

HOW TO PAINT A MINDEN COLONEL

FIRST THOUGHTS

First, I must emphasize that the description below is itself a work in progress...As this was a test figure, the experience I have gained will help me refine the process. Where I believe further improvements are needed, I will describe the steps I will take in the next test.

Second, the paints I use are a blend of Foundry, Coat D'Arms, Formula P3, and some Vallejo and Citadel. The actual colors, in my opinion, are not as important as the process of applying them, and as such I will refer to them with generic names, such as deep blue, ochre yellow, etc. If anyone needs a specific color, let me know! I rarely use triads anymore as I have gathered enough experience to mix my own colors depending on the desired result. The paint consistency is quite runny (but still covering completely) for painting large surfaces to quite thick when it comes to applying highlights for small details (to avoid having the paint run into the crevices!)

Third, I usually paint with the layer technique, applying from two (very small details, such as buttons or cockades) up to five (such as coats) layers. I start from the darkest possible (often created by adding black or brown or gray to the intermediate paint) and proceed to the lightest (often created by adding white or yellow).

Fourth, I must confess that in my experience the best results with the above technique are obtained when the painted surface is as large as possible, for literally obvious reasons! As such, increasing the number of layers for small details or smaller figures just clutters the figure and creates an overall 'busy' image. So here, less is best!

Fifth, again in my experience the problem with small details and recessed or hard to get features (such as waistcoats, breeches, faces, etc), and such exist in all kinds of figures, is that the layers cannot be applied correctly. Especially, it is difficult to apply the darker colors without overlapping with other areas or destroying the black-lining between areas.

Sixth, I paint using Rosemary brushes. For the colonel, I used a brand new 3x0 (Nr93) for everything but the face and black-lining, for which I used a brand new 7x0 (Nr92). I painted dipping the brush half-way through but used only the first quarter of the tip for the actual painting. I paint with several small strokes instead of a few and larger ones to retain control.

THE PAINTING PROCESS

Step 1

I cleaned and attached the rider to the horse using greenstuff and superglue. Once dry, I primed everything with Humbrol matte black enamel making sure the paint was applied tightly to prevent any loss of details.

Step 2

I painted the entire figure using the shade colors (darkest) doing my best to avoid overlapping to other areas and erasing the black lines separating areas. Only the face was painted using the lightest possible color, but I will not repeat this again in the next figure.

Step 3

I washed the entire figure (including the horse) with the GW new washes (which run into the deepest crevices without smudging much the raised areas, like inks do). I used the sepia for the waistcoat and breeches (painted with ochre yellow), and also for the face. Everything else was



washed with black. I now have in order the complete set, so I will try to see if anything else works better. I gave this step enough time to dry up. At this time, the figure looked very dark and dirty. I wanted the very dark effect for two reasons. First, the smaller the figure or feature being painted the strongest must be the contrast between the shade and the other layers. This gives depth to the painting, which is needed as size is reduced. Second, applying the shades in a clean way is very difficult as the size is reduced and for this, the washes came to the rescue! So, my usual shades became darker and the recessed areas were well defined without the need to use magnifiers. I believe this is the most critical step in painting this figure.



Step 4

I painted again the whole figure using my normal shades for large surfaces (such as the coat and the horse) but for everything else I started with the first lighter layer (for example, I added a bit of white to the ochre yellow for painting the waistcoat). From that point on, I kept adding highlights as needed. The coat has five layers, including a final feathering effect at the hem. I used to be satisfied with my dark blue (Foundry) but I think I need a new one for these figures, something richer and darker at the same time. This Foundry blue is muted and works well with larger figures, but for the Minden ones I want some with more of a punch, perhaps a royal blue will do the trick. I think I have over-highlighted the boots, but this is a matter of personal taste. I should have left more black showing through. The face is OK, but since then I have started using the 'best' flesh paint I have ever seen - it's a custom mix done by my studio and finally I manage to convince them to share!

Step 5

Metal work...This was very easy. All small parts to be painted with metal paint (such as buttons, lace, sword fittings, bridle buckles, were first repainted with black as most had already been accidentally splashed with this or that paint! Then, a very dark metal paint (tin or brass) was used followed by a very bright one and finished with another wash (black for white metal, sepia for brass/gold).

Step 6

Black-lining. This is the most important step for a clean painting job. Using my finest brush, I used again the washes to redefine all lines and recessed areas. The face and eyes were also done with this brush. As these washes are very dilute, some black was often added to erase some paint overlaps to the 'black' zone in between colors.

Step 7

Gloss varnish using Humbrol Clear and then matte varnish. Finally, I glossed again all metal and all leatherwork (boots and horse leatherwork).

THE HORSE

The paint I used for the horse is Coat D'Arms Horse Tone Brown. It was highlighted using Coat D'Arms Leather Brown and then some white. The 'whitish' parts were based on a 'bone' paint to match the warm color of the overall brown theme - here the wash was the sepia and not the black used for everything else. The 'blackish' parts are black paint mixed with the Horse Tone Brown and some white for the final highlights, again to keep the tones warm. All leatherwork on the horse is left untreated 'shiny' black.



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