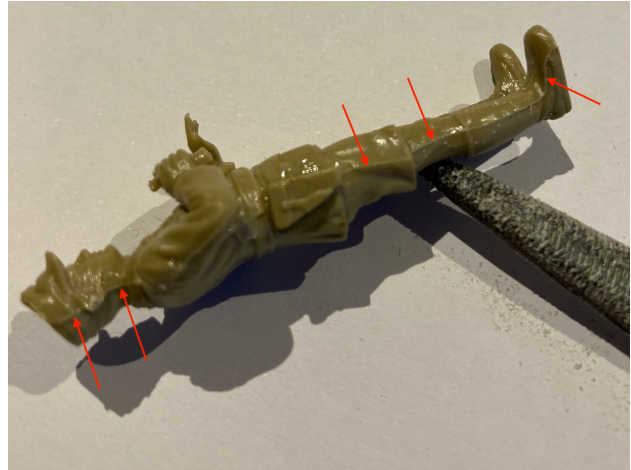


Painting figures - a guide by Graham Tuer

All figure painting uses the same principles regardless of scale, the only difference is the larger the scale, the easier they are to paint, but more detail requires defining and will be noticed. Also the better the moulding, the easier it will be. The examples used here are 1/35 scale WW2 figures.

The technique used here is one that works for me (primarily as I paint smaller scales) so develop the technique to suit yourself and the figures being painted.



1. The first task is to clean the figure, use either a fine file or sandpaper to remove any moulding marks (arrowed). It's easier to file these prior to construction as access maybe awkward afterwards.

2. Once the basic cleaning has been done, construct the figure as required, with its equipment. Paint will be used to cover any other imperfections.



3. Paint the figure with a dark wash, darker than the main uniform colour, to help highlight the creases and edges of any clothing, collars, straps and equipment.

This will also highlight any moulding marks that have been missed or areas that require filling. This needs to be done now.

Don't worry if any mould marks require filling, and subsequently are filed flat, losing uniform detail, such as straps, these can be re-applied with painting.

4. Now paint any flesh areas with a dark flesh colour (darken flesh with brown). This will help define the edges of any clothing and highlight any muscle. Again use a thin mix, this won't be the final colour.

5. Next paint the areas that are in shadow using a very dark colour or black, such as under helmets/hats, sleeves and shorts. Also the edges of clothing, such as jackets, straps and socks. It's also useful to paint any hair that is to be fair in colour. This does not have to be accurate, so going 'wide' is fine. When the main colours are painted, it will be easier to run the brush to the edges, yet keeping an element of the shadow.

The colour used depends on the main colours plus personal preference. As a guide I use the following:

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| • Black | Bright colours eg. Napoleonics / civilians / medieval / renaissance |
| • Very dark brown | Desert colours eg. 8th Army / Afrika Korps / Khaki drab |
| • Very dark grey | WW1 / WW2 / modern uniforms |



6. Now complete the painting of the figures with the base colours, taking the paint up to the edges, making the black-lining become minimal. If any black-lining looks too thick, it probably is, so more colour will be needed to reduce the lines. It doesn't matter if the colours are a bit bright, especially so for WW1/WW2 uniforms, as the next stage will dull those colours.



Depending on the mould quality, it may be necessary to exaggerate some detail, such as pockets. Use gunmetal or a blacked silver for any metallic items. Where uniforms are not so uniform (as with these Afrika Corps figures) it's a good idea to vary the colours by lightening or darkening the base colour.

At this stage make sure any difficult to reach areas are painted, such as the back of the neck under a helmet. There's no need to paint everything, as the 'shadows', such as under the arms and helmets, will come into play to provide the depth required. If possible, don't add equipment or helmets/hats until later, to make painting faces and hands easier.

7. The next stage is to add shading and depth to the figures. This is easily done with a wash, usually a brown-grey mix. It may appear that all the careful painting and colours are being ruined but the wash will collect in the creases, thus creating shaded versions of the main colours. If there is excessive wash on the figure it can be removed by resting a tissue on the liquid.



8. Painting the faces.

This is most difficult step and a lot depends on the detail moulded into the model. One option is to simply paint a dark wash across the face, such that it collects in the crevasses, this might be the best option for 1/48 scale figures.



1. Paint white in the eye sockets



2. Paint a thin black vertical line across the socket



3. Paint dark flesh, around the sockets to 'close' the eyes

Highlight the faces with a light flesh colour on the nose, cheeks, forehead and chin. If feeling confident, you can use a grey-flesh to represent stubble growth or dirt, but don't overdo this - less is more.

9. Paint a final dark wash in selective areas that might not be as dark as required. This is subjective so will depend on the style required.

10. Add detail such as badges, straps, buckles and use an orange-brown mix to highlight leather.

11. Finally drybrush the figure with an appropriate colour; off-white for sandy conditions, a cream-brown for mud conditions. Only do this if the figure is likely to represent those in action.



How much detail that is required is a personal preference, as it the style. The key is creating contrast between the different colours. Above all, adding figures to your models will bring them to life - literally.