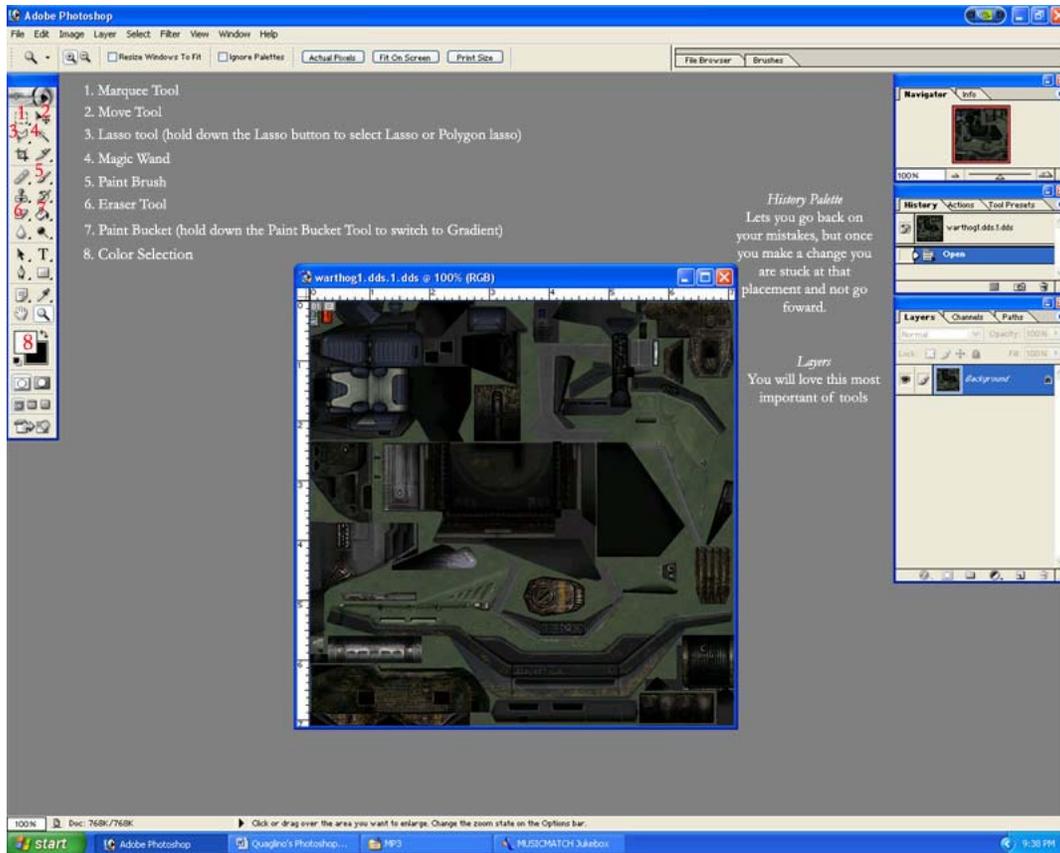


The file is small on the screen but that is okay, PS has a Zoom In\ Out ability. (click 'Z', the mouse will turn to a magnifying glass with a plus, then click to where you want to zoom. click 'Z' and hold down 'Alt' to zoom out.)

Do a 'Save as' and add 'NEW_' in front of the documents name, save as a PSD. It should default to this anyway. Now you can hit 'Ctrl S' to do a quick save from here on out.

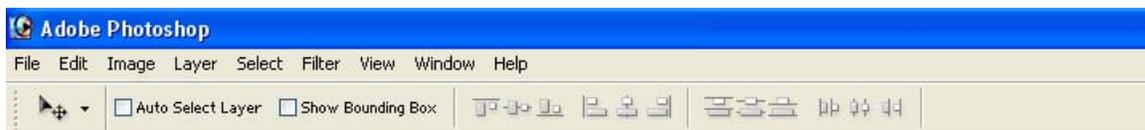
To the Left of your screen are your tools, Here are some real useful ones. (Magic Wand, Lasso, Polygon Lasso, Marquee Tool, Paint Bucket, Paint brush, Gradient, Move Tool, and Color Selection, Eraser Tool.)

To the Right you see History and Layers



What do these tools do?

When a tool is selected, the top bar of Photoshop (shown below)



Changes to reveal new setting options for that tool. Try clicking various tools and see what you may do.

Magic Wand: This tool allows you to click over an area and let the computer guess what to select, it may be too much or not enough, this can be adjusted by changing its 'tolerance' If you use this and click on an object and the whole screen is selected, chances are you are on the wrong layer, so pay attention to your layers. (discussed below)

Lasso: (hold down the lasso icon to bring up the polygon lasso)Click and hold then draw freehand to select an area to work on. The **Polygon lasso** is my fave! You find a point to start click and let go, then find another spot to continue, you will see a line come out the pointer showing how the next point click will lay. Continue clicking around until the area is selected, a small circle will appear next to the polygon lasso when the path is closed, or double click if you are really close and it will close for you.

Note:

If you select too much or not enough don't freak, you can add or subtract from the selection and "sculpt" it the way you want. Simply hold down 'shift' while inside the selection to add to it, or 'alt' while outside to delete some of the selection.

Marquee Tool: This is for Circles, Squares for a quick area to be filled. Simply click and hold with the shape you want selected and drag out, keep shapes uniform by holding the 'shift' key while doing this.

Paint Bucket: Click this over a selection for a quick entire fill of the selection, it will use the color specified in the Color Selection.

Paint Brush: Acts like any other coloring tool for a computer except you may change the size and stroke using its setting options.

Gradient: Click and Hold the Paint Bucket to reveal this icon (or vice versa) With a selection area ready, you may pick a color of the Gradient you want. Find your starting point (this is where it will be its darkest.) and drag in the direction you want and let go, (where you let go will be its lightest.)

Move Tool: A simple arrow pointer, hold down the space bar (becomes a grab tool) to move around the image when zoomed in close, it is a grab tool.

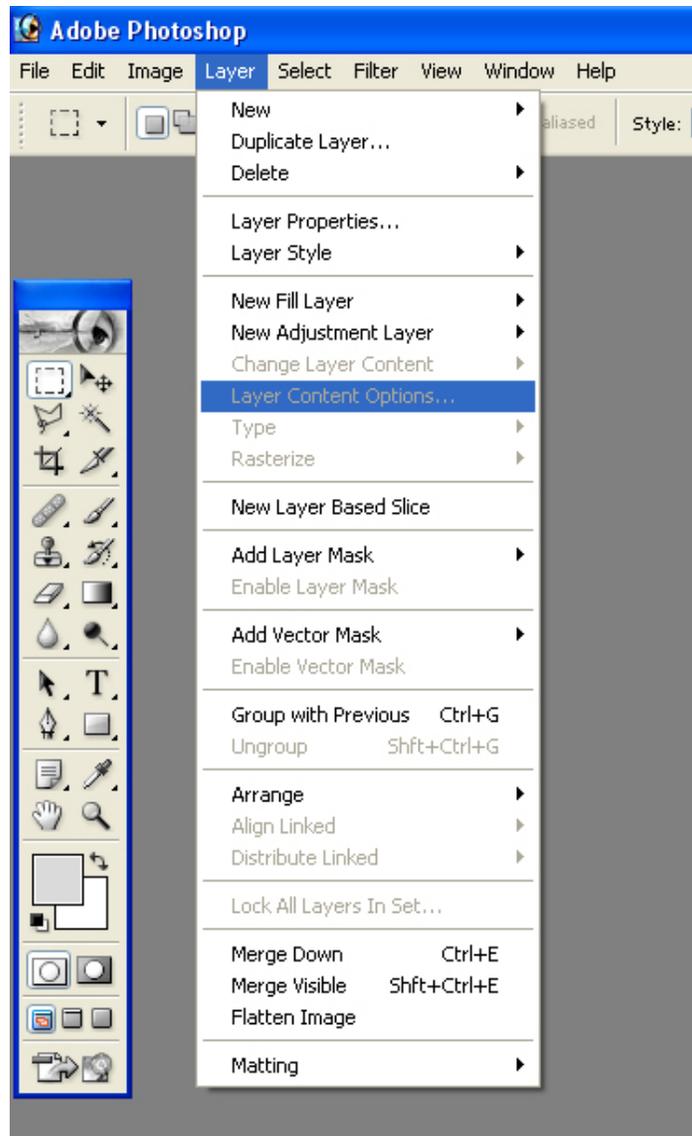
Color Selection: You see 2 boxes one in front and in back (foreground color and background color) click to bring up the color selector and find whatever value you want to choose for that color. You see a small bar to the right, this can be dragged up or down to change the color, when done hit enter or ok. The dual end arrow you see next to the 2 boxes switches the foreground and background color back and forth.

Eraser Tool: Can erase areas of a selection so as not to cover up certain objects, this allows you to block in big areas quick and color then go back later to select what you want visible and bring them out. You may also change its 'pressure' and size using its options. Pressure is like lightly erasing it away, not a full erasure, good for bringing out subtle items into view.

History: Make a mistake? This is the ultimate undo! Allows you to go back pretty far, you may also go back if you went too far but once you start working again you may not go forward again. Did that make sense?

Layers: The MOST important tool in Photoshop, think of a layer as a transparency that stacks on top of each other, you may create a new layer and work over a picture without actually touching it. (Like a Warthog!) You can have tons of layers! Name the layers so as not to get confused! You can change the opacity of a layer, make a layer invisible, change the layer's position of where it sits over or under other layers (click & hold a layer to grab, move up or down.). You may combine layers, merge layers, Etc.

You can see what layer you are working on because it is blue, it will also have a brush in the box to the left of the layer name.



Above is the layer tab (I guess Adobe could only fit so much into the layer menu, they had to put other elements elsewhere.). Merge down lets the current selected layer and the one below it to become one, Merge Visible allows all the layers whom do not have the eye clicked off become one.

I merge down when I am positive these 2 layers will need to be together so I may work on them together.

When you flatten an image it permanently merges all layers to one. You will not need this tool.

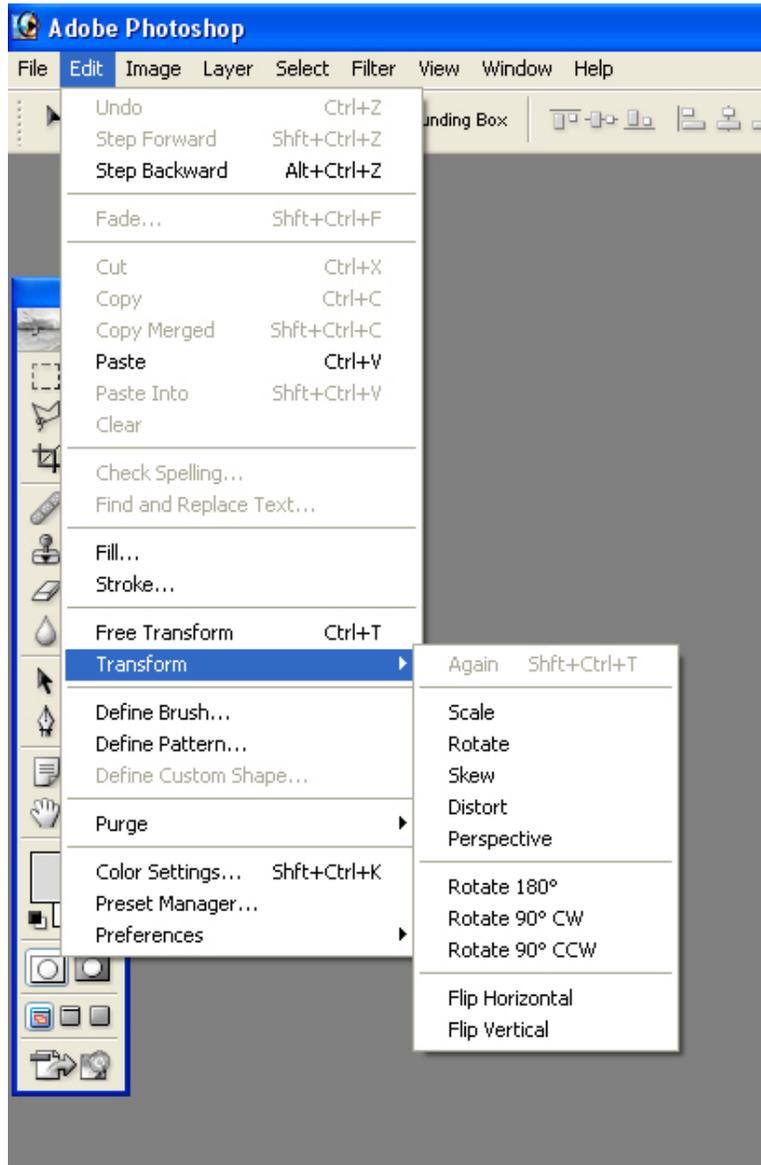
Transforming and Rotate text and Images!

Need to re-size that image to put on a vehicle? I got ya back! Simply go up top and select edit> transform> and then scale. You will see a box around the image, you can stretch,

widen, all that good stuff by clicking on the small squares shown on the box and pulling in or out. To keep the image or shape uniform in size hold down shift while doing this and grab a corner.

Note:

If you have a pic that is small and enlarge it, it will become pixilated, and ugly!

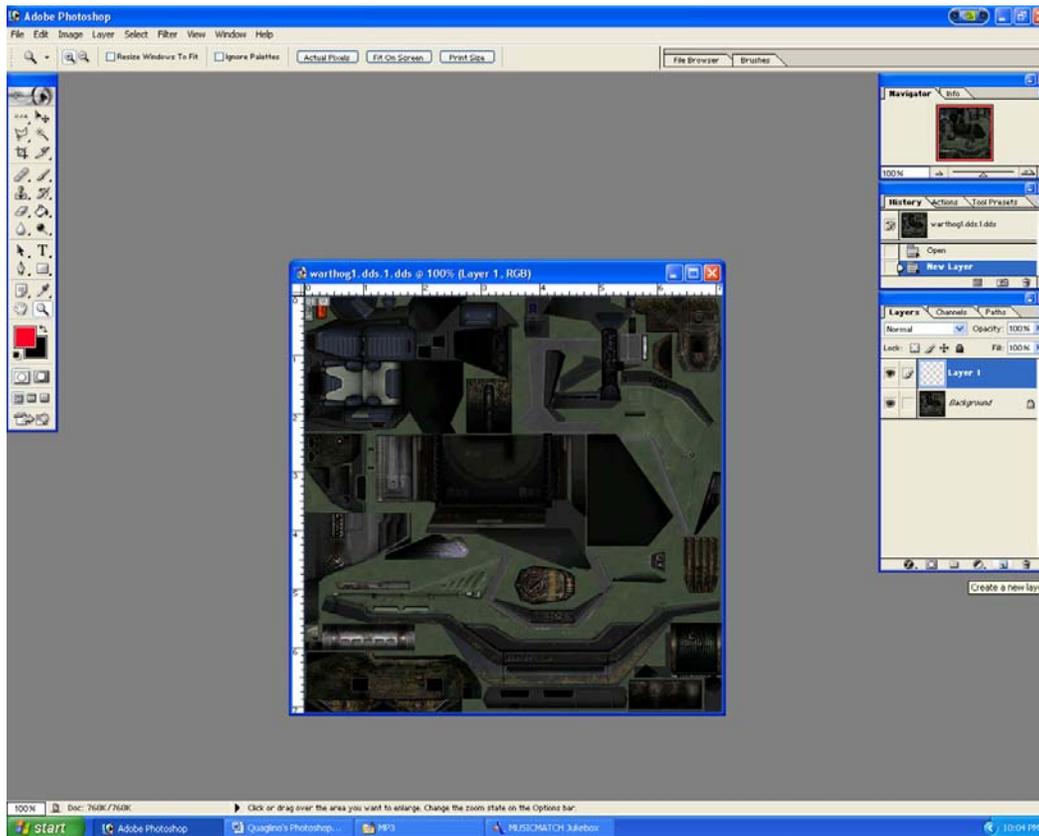


Also under edit> transform you will see rotate, you will understand what to do there, they also have flip vertical and horizontal so this can help if you want the image mirrored.

I am no Master but that should give you a BASIC understanding of what the tools do. Again there is a lot more, but you just want to skin right!!! And you just want to skin!

Getting Started

Look over at you Layers Palette, you will see a small pic of the Warthog, in that same row you see an eye to the left and to the right a lock. The eye means this layer is visible but since the lock is there that means you cannot do anything to it. Normally clicking the eye will make that layer invisible. We need to make a new layer so as to start the coloring. At the bottom of the Layers palette you see some small icons, to the left of the trash is the New Layer selection, click that and a new layer will appear above the warthog. It will be a small checker board looking thing in the layers palette.

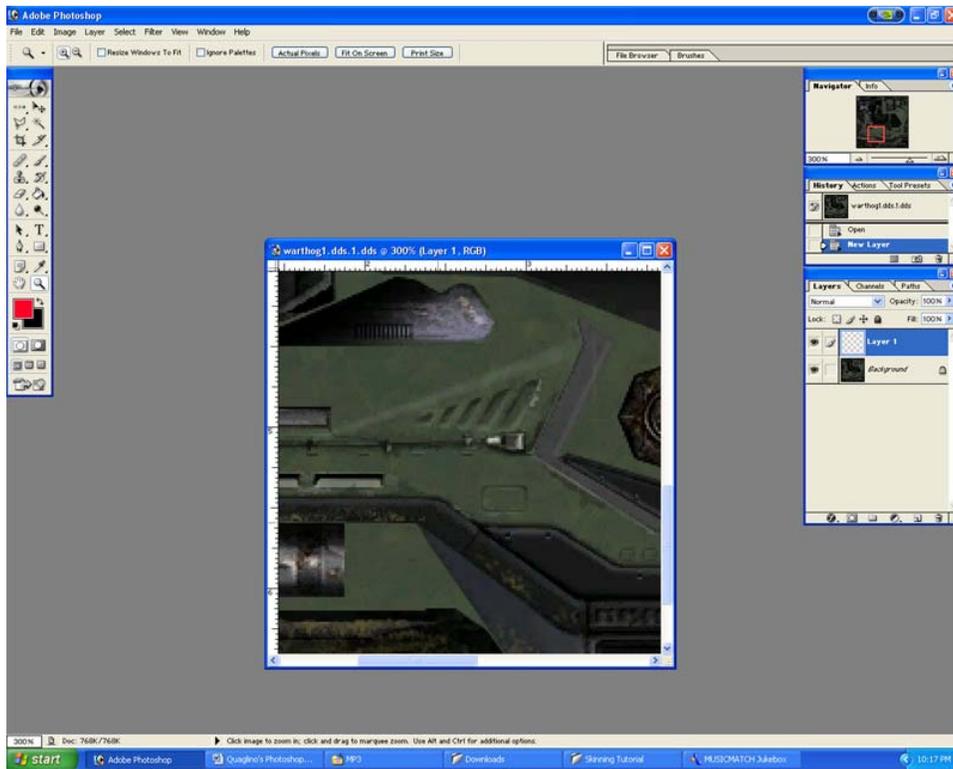


Right Click on the new layer 'Layer 1' and select 'Layer Properties' then change the name to "flats" this layer will deal with your flat basic color the warthog will be.

Make sure you have the 'Move Tool' selected so we can start from scratch.

Now you are going to use the Polygon Lasso. In your tools menu you will see the lasso tool it is circular, not like the one shown above as I barley use the normal lasso. Hold the 'Lasso' down and select the 'Polygon Lasso'

Zoom in a bit close by holding down 'Z' the pointer will turn to a magnifying glass with a plus in it, holding down 'Alt' will show a minus for zoom out. It will get pixilated but so what we can always zoom out to see again what we are doing.



Expand the window to see more, just as if you were resizing an Internet Explorer window.

Photoshop Tip

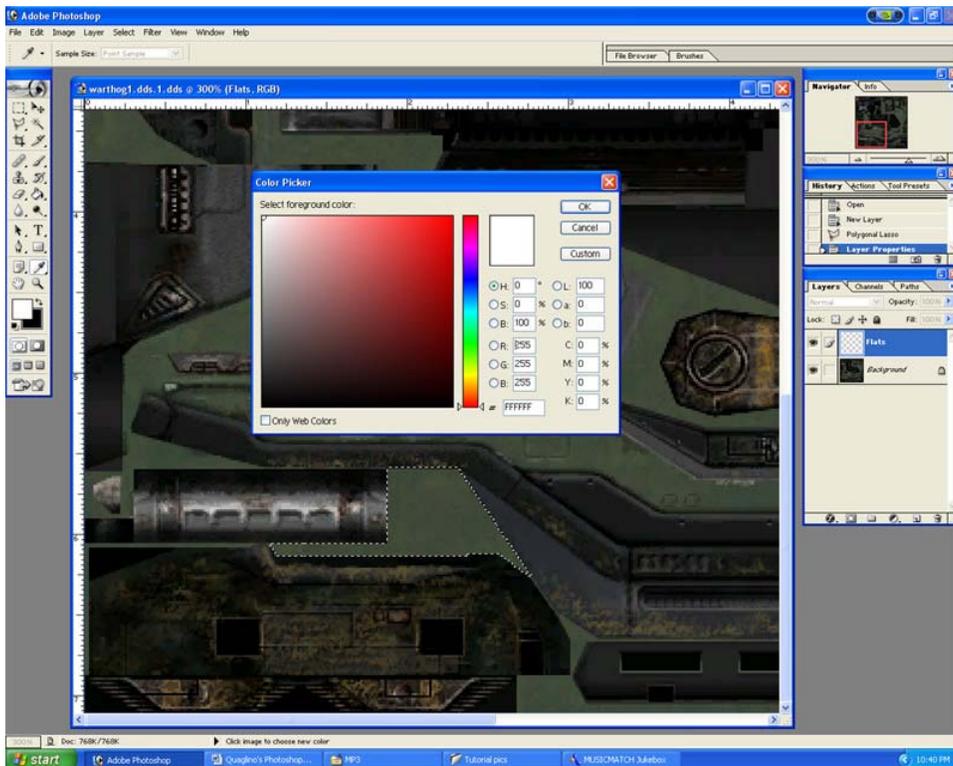
If you want to move around the image hold down the 'Space' bar the pointer will turn to a hand then click and hold while moving the mouse were you want.

Make sure the 'flats' layer is selected, it will be blue. (ex. The above picture tells you I am on Layer 1.)

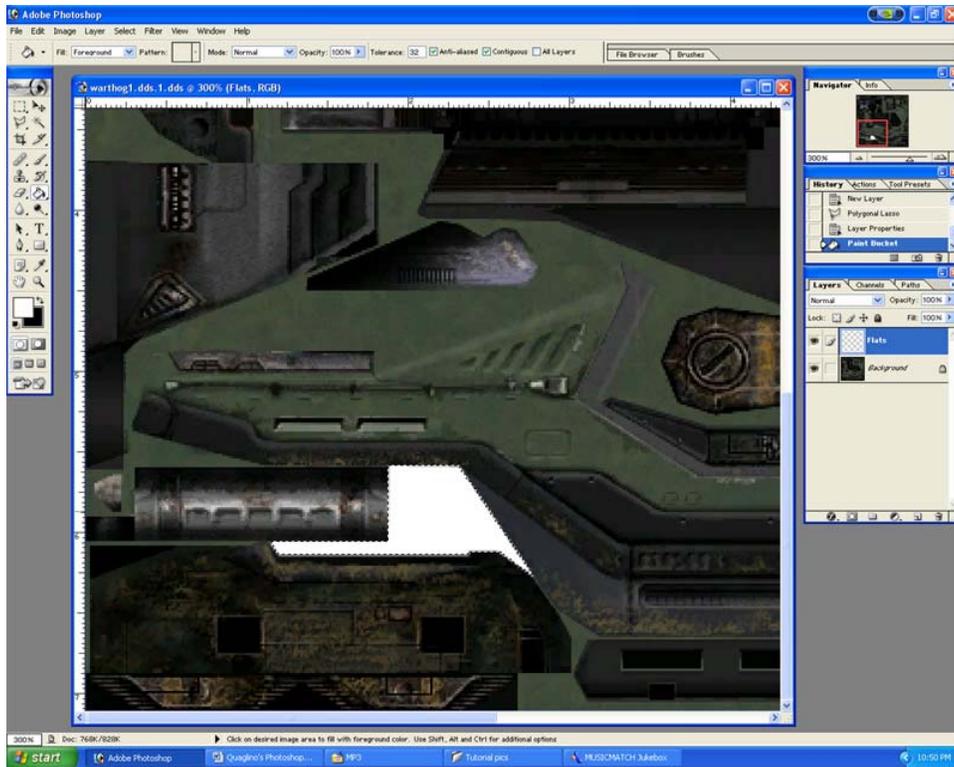
With the Polygon lasso find the green paint job of the warthog (or whatever you want to color) You will be outlining this so find a place were you want to begin and click, you just placed a point, when you move the mouse you will see a white line extend from that point. Clicking where you want the line to fall & next point to be & so on until your outline comes near where you started, the path is closed when a small circle is shown next to you lasso pointer. Or if you are close enough to the point just double click and it will close.



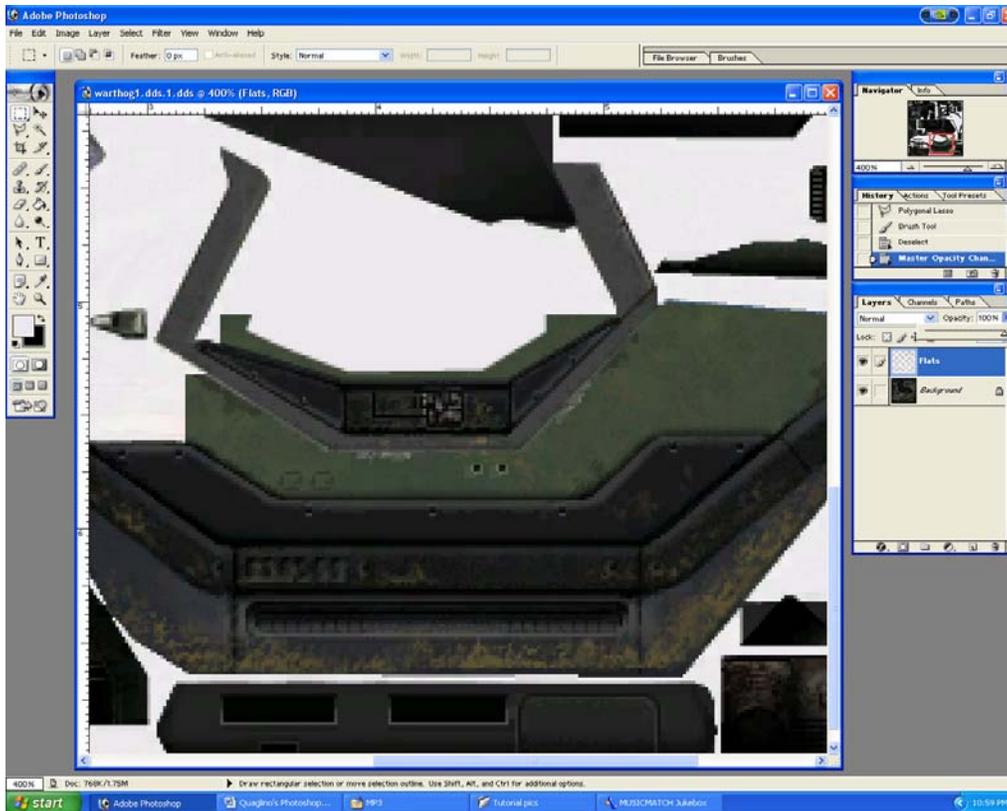
With the section of this layer selected, go to your 'Color Selection' in the tools menu; click the top square to bring up the color picker. Of the 2 squares shown, the front means foreground and back is background.



Select your whitest white for the body. Then use the paint bucket tool and click inside the selection. (Color tip: the whites white is # FFFFFFFF, blackest black is 000000)

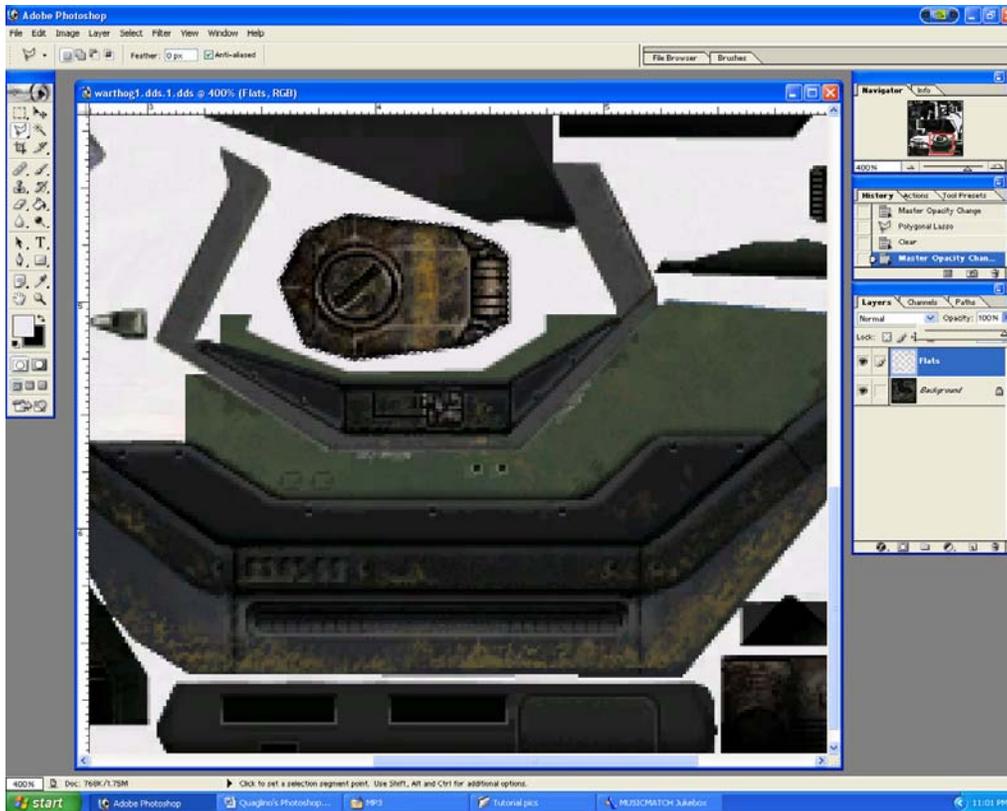


For the sake of getting the flats down, don't worry about going around everything you want visible, you can fix that later. Look at the pic below, I colored over an object but now I can't see it. Simply go over to the layers palette, there you will see an opacity bar, it will be reading 100% slide that down say to 10% or 20 now you can see underneath that layer.



Opacity will change ONLY on the current layer you are on.

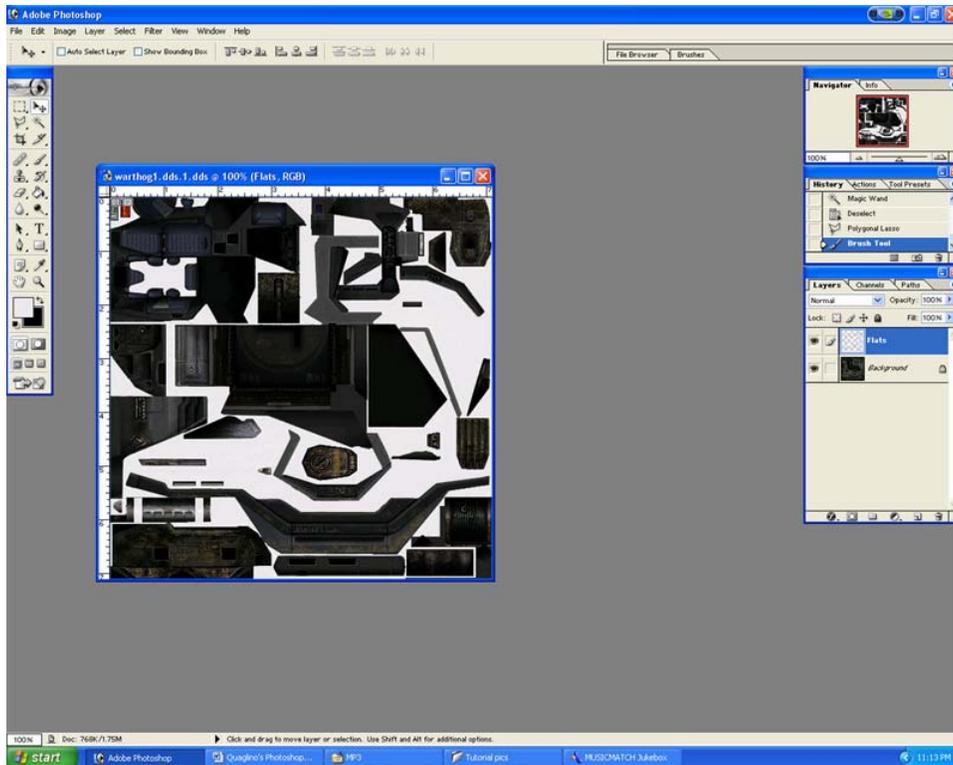
With the polygon lasso, outline what you want shown and hit delete. Now it is visible! Keep going until it is completely done. Some people will say to use the Magic Wand to select, but with all the different color pixels the area you just want to select will start to spread over, and then you have to clean up a lot.



While selecting if you make a mistake and deselect don't scream, go to the history palette and select your previous step. Also while selecting you don't have to be Dead Accurate on the money, just close, when all is said and done the pixels will be so small you can't tell.

With these flat colors it makes it stupid easy to use the Magic Wand tool to select an area for further special add-ons. Select Magic Wand, and click that area, if it selects more than you want simply select either the Polygon Lasso or the Marquee tool then hold down either Shift (which brings up a plus next too your pointer) or Alt to subtract.

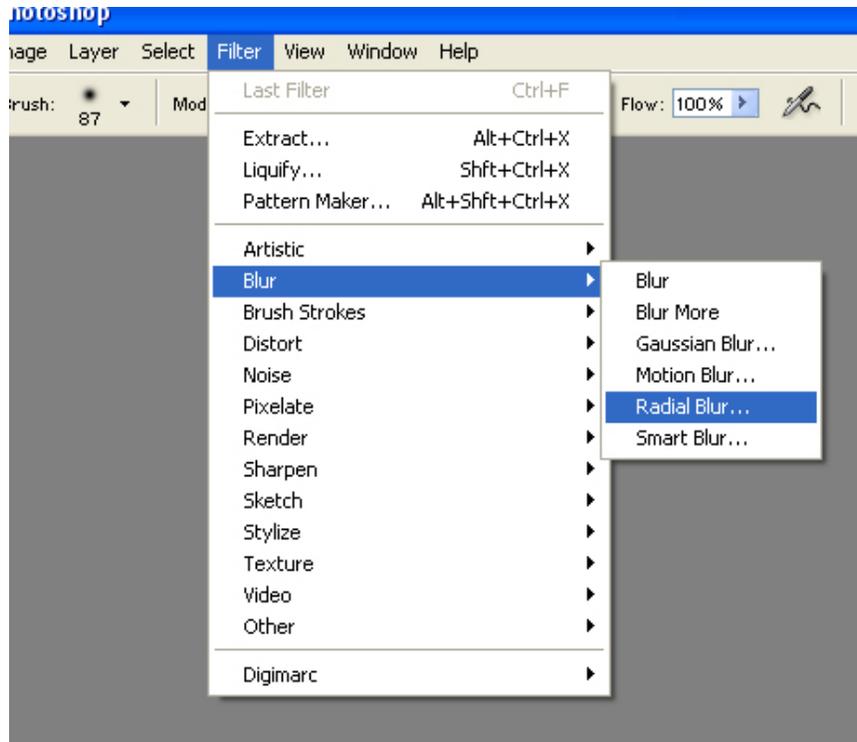
Too add to the selection if you require, you must bring your pointer to the inside of the current selection, to subtract you must start on the outside of the current selection. Try it you will see what I mean. Adding and subtracting will take time to get used to but if you mess up there is the history palette.



Of course you have remembered to save the entire time, right!

Wheels

This one should take all of 5 minutes to complete, 4 minutes to find the rims you want on google. Open the image in Photoshop, Hopefully you should see rulers on the top and bottom, if not hit 'Ctrl R' Go into the ruler and click and hold down then pull out next to the edge of the rim, do this top and bottom. Select the Circular Marquee tool, now where the 2 lines you have created cross each other place the plus looking Marquee pointer on top until it lines up vertical and horizontal with the blue ruler lines. Hold down 'Shift' and drag to the bottom right until it cover the section of the RIM you want. Now copy and paste it onto the Warthog bitmap and resize it accordingly. Once you are happy, right click on the layer with the new rim on the layers palette, right click and 'duplicate layer'. The new rim is behind the old one, so with the 'Move tool' put the new rim in position, to give it that spin effect, follow the picture below and do a radial blur. Don't go overboard, a little is enough.

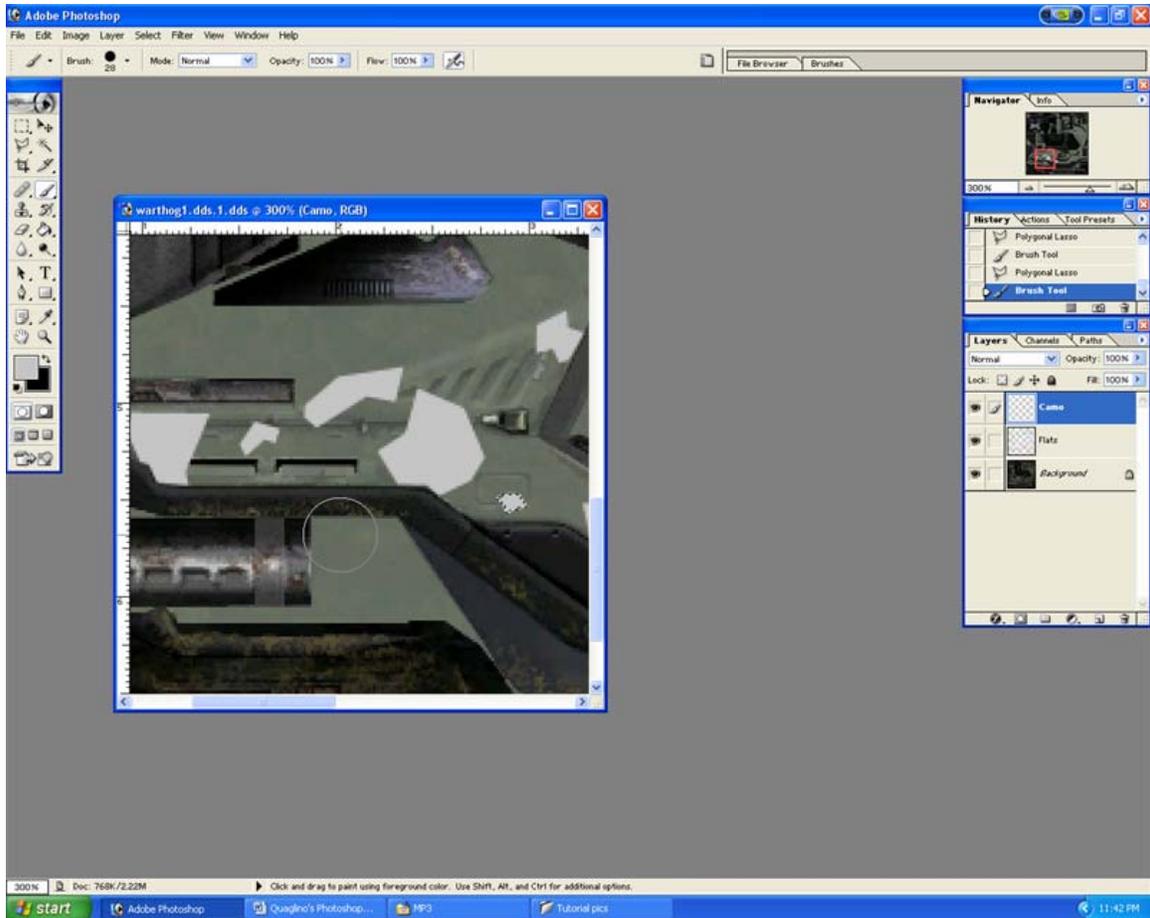


Camo

Utilizing your new found skill with the polygon lasso, you will use this for the camo, you can use the regular lasso if you like but I like the precision rather than a drawn look.

Create another layer so as not to disturb the White paint. Since we used White lets go with an Artic Camo (Grey and a lighter Grey, you won't want it too dark, it is for the snow after all. Then select the Camo layer.

Now just start applying random shapes with some sharp edges.



It may look odd, but it looks better on the Warthog when in 3D.

Now we can try it out in the game and see if we need adjustments.

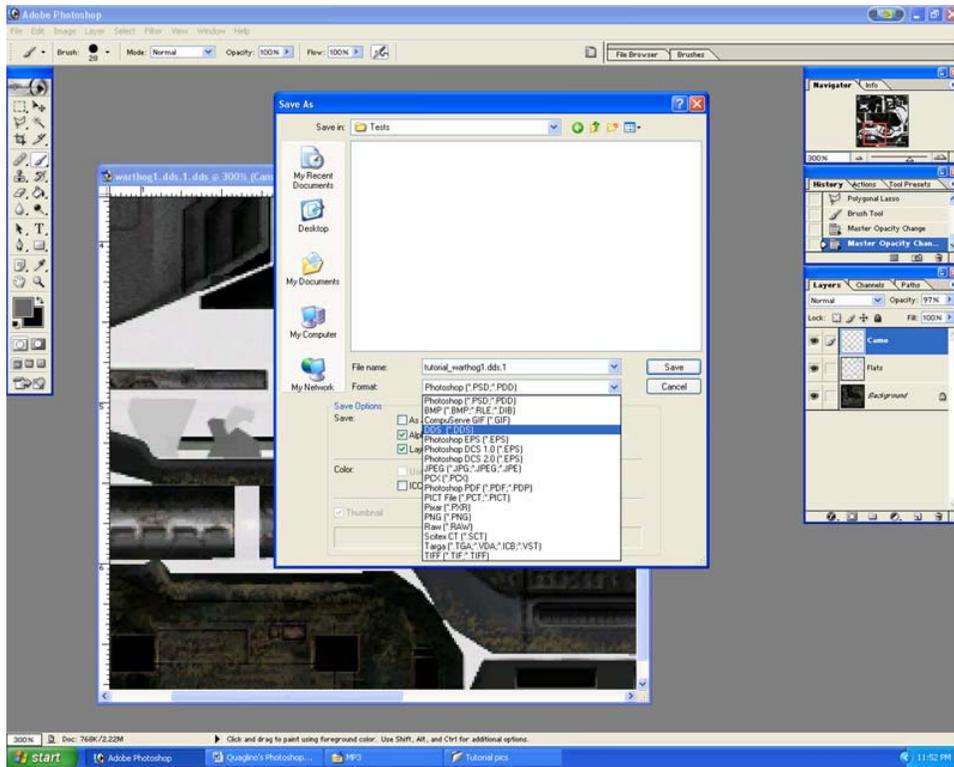
I only did enough to guide you on your way (you get the idea), so forgive what mine will look like.

Saving as DDS file.

Save for the last time then go to File> Save As

It should read 'NEW_warthog1'

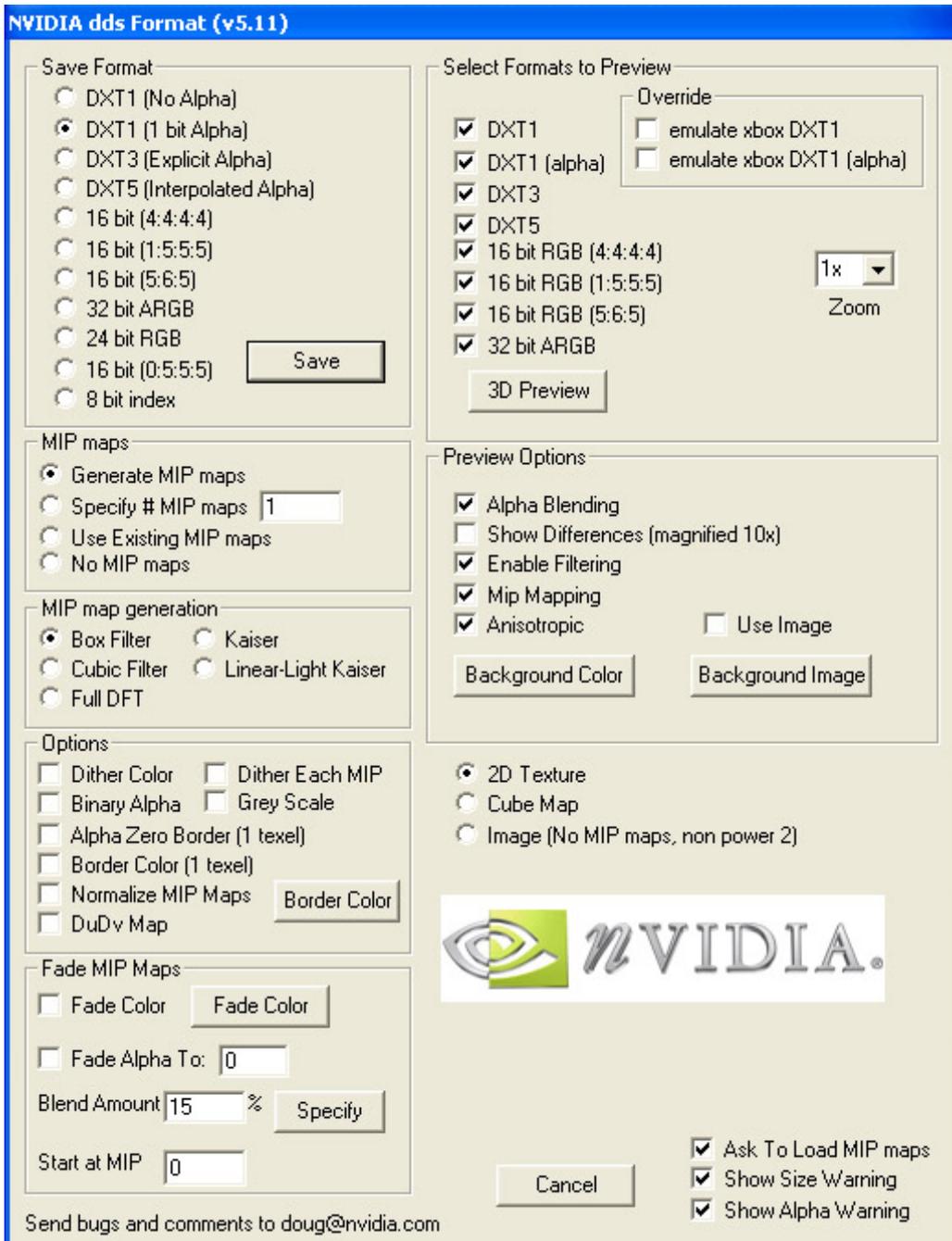
Make sure it reads NEW_ so you will not save over the back-up copy of the original.



Go to file format and select DDS

A DDS screen comes up select DX1 (1 bit alpha)

It should look like the pic below.



Then click Save!

And close Photoshop.

Injecting into Halo

Open up Halo Map Tools again and find the Warthog file. This time click 'Inject Texture'. Find your newly created file and open it. A pop-up letting you know it was

injected comes up and your pic is now visible. You are ready to play. First just exit the HMT program so as not to conflict with Halo. Then open Halo with a stage featuring the warthog and check it out to see what you need to change or add!



As you can tell the Grays are too light not really noticeable, so just open up Photoshop and go to open your file, not the DDS version, but your PSD file for Photoshop so as to adjust the layers. Here I would select the Camo layer, take the Magic Wand, while Magic Wand is selected hold down shift and select all the same colors. With that selected, go change the gray to a darker gray and then click paint brush. Now you can just hold down the left mouse and color over the selected areas with out painting anything else, you are telling PS that ONLY this is what I want to color. Do this till you are happy with the final product.

Also as a bonus! You never need to take the time to outline the Warthog (rocket or chain gun), they both have the same style bitmap! And all you need to do now is 'Ctrl' click the Flats layer and copy and paste onto a new Warthog, just change the color of the New Warthog!!!! The only thing you need to do is add the fun extras!

Remember every time you change something you must 'save as' DDS file and replace the previous file, if not after a while you will have tons and it gets confusing.

You must also inject it again. So don't forget!!

I hope this was helpful to you in your understanding of the wonderful tool of Photoshop. Look up some advanced tutorials, or like me attend a school and take the classes. I have yet to see something Photoshop could not handle.

If you have any questions please feel free to PM me 'Quaglinoman' at Halomods.com, I should be able to answer it.