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Painting a World War 2 US Paratrooper



The figures used are Sojers SP205

The US Paratroopers had two main jump uniforms. These elite and brave troops were given a unique (if flawed?) uniform. The first pattern was a pale tan colour that was sometimes painted with black stripes (using a paint brush) as a desperate attempt by the troops to break up this bright uniform. This was the uniform used by the USA during the D Day operations. A later pattern was produced of a darker drab colour, presumably because someone realised that the Tan colour stood out amidst all the green of North West Europe?

This painting guide is to be used to paint the 1st type pattern.

A) Preparing the figure



A



B

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.

Here you can see the bare metal figure, glued in place to his washer, then blue-taced (soft putty) to the top of a bottle top.

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.

B, Background colour

I mix a little *Vallejo Olive Drab 889* 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 a dark undercoat as the base coat also means not as much black lining later.



C



D

C) Flesh

This time I decided to paint the flesh tones of the figure first. Everybody has their own preferred way of painting flesh, so I will not go into how I did it ;) I also painted any wood a dark brown at this stage.

D) The main uniform

Using a size '0' brush I carefully painted the tunic and trousers of our Paratrooper *Desert Yellow 977*. Be sure to leave extremes in creases and folds the background colour.

E) Highlighting the Uniform

Still using the size '0' brush I paint the raised areas of the yellow with *Buff 976*.



E



F

F) Adding the base Webbing colours

US webbing can be either Tan or a green colour. To make the figure stand out and look attractive I always go for contrasts. In this case the webbing will be a green shade. I used *Russian Uniform 924* as the base colour. The helmet was dry brushed. The webbing carefully painted with a '00' brush. If you want to use the Tan colour, just repeat the process using the same colours as the Uniform.



G



H

G) Highlighting the webbing

Quite simply I mixed 50% *Russian Uniform* with 50% *Buff* and used a size '000' brush to pick out detail on the webbing. The helmet was once again dry brushed (lightly).

H) The Leather

US Paratroopers leather work was finished a red colour. I use Flat *Brown 984* painted with a size '00' brush and then high lighted with *Mahogany 846* with a '000' brush.

I also painted the scarf and foliage on the helmet a bright green at this stage.



I

I) Woodwork and Metal

I paint all the metal work black and then highlight with a bit of silver. The wood is then highlighted with a mix of the original brown colour and *Buff 976*

For most people this will be enough to finish the figure.

J) Adding extra detail

The US Paratroops had a very prominent Stars and Stripes on their right arm (presumably so as not to be shot by friendly troops? Or perhaps to draw more fire from the enemy incase they didn't realise these bright tan soldiers running around were Americans?)

Although tricky, the Stars and stripes can be painted at this small scale. First paint a red oblong on the right arm (the Sojers figures have a raised area for the flag already). Next paint a blob of mid blue in the left top corner of the red.



F) The Stars and Stripes

Ok, I can't do 50 stars and all the stripes, but a '000' brush and a steady hand gives a few blobs and at least three white stripes, which at 20mm looks pretty good (honest!)

G. Finishing Off

I also painted a Unit badge on the left arm (black badge with white dot in centre) and based the figure with scatter and static grass.



Happy painting

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