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Painting a 1943-45 Wehrmacht infantry figure wearing Splinter Pattern Zeltbahn



Heersplittertarnmuster 31 (left) is the official name of the commonly referred to Splinter Pattern Camouflage used by the German Army during WWII.

The Pattern while looking very complex to start off with can be reproduced even in 20mm scale and look quite striking.

By following the following steps (and a steady hand!) your figures will even look like they have the minute raindrop print over the main zig zags.

The pattern itself is made up of a pale green/grey base colour with large geometric zig zags of brown (Splinters) and smaller areas of medium green joining the brown zig zags together. Over the top of this pattern are hundreds of tiny vertical dark green lines referred to as 'raindrops'. The raindrops are printed in blocks leaving some areas of the Splinter camouflage plain.



The figure used is an Almgöver

1/72 German Grenadier

A) Preparing the figure

The trick to getting good results is often patience and good preparation. I always wash my bare figures in warm soapy water, file away any mould lines and superglue them to a steel washer.

The washer isn't essential, but it does create a sturdy base for the figure and it has the added advantage of been able to use on magnetic card.

Next, I use an old plastic bottle top and bluetac the figure to the top. This provides an excellent stable platform to grip while painting the figure.

Once this is done, I mix a little *Vallejo Black 950* paint with *Windsor and Newton Acrylic Flow Improver* (you can use water, but the finish isn't as good) and give the bare figure a wash with the mix.

The wash when dry will still show all the detail of the figure and also of created a decent primed surface for painting on. Using black as the base coat also means not as much black lining later.



B) The Base Colour: Zeltbahn.

Using a size '2' brush, I liberally applied an undiluted coat of *Grey Green 886*, taking care to leave the black undercoat showing where cloth overlapped, or equipment ended.

C) Adding the base brown camouflage splinters

Switch to a size '0' brush and paint at irregular intervals 'W', 'N' and 'V' shapes over the Zeltbahn. I used *Cam Med Brown 826* for this colour.



D, Adding the base Green Camouflage

The green areas painted in Black Green 980 in chunky blocks, are always touching the brown zig zags. Ideally one green block should connect two separate brown lines or fill in a corner section of a brown line.

For some people this will be pleasing enough to pass as Splinter Camouflage. I would recommend using a paler green if this is the effect you want.

E) Getting a bit harder: Painting the Raindrops

For all those of you bold enough to try and capture the flavour of the raindrop overprint, take a '000' brush, Pastel Green 885 and paint very small lines, following the direction of the cloth, over the original Grey Green 886. Take care not to paint over the brown or green.

The contrast of the darker grey and the pale pastel will create the illusion of the raindrops.



F) The Brown Highlights

Repeat the '000' process on the brown zig zags using Beige Brown 875.

Although not accurate, I have found that painting a paler brown over the dark brown creates an optical illusion of the raindrops continuing over the entire print.

I have also created a nice effect by painting the brown high light in full (not as lines) and that also works well. To use this effect, paint the highlight over the darker brown, just leaving the edges dark brown (and any deep folds in the cloth to create the shadow).

G) The Green Highlights

Once again using the '000' brush, this time using Olive Green 967 paint vertical lines over the dark green base colour.



Once the green has been high lighted, the Splinter Pattern is finished, sit back and admire your handy work.

Of course, until the entire figure is painted, the effect won't look complete...

H) Painting the rest of the Figure

At this point, I have painted the flesh area in my preferred base colour, followed by painting out the uniform and helmet dark grey. All sand coloured equipment I paint a base colour of brown.



I) Field Grey

Next paint the uniform Field Grey leaving the darker shade visible in the folds of cloth. I also high lighted the flesh at this point.



J) Highlighting

By mixing white in with my Field Grey I created my paler tone for the raised areas of the uniform.

K) Final touches

All the little details are finally finished off, canvas is painted Tan Yellow, leather work is highlighted, wood work is painted and the gun metal is high lighted.



L) Basing

To finish the figure off, the base is painted with PVA glue and dipped in gravel. Static grass is applied later in clumps.

Unless stated otherwise all the paints used are Vallejo.

Happy painting

Matthew Hingley
www.elhiem.com