



**rasmussen81**

## **TUTORIAL: PAINTING YOUR 1/72 INFANTRY SOLDIERS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This tutorial is designed for players of Memoir '44 who want to customize the infantry soldiers that come with the Memoir '44 base game and various expansion armies or other 1/72 figures. You do not have to be an artist or even a perfectionist to customize your soldiers. After following this tutorial, you will have a fun and visually exciting custom Memoir '44 game! For best results, read through all of these steps and then collect your materials.

If you want to buy 1/72 soldiers (they will be the same size as the Memoir '44 infantry but will come in many more poses) go to <http://www.plasticsoldierreview.com/PeriodWorldWar2.html> and figure out which soldiers you like the best. You will have to buy them somewhere else, but this is a good resource to see the poses and molds for each company and each countries army.

### **STEP 1: PREPARING TO PAINT**

Step one has two parts. First you will need to wash your figures to remove the residue from molding and the dirt from playing. You can skip this step but the dirt and residue can make it hard for the paint to stick to the plastic.

To wash, just put your figures in a container with warm, soapy water and gently scrub them off. Let them dry.

The second part of step one is mounting your figures. If you are painting the Memoir '44 figures you can skip this step because they already have a solid base; many of the 1/72 infantry figures you can buy (after looking at the Plastic Soldier Review website) have small bases that tip over easily during play. You'll want to mount your soldiers on a more solid base.

### **WHAT YOU'LL NEED**

Glue Gun

Bases – some people like to use metal washers. This adds weight and you can stick them on a magnetic foundation in your storage container.

– I like to use plastic math counters. These can be found in school supply stores for very cheap and are the perfect size; four can fit in a hex.

Heat the glue gun. Once heated apply some glue to the bottom of a figure and wipe the tip of the gun on an edge of the figure's base (to prevent stringy glue). Before the glue cools, put the figure in the center of the base – plastic or metal. It will be cool in seconds.



This is also a good time to check over each figure. Remove any flashing

with a hobby knife and use a hair dryer to heat any bent figures, allowing you to set them back in place. Don't melt the plastic and use the dull side of your hobby knife to push the soldier into shape.

## **STEP 2: PAINTING THE BASE COLOR**

This is the most scary step for many people because you are crossing the point of no return. Once your soldiers are painted with the base color you have to continue or you end up with an army painted one boring color.

### **WHAT YOU'LL NEED**

Paint brush – small and soft bristled. A #3 works well.

Paint – I use black as my base color. Most of it ends up covered in the end but the black can help make simple shadows and shows clearly where you have missed a spot.

Water or Acrylic thinner – for cleaning your brush

Paper Towel for drying the brush after cleaning

You don't need to be careful during this step. Your goal is to get each figure completely painted with your base color. You will need to paint every crevice so don't miss areas under the arms, the insides of legs, and all around weapons. You want to paint the base of your figure as well because the plastic will show through in the end if you don't. Examine each figure to make sure you covered it all.



Let it dry completely before moving on to Step 3.

## **STEP 3: PAINTING SKIN AND HAIR**

A good rule of thumb to remember about painting soldiers is to paint them in the same order you would get dressed in. Start with skin and hair, then pants, coats, boots, gear, and finally weapons and helmets. When painting detail, you want to have a steady hand. If you're like me and need a little help with that, rest your hands on the table you're working on. The hand holding the figure can rest normally. With your painting hand, rest your pinky on the table to give yourself good range of motion but still steady your brush.

In this step, you want to look over the figure and decide which parts are skin. Are they wearing gloves or not? Will you need to paint hair or is there not that much detail? Once you have this figured out you can start making your men come alive.

### **WHAT YOU'LL NEED**

Paint brush – now you need a small brush. #10/0 works well

Skin Color Paint – I use Testors Enamel 1116 Cream

Water or Acrylic thinner

Paper Towel

Using the fine paintbrush, begin painting the skin of your figures. This is usually the face and hands only but may also include some arms and legs (the British 8<sup>th</sup> Army or the Afrikacorps). You can be a little bit sloppy during this step because you will be painting the surrounding areas later on.



To speed this process, follow the same sequence. Paint each figure's face, then left hand, and finally right hand. This ensures that you won't miss any area, though if you do you can come back later and fix it.

#### **STEP 4: PAINTING THE CLOTHES**

Each set of men will have different uniforms and they will usually be different colors. The box that the figures came in will give you a general guideline to follow but you are always able to choose your own color scheme. As a general rule, here are some common color schemes for each country:

- British – dark tan (8<sup>th</sup> Army),
- American – tan and green uniforms (
- German – grey uniforms, camouflage (paratroopers), white (winter)
- Russian – Brown, green, tan (summer), white (winter)
- French Resistance – Various colors



Your color choices don't have to be perfect. Whatever color scheme you choose, paint every soldier the same way (or similar) so when they are assembled, there is a consistent appearance.

#### **WHAT YOU'LL NEED**

- Paint brush – I continue to use the 10/0 brush.
- Uniform Color – make sure you don't try to mix it or your soldiers will all be wearing slightly different colors. You won't be able to mix it the same twice.
- Water or Acrylic thinner
- Paper Towel

Depending on the uniform, you may be able to use the same color for the pants and coat. In this case you can paint most of the soldier all at once. If pants and coat are different colors, start with the pants first.

#### **PANTS**

When you are painting the pants, be careful around the boots because you can often leave these black (and save yourself from needing to touch them up if you aren't sloppy). Paint over any

gear like canteens, shovels, or webbing with the pant's color. If the pants and coat are different colors, let the pants dry before moving on to the next section.

### **COAT**

You'll need to take a little bit more time for the coat because it touches the skin and pants that you've already painted. If you are careful during this step you can save yourself a lot of time in the end. Paint the coat including any equipment and webbing that is in this area; you'll get this detail later.

### **STEP 5: PAINTING HELMETS AND BOOTS**

You're almost done with the soldier. After this step and touchup you could be finished and play with some impressively realistic soldiers. If you were careful while painting the pants (and the boots stay black), you may not need to paint them. But if you were a little bit sloppy (or the boots need to be leather brown) you'll need to work on the boots. If you're painting the boots brown, don't worry about getting brown on the base because the grass will cover over it.



You can paint the helmet earlier if you really want because nothing (except the face) overlaps it, but I usually wait until the end to paint it. I paint the helmet with downward strokes that pull off the edge of the helmet (instead of going around the outer edge of the helmet). This helps me not get the helmet color on the face if my brush slips.

### **STEP 6: PAINTING THE GEAR AND WEAPONS**

When you paint the straps, canteens, trenching tools, weapons, and other gear, the figures go from looking like men in uniform to looking like soldiers. This step may require a little bit more time but is well worth it! Work in short intervals and it won't feel as eternal.

### **WHAT YOU'LL NEED**

- Paint brush – the smallest you can find. I continue to use the 10/0 brush.
- Gear colors – usually this will include grey, brown (for wood and leather)
- Water or Acrylic thinner
- Paper Towel

Look the figure over and decide which parts need to be which color. Start with one (grey maybe) and paint everything that needs to be that color. I usually paint the weapons at this time as well.



This will be the most detailed work you do on the project so remember to brace your hands to prevent shaking and accidents. If you do make mistakes, you can fix it during touchup. When you are doing leather straps or webbing, try long smooth strokes to get straight lines.

## **STEP 7: ADDING THE GROUND**

This is an optional step. If you don't want to add grass just paint the base green and skip to Step 9. Adding grass is an easy step that makes the figure look even better and adds to the customized look.

### **WHAT YOU'LL NEED**

Paint brush – larger old brush that you don't mind getting glue in

Paint brush – I use a 5/0. This is to paint the ground.

Paint – green for grass. White for snow. Yellow for sand.

Glue – Poly Vinyl Acetate (P.V.A.) which is just a fancy name for white glue or Elmer's Glue.

Basing material – I use sand in place of flock or other fake grass. It doesn't wear off as much, is cheaper, and looks great. You can get it at a hobby store or collect it yourself.

Shallow plastic container – I use the bottom of a yogurt container I cut off

Start out by laying a bead of glue around the plastic base that you glued to your figure. Using the old brush, spread the glue over the base of your figure and the plastic base. Try not to get glue on the legs or boots of your figure.

Put the figure in the shallow plastic container and sprinkle the sand over the glue-covered base. Pile the sand up on the base and leave it to sink into the glue and dry. Continue with the next figure in the same way.

Once the glue is dry, you can paint it using your 5/0 brush. Decide if you want the ground to be green grass, white snow, or yellow sand. You want to start by painting all of the basing material a darker shade of the color you want. When I want it to be grass, I paint the sand a darker green, followed by drybrushing a light green. If I want it to be snow I use a light grey, followed by drybrushing white. If I want it to look like desert sand, I paint the base a dark yellow, followed by drybrushing a lighter yellow. I'll continue as though you wanted to paint the basing like grass.



After you have painted all of the sand green (being careful not to get it on the soldiers boots) you need to let it dry. When the base color is dry, you want to drybrush a lighter color green over it.

### **DRYBRUSHING**

Drybrushing is a painting technique where you use very little paint and only catch the raised parts of the area you want to paint. In this case you need to get some light green on your brush and then wipe most of it off on the paper towel. Gently pull the brush over the sand, painting the raised bits of sand a lighter color. This creates a two-tone effect and makes the grass

look quite real. Drybrushing is fast and easy; just remember that you don't want to use much paint.

### **STEP 8: DETAIL TOUCH-UP**

You're almost done. Look back over your whole figure and find any places where you accidentally got a color in the wrong place. This might include green from the grass, brown from the equipment, etc. Hopefully this step won't take you very long but you may need all of the colors you've used for these figures. Take your time and examine the whole figure because if you move on to the next step, it's much harder to fix mistakes.

### **STEP 9: FINISHING FOR PLAY**

The figures are almost ready to join the ranks of their respective armies in Memoir '44 battles again! This step is important for keeping these painted figures looking nice for years of game-play. You will be giving them a protective covering that will help prevent the paint from wearing off or chipping.

#### **WHAT YOU'LL NEED**

Paint brush – the same #3 brush you used for the base coat will work well  
Matte Ceramcoat Finish  
and/or  
Matte Spray Finish

To protect your paint job, gently and slowly brush on the matte finish. You can use Ceramcoat or another brand. Be sure not to use too little and don't go fast because you will create bubbles that are hard to get rid of. Apply two coats and allow them to dry between coats. This step takes a while because the finish takes so long to dry. After these two coats, I also spray a coat of matte finish to be extra safe. You could skip to the spray but it won't be as sturdy. Allow to dry completely before you handle them.

### **CONCLUSION**

You did it! If you followed these steps you have an army of custom Memoir '44 soldiers who are ready to charge into battle!

If you have any questions, feel free to PM me at rasmussen81 on the Memoir '44 web site and take a look at my gallery to see the final results of my figure painting.

All of these techniques were learned from the advice and help of other Memoir '44 fans. A big thanks to Roobarb for all of his advice and encouragement and to Brummbar for allowing me to copy his format for this tutorial. I'm still learning and improving, so don't be worried if your first few projects don't turn out perfectly. Just remember that these are figures for a board game and you will be sitting a ways away from them; you won't see most of the imperfections.

If you want to learn how to paint the Memoir '44 tanks as well, visit [www.Brummbar44.com](http://www.Brummbar44.com) and click on the DEPOT tab to download his tutorial.