

# Quick 'n' Dirty Guides #1

## Weathering your troops

### **SKIN & FACES**

The cartoon 'five o' clock shadow' is an excellent visualization of facial weathering. Do this by painting a flesh and black mixture (make the shade darkish grey) around the upper lip, jaw and chin. Lighten by adding more flesh to the next highlight and a little white in a final touch to the highest spots. Avoid using a pure black and white mixture as it looks too stark and the contrast is extreme against the warmer flesh colours of the face.

An occasional scar on the upper cheek can be painted in using a 000 or 0000 brush. Make the colour of the scar deep red as a bright red will not contrast well with the flesh.

If you are particularly fixated by making your miniatures appear 'theatre specific' then paint tropical climate serving Americans and Northern Europeans in a flesh tone one shade darker than you would normally to simulate the effect of the sun. Equally you may paint 'winter soldiers' with slightly greyer or paler complexions. The answer to the next question is YES, embarrassingly I have done this in the past but I won't be making a habit of it.

### **CLOTHING**

#### THE 'DUSTY' LOOK

On my figures this is the commonest and easiest to achieve weathering effect. Finish painting the figure as you normally would. Take a fairly coarse or old brush which is either flat or has definitely lost its point and the bristles are somewhat splayed. Pick up some darkish base colour such as Flat Earth, English Uniform or Olive Drab on the brush but wipe most of it off with a tissue. Make sure the paint is reasonably thick and not runny, also ensure the paint is absolutely 100% matt. The brush should not be wet when you do this. Pull this brush across coat hems and lower areas of boots or trousers. This leaves uneven patches of the paint in a random fashion. Next, use a shade such as Vallejo Medium Flesh, Workshop Bronzed Flesh or similar. Drybrush lightly across the same areas. The effect will be immediately apparent. If you wish, add a little white to the mid colour and gently drybrush only the extreme relief areas. Boots may need a black or dark brown wash over the very tops or bottoms to restore definition.

## **CLOTHING**

### THE 'MUDSPATTERED' LOOK

This method follows an almost identical process to the 'DUSTY' look. The biggest difference is that it should be done in reverse. Fresh mud is always darker than dried mud. Follow steps 1 & 2 for the 'DUSTY' process but instead of a final highlight choose a deeper darker shade. A rich brown or red brown can give a nice effect. On vehicles a slightly glossy shade could be applied to simulate wetness. This technique is slightly trickier than the 'DUSTY' look and may need a little practice. Be careful not to over do it and be patient.

## **CLOTHING**

### THE 'FADED & PATCHED' CAMPAIGN LOOK

On campaign it doesn't take long to find out which manufacturers cut corners. Uniforms fade, rip and fall apart. Alternative clothing is found, scavenged or looted. The most obvious painting technique is to vary the shades of the primary colour of the unit. British Redcoats with shade variations running from brick red or pink to deep or bright red are a good example. Leg wear in different colours adds to the effect, so the same redcoats have trousers of light or dark grey, white, crème, buff or even brown. Patches can be added by marking a regular shape: circle, oval, square, oblong, triangle in a dark colour (try and avoid pure Black). These patches should be positioned in the traditional places such as elbows, knees, backside or less usual places. Paint just inside the limits of the box leaving an inconspicuous but distinct dark line to mark the edges of the patch. Inside the boundary chose a contrasting colour or even a pattern (red and white striped ticking is a good choice).

Another trick is to deliberately paint the entire unit in a very subdued shade of the ordinary uniform colour. Yet another is to make all aspects of the uniform which are normally dark, light and vice versa. Brilliant white webbing and cross belts should be changed to offwhite, pale yellow or buff or even speckled with darker earth colours.

Equipment and packs can be finished in unusual colours and leather cartridge pouches which are normally black can have the edges brushed in red brown or pale brown to simulate wear.

Vary headgear by having some figures with hats and some bareheaded. Bandage heads using small strips of paper. If working in a period where a variety of headgear was issued and available (Napoleonic/WW2) mix it in one unit. Make standards which have torn edges, pieces missing or are faded or shot through.

Field signs like armbands, rags etc can be painted on or quickly made with thin paper.

***Some references on this site***

Gallery Sections:

***GNW: Swedish Army; close up shots of infantry and cavalry units***

***Wof LoA: Unit close ups; various***

***Crimea: Various units particularly Allied: French & Turkish***

***WW2 : Early, Middle & Late War German***