

COVER MOUNT FOCUS

Give la tiny miniatures!

Gee Walsh takes his first foray into Epic scale Napoleonic and shares his painting approach for this month's free French Infantry frame.

My knowledge of Napoleonic warfare doesn't extend much past *Sharpe* and I usually paint 28mm or larger, so taking on these tightly grouped tiny soldiers would be a new challenge for me. That was what *Wargames Illustrated* was after when they sent me an infantry frame of Warlord Games' Epic Napoleonic models - a first timer's approach where others could learn from my successes and failures.

With the sheer volume of figures in the sets I reckon the priority for most gamers will be to get their minis painted and onto the table with the minimum of fuss, so that's the approach here.

Prior to putting brush to plastic on this French Infantry frame I needed to expand my general idea of a French Napoleonic uniform - white with some blue bits on it! To further my knowledge, I had a couple of good Osprey books to hand, plus the beautiful *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Uniforms of the Napoleonic Wars*, from Lorenz Books. It's really worth picking up the full collection of these, which go from the Roman era to World War Two.

A caveat about my paint jobs - the finished models are not designed to be super accurate, or win any awards, this method is purely to get hundreds of painted figures on the table as fast as possible!

GETTING STARTED

Your first step on the way to an easy painting experience is to only glue the front rank of troops to the base. This gives easier access to the rear, which can be mounted on any sort of support while you paint them. Use some sticky tack to keep them in place or a tiny blob of superglue if you find your brush pressure is moving them around too much.

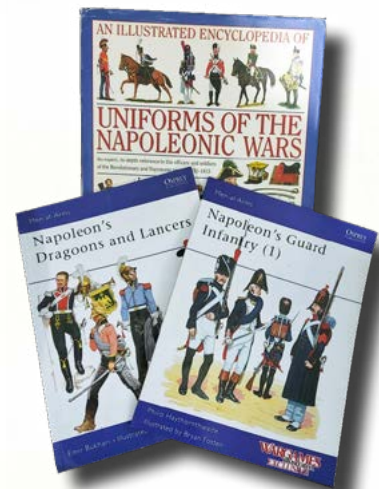
White is a dominant colour on these figures, so I began a white spray undercoat, rather than my usual grey primer. I dusted the figures with several light passes rather than a direct spray to avoid any loss of detail on these small miniatures. This approach will leave a blue 'preshade' because the colour of the plastic shows through in the recesses, which will make for a good looking white, with shading, before you've even applied a paint brush to the figure. With white being the dominant colour that's much of the work already done with just the pressing of a spray can nozzle!

BASECOAT

With the prep work done it's time to apply some basecoats with the brush. Try to be as neat as time allows and avoid spilling colours over onto the white areas you have already covered with your spray undercoat.

Think of the figures as a combined entity rather than individuals. You don't need each infantryman painted like a single figure but you want them to have impact as a combined whole. There are some gaps and messy parts in my painting, particularly around the various white details on the uniforms, but the wash does most of the work to hide those errors and the smaller scale offers forgiveness beyond that.

The more infantry you paint the more muscle memory you'll develop for each element. Boots that would initially be done one at a time can be



PAINTS USED

I used all Citadel paints as it was what I had to hand, but my painting approach will work with any brand. I chose brighter colours to begin with, so that darker washes would not tone down the colours too much. If you have a collection of GW paints reach for the following to paint your French:

Macragge Blue, Mephiston Red, Retributor Armour, Rhinox Hide, Mournfang Brown, Hobgrot Hide, Cadian Fleshtone, Skrag Brown, Corax White, Corvus Black, Iron Warrior, Abaddon Black, Black Templar Contrast, and Contrast Medium.



painted with a few confident sweeps of the brush across the length of the men if you get your paint thinned to a consistency that flows just right.

What colours and where?

Keep the colour application bright and minimal. I used a vibrant mid blue on the sleeves and tops of the shakos. Red was applied to the cuffs, collars, and the rear rank's coat tails.

On the back brown covers the main part of the backpack, and I mixed up various natural colours for the bed rolls to add variety. As with the coat tails, more focus was put on the rear rank's packs and rolls. The figures in the front would have their backs obscured, especially at the lower level, so I didn't want to waste too much time on them. I used a variety of browns and greys on the rear rank's back hair too.

Filling in the flesh colours on the faces and hands was where I focused more time, taking care not to overspill, and spending a little longer on the front rank because they would be unobscured.

The most delicate part is the musket, which runs down the full front of the figures. You don't need to go perfectly to the edge as you apply your metallic paint to the barrel - the later wash will fill in the blanks, but try and get as close as you can. Do the same for the stock with brown, not forgetting the small amount of wood showing on the reverse of the rear rank.

FINISHING THINGS OFF

I would not usually wash these varied colours with just one colour of wash on a 28mm figure. With the scale and time in mind I changed my usual approach and added the final shading with a single diluted 1:1 wash of Black Templar Contrast paint and Contrast Medium. You want the wash to really flow into the recesses and not stain any areas, which is why the Contrast paint is not applied pure. Note that you can use water in place of the mixing medium but your wash may not have quite the same flow.

When this wash has dried it's time to paint areas such as the hat and the boots in black. Touch up any overspill, especially on cross straps, with white and that's it, the models are done!



THE OFFICER AND ARTILLERY

I followed the same steps as on the Infantry, but I added more gold to areas such as the epiletos to give the Officer some extra 'bling'! I also ensured the overall job was a lot neater as he will stand out by not being ranked up. The white horse helps him really stand out too.

The artillery pieces use the same techniques as the Infantry for the crew, but the cannon is painted with Retributor Armour and the carriage is painted with Corvus Black before the wash is applied.

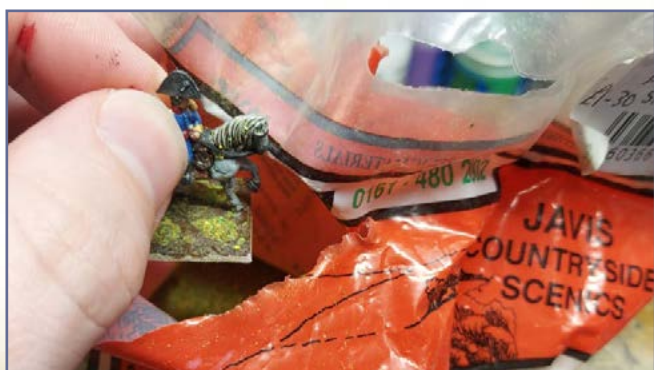


BASING

With painting done you can glue the rear ranks onto the base and get ready to apply texture. Be wary of the basing materials you use; certain sands or texture paints may have too large a size of grain and make it look as if your troops are surrounded by boulders. I used Vallejo Earth Texture, its grain size was just about right, and it had sufficient density to cover the small lip on which the ranks were standing to make the ground more blended.

Leave the Earth Texture to dry for as long as you can, then basecoat it with Rhinox Hide or similarly toned brown paint before applying a gentle drybrush of Mourmfang Brown or similarly paler brown. I add black edging around the base but I know this is not to everyone's tastes.

To finish things off I wanted to add some foliage. Basing tufts designed for larger scale models wouldn't feel right so I used some flock. A mixed blend (picked up quite cheap at a local hobby store specialising in model trains) was just right and was applied in patches over small blobs of superglue.



IN CONCLUSION

Overall, I found this to be a far more taxing painting experience than I initially expected but that might be because I gave myself an hour from start to finish (not including any drying times) to prove that it could be done. With my Epic scale and Napoleonic cherry popped I am sure that working on more Infantry at once would speed up the time and reduce the stress. Army painting is about winning the war and this experience was just a minor skirmish!



The overall appearance of the Infantry stand may not be too great when looked at individually, but en masse on the tabletop they'll make for a great looking army.

