



# A Guide to Painting Miniatures of the English Civil War



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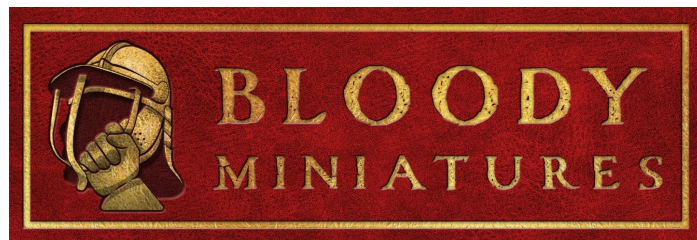
**THIS GUIDE EXPLAINS HOW I PAINT 28MM FIGURES  
FOR THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR.**

THERE ARE HEFTY HARDBACK VOLUMES AND A  
MILLION YOUTUBE VIDEOS DESCRIBING HOW TO  
PAINT WARGAMES MINIATURES.

THIS IS REALLY JUST A PRIMER, POINTING OUT  
SOME PARTICULAR THINGS TO THINK ABOUT WHEN  
PAINTING FIGURES FOR THIS PERIOD, AS WELL AS  
SOME GENERAL ADVICE ON MATERIALS AND  
TECHNIQUES. THERE'S NOTHING PARTICULARLY  
NEW OR CLEVER ABOUT IT, AND DESPITE CLAIMS  
TO THE CONTRARY, THERE ARE NO MAGIC BULLETS  
WHEN IT COMES TO PAINTING WARGAMES FIGURES.

THE ONLY THINGS YOU REALLY NEED ARE  
**TIME AND PATIENCE.**

**RICHARD LLOYD**





*Fig 1 : A parcel of rogues*

## **PART 1: PAINTING THE PERIOD**

Before diving into the brushwork, it's worth spending a little time thinking about what we're trying to portray. And how best to do that when it comes to wargames figures. Because what may be strictly historically accurate, may not look good - or even right - depicted on an inch high model.

Speaking of historical accuracy... Like most things that happened 400 years ago, while we do have a lot of evidence - surviving arms and armour; contemporary illustrations; the luminous portraiture of William Dobson (hyper-stylised and not representative of typical everyday wear), plus plentiful documentary references in muster rolls, drill manuals, and quartermasters' requisitions - no-one can say with absolute certainty exactly how things looked at the time.

Unfortunately that won't stop people telling you that things were definitively this way or that. Some of these old chestnuts are very deep rooted: Buff coats were always a deep yellow ochre; armour was always

blackened; Parliamentarians always wore orange sashes and Royalists always wore red (except when either side wore blue). And so on. Many of these shibboleths owe less to irrefutable evidence from the time, and more to the unshakeable credos of today's re-enactment fraternity.

We do know for certain that in the early phases of the Civil War, wealthy magnates on both sides - self-styled colonels - hurried to raise, equip and clothe regiments at their own expense. It's the transition point from retinues of the Middle Ages wearing their lords' personal liveries, to the age of uniformed armies. The appearance of English Civil War armies owes something to both the outgoing and incoming ways of clothing and equipping soldiers.

We know that red and blue coats predominated, but that a wide variety of other colours were adopted by different regiments - many of which have passed into legend: Newcastle's Whitecoats, Hampden's Greencoats. Essex's men all in orange-tawny, Waller's in Yellow, Lord Brooke's in dashing purple.





*Fig 2 : A Regiment of Foote in Orange-Tawny*

This appealing kaleidoscopic vision of battle lines drawn up in coats of many different colours is part of the enduring romantic appeal of the Civil Wars. The allure of so much (literal) period colour is irresistible to wargamers. The reality though, was probably somewhat different.

The rigours of campaigning in these rainy islands, attrition, battlefield reorganisations and the merging of different units, not to mention the variability of dye batches and the pre-industrial absence of colour-fastness, all make it extremely unlikely that much true uniformity was sustained after a few weeks in the field, never mind over months or years.

This probably remained the case even once army-wide procurement became more common as the war wore on – the King’s ‘Oxford Army’ being clothed in coats of blue, for instance. And, more famously, the Parliament’s ‘New Model’ army in the red coats that supposedly bequeathed the British infantryman the colour of his tunic down the 300+ years that followed (although actually, red had been the firmly established ‘military’ colour in England since Tudor times).

Although there are some records of bulk orders placed for ‘suits’ (i.e. matching jackets and breeches), uniform breeches were far from standard issue. So whilst there would have been a degree of uniformity in the coat colours of many regiments, it’s likely that breeches and other items of clothing (hats, shoes and so on), would usually have appeared more hotchpotch.

Of course, none of this need prevent us, as wargamers or collectors, from painting our figures just as we like. Indeed, while some people will tell you that there are hard and fast rules that must be obeyed, the reality is that there was probably far less uniformity and consistency of appearance than these same people would have you believe.

But as with all wargames periods and genres, there’s a balance between what is historically accurate (as far as we know anyway) and what looks great on the tabletop. Each of us decides where along that line we sit, and we paint our toy soldiers accordingly.



## Uniforms

I paint my units in a single coat colour (red, blue, green, etc.) but within that dominant colour, I try to achieve some tonal variation from figure to figure. Sometimes I also include one or two individuals in non-matching coloured coats, to represent the less than fully uniform nature of the age.

I do, however, paint my officers' coats the same colour as their men's - even though the received wisdom is that officers generally wore their own fancy civilian duds, with only the rank and file expected to wear the uniform coats of woollen broadcloth or kersey doled out by the quartermasters. Once again, this may or may not be historically accurate, depending on who you believe. But to my eye it just looks better.

I paint all the breeches within a unit using a limited palette of two or three different muted colours: browns, greys, or darker blues and greens, for instance. I do usually give a few figures breeches the same colour as their coats though, on the off-chance that some soldiers managed to get suits of matching trousers and coats.

## Buff coats

The buff coat, in both its sleeved and sleeveless incarnations, was a ubiquitous and characteristic item of protective clothing worn by combatants in the

17th. Made from toughened ox-hide, it was worn underneath armour, or as a protective layer in its own right. A thick leather buff coat wouldn't stop a musket ball, but could certainly turn aside a sword cut.

Most re-enactors' buff coats are a deep yellow ochre, which is probably down to modern-day chromium-based tanning. In the 1640's, tanneries used oak and other tree barks as their main tanning agent, and most surviving examples of 17th buff coats are a faded dirty brown or a very pale buff. (This is probably unsurprising given that they're made from 400-year old organic material. Their original colours were almost certainly deeper shades).

The best guide, I'd suggest, is to drop in on any craft leatherworker's studio today. You'll find an absolute myriad of colours in their stock of 'natural' (i.e. cured but undyed) hides - leathers and suedes from black to white, and every conceivable shade of brown in between. I paint the buff coats of my ECW figures in a mixed palette of browns. From yellow to russet, ochre to pale buff, grey-brown to black. Again it adds a pleasing visual variety.

On many ECW wargames figures, you will have the choice of painting a figure in a full buff coat with leather sleeves, or depicting it as a sleeveless buff coat worn over a coloured uniform coat.

*Fig 3 : Buff Coats (Also available in Buff)*





*Fig 4 : Armour in many colours*

## Armour

There's a good deal of evidence that armour of the period (principally 'back-and-breast' plates, helmets, gorgets, and tassets) was often either left 'black from the hammer' or painted black / treated with blackening oil, to stave off rust. Or 'blued'. Or deliberately 'russeted' (oxidized and oiled). But there are also plenty of surviving examples of polished armour from the Civil War era, so it's not possible to be definitive. Good quality armour was made of steel, and was very expensive. Cheap, mass-produced armour (issued to pikemen, for instance), was made of iron, and thus more likely to be black. Personally, on inch-high wargames figures, I prefer the look of 'white' (i.e. bright) armour - although I always deaden it down with washes to give it more of a grimy, battle-worn look.

## Weapons

There's less contention about bladed and hafted weapons, or the metalwork on black powder firearms of the period. As a matter of life-and-death self-preservation, fighting men of all eras spend a great deal of their time keeping their weapons and fighting gear as clean and sharp as possible to maintain lethal effectiveness. I can't imagine it would have been any different in the ECW, so I paint all weaponry as unashamedly shiny steel, then dull it down a little

with washes to make it appear well-used. Woodwork on both hafted weapons and firearms can vary hugely. Weapons of the period found in museums invariably have deep, dark brown burnished woodwork. But this rich, intense patina has been acquired through extreme age and repeated handling. Who's to say what colour they were when new? I tend to paint woodwork light brown – not because it necessarily *is* right, but because it *looks* right. There are a lot of these sorts of compromises involved in painting wargames miniatures. In reality, woodwork could vary from almost white for brand new pike shafts, to more of a red-brown for firearm stocks fashioned from seasoned hardwoods.

The ECW musketeer's distinctive accoutrements included the characteristic bandolier of 12 'apostles' (pre-measured individual charges of gunpowder), a priming flask of powder, a soft leather bullet bag, and a coil of matchcord.

The 'apostles' were bare or polished wooden bottles, although there are quartermasters' records from the period, for bulk orders of apostles finished in red or blue. Many re-enactors paint their apostles, and I usually do the same on my ECW figures. They just look more interesting.

The priming flask was usually metal, with or without a leather skin. I generally paint mine as bare tin. Matchcord is a kind of neutral grey.



## Hats, shoes, boots, baldrics, snapsacks, stockings, collars and cuffs

Some formations were bulk-issued with shoes, shirts, hats and so on. But in many cases these items of everyday clothing were left up to the individual.

I therefore paint hats in a variety of blacks, browns and greys. Boots, shoes, gauntlets and leather baldrics, I paint in assorted leather colours – browns, black, chestnut and tan. Shirts were commonly of lockram (an undyed coarse linen), and stockings of knitted grey wool. The ubiquitous slung ‘snapsack’, which held a soldier’s possessions and rations, was usually made from canvas, but occasionally leather.

I generally paint all collars, cuffs, stockings, snapsacks and suchlike in a kind of homespun grey-white.

Vallejo ‘Medium Grey’ is a great option for these sorts of items - although using a few other colours helps to create a visually appealing variety. I’ve used everything from ‘Pale Sand’ to ‘Khaki’ for these kind of undyed fabrics. It’s known that some regiments wore coats with contrasting coloured linings. In these instances turnback cuffs could potentially be a colour rather than ‘natural’.

Buttons on officers’ coats would sometimes have been silver or brass, but on the clothing of most common soldiers, were usually pewter. Wooden buttons were also commonplace, and buttons turned from horn or bone. I paint all buttons in silver though, otherwise they tend to disappear on a 28mm figure. It’s another

of those things that may not be strictly right, but it looks right.

## Sashes, feathers and the like

Tradition has it that officers, ensigns, sergeants, and anybody who was anybody, wore broad, showy sashes to denote their status. Red or crimson on the Royalist side and orange (later dark blue) on the Parliamentarian. This colour-coding supposedly helped to distinguish the two sides in an era when, as we have seen, regiments wore coats of different colours – and sometimes coats of the same colour but on opposing sides in a given battle.

In practice, it’s once again impossible to be definitive about this. Because there are also contemporary references to green sashes, black sashes and yellow sashes. As well as to field signs as varied as pieces of paper to sprigs of greenery, all helping to identify which side you were fighting on. So really, when it comes to sashes, you pay your money and take your choice.

Feather plumes could have been dyed in garish colours, but it seems more likely that where flamboyant individuals managed to acquire extraordinarily costly exotica such as ostrich feathers to decorate their hats, these would have been black or white. Which is generally how I paint them on my ECW figures.



*Fig 5 : The ubiquitous snapsack*



*Fig 6 : Boot hose. Those characteristic over-leggings*

## Boot hose and wrinkled stockings

A quick word about boot hose... These were boot liners, like over-socks, sometimes with a finely decorative lace top, worn inside long bucket-top boots for reasons of comfort, practicality, and (amongst the upper classes) fashion. But ordinary soldiers in simple latchet shoes often adopted thick woollen boot hose as a second layer of protection against mud, damp, and the rigours of campaigning on foot.

So when you see ECW figures that look like their socks are falling down, these are actually portrayals of the characteristic boot hose worn as a loose protective gaiter over finer-knit stockings. Both items of lower legwear should therefore be painted as fabric – because those are not bare calves on display.

Right, enough theory - onto the practice.

I should point out that I've contributed painting guides to a number of publications down the years, so if you feel like you've read some (or most) of this before - you probably have. I paint the way I paint, and tend to describe it pretty much the same way every time. At least I'm consistent.





## PART 2: PAINTING TECHNIQUES

I use the so-called layering technique to paint wargames figures. This just means laying increasingly lighter shades of paint over a dark base to build up an illusion of depth and enhance the 3D relief of the miniature. It's a technique as old as art itself, but in an inch-high figure its effect is greatly intensified – it's what people mean when they talk about a figure 'popping'.

Anyone can learn how to do this. A reasonably steady hand and an eye for pleasing colour combinations and contrasts certainly helps, but most people's skill and technique improves with practice. It does require time and patience though, and to be fair, not everybody has those at their disposal.

In the popular (and quicker) 'dip' or 'wash' method, you paint a figure in block colours, then slap a stain over it, letting it pool in and darken its recesses. (The recent craze for 'contrast paints' is just another version of the same thing). In either case, you're using a technique to heighten the contrast between the raised and recessed areas, thereby enhancing the impression of depth. Layering is a far more controlled method that produces better results, but indisputably takes longer.

Alternatively, you can just paint your figures in block colours and leave it at that. Many people are perfectly happy with that. Some people don't even get that far. It all depends on how quickly you want to get your figures onto the table, versus how spanking you want them to look when they get there.

*Fig 7 : Bloody paint brands of choice*



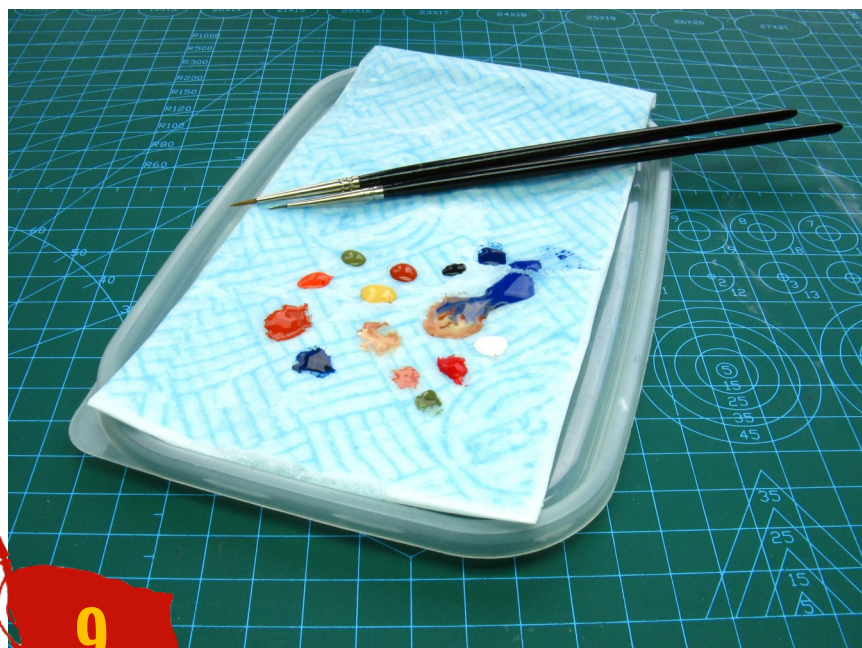
## General painting advice

I use acrylic paints - Vallejo 'Model Color' for the most part, along with a small number of Citadel (Games Workshop) and AK Interactive paints. These brands are reliably opaque, highly pigmented, and don't generally dry to a shine. Shiny paint is a pet hate. It makes it difficult to see what you're doing when it comes to highlighting. Certain well-known brands have a distinct tendency to shininess, despite claiming to be 'matt' on the label. (I know you can add matting agent or medium, but really, you shouldn't have to).

- Off-the-shelf 'triads' can give rather too abrupt transitions between layers, so when it comes to the highlight layers, I usually just mix my own as I go along.
- 'Hobby' acrylic paint bottles contain thick pigment and a thin carrier medium. These two components will have separated out long before the bottle has reached your painting desk, and they're notoriously difficult to mix thoroughly just by shaking. Some people pop a ball bearing into each bottle to act as an agitator. But you mainly want to use the thick stuff anyway, and not too much of the thin. With dropper bottles like Vallejo and AK Interactive, I store them upside down so that I'm mainly dispensing just the thicker paint which gathers at the bottom (or in this case, the top) of the bottle, rather than the thin, translucent carrier medium. With flip-top jars like Citadel paints, you just have to dig in and hoick out the thick stuff from the bottom.

- Once you've deposited a small amount of this thick paint on your palette, use water to thin it slightly. I promise you, water is all you need, notwithstanding the proliferation of flow improvers, retardants, re-agents, extenders, and other arcane preparations aimed at separating credulous wargamers from their hard-earned cash. Never use neat paint straight from the bottle. It nearly always needs a drop of water to thin the consistency slightly. This will help it go on much more smoothly from the brush. A couple of thinnish coats are also easier to apply than one thick coat that risks clogging up any fine detail. Thinner paint also helps the subtlety of transitions between layers, letting you build up your highlights more gradually. I decant very small quantities of paint onto my palette, thin and mix it there as required, and thence apply directly to the figure.
- I work off a homemade wet palette - because acrylic paints dry out infuriatingly fast. A wet palette is simply a damp surface that keeps your decanted paint wet during and between painting sessions, thus saving a lot of wasted paint and a fair bit of wasted time.

*Fig 8:  
The wet palette*



- You can buy a wet palette, but it's dead easy to improvise your own. Just saturate a couple of folded sheets of absorbent kitchen towel with water, wrap this soggy wad in a square of baking parchment or greaseproof paper, and place the resulting package on a plastic takeaway lid or similar. When you deposit your paint on this cool, damp surface, it will stay wet, and won't instantly start drying out. If you pop a cover over the palette at the end of each painting session, this arrangement will stay cool, damp, and keep your paint usable for several days.
- I use sable brushes. A 2/0 or 3/0 for the initial coats of paint, and a 10/0 for the finer detail. I confess to using the tip of my brush to lift, mix and thin paint on the palette. Every book on figure painting will tell you never to do this, and such heinous abuse no doubt shortens the lives of my brushes dreadfully. But it saves a great deal of faffing around every time I switch from one layer to the next.
- My paintbrush brand of choice is a Rosemary and Co. Series 33 Kolinsky Sable. They're every bit as good as some of the more famous and oft-recommended alternatives, but a damn sight cheaper. In truth, any reasonably good quality sable brush will serve you pretty well. Synthetic brushes – not so much.
- It helps to mount your figure on something like a plastic bottle top or cork for painting. Use a drop of superglue to temporarily attach it. Otherwise, when it comes to painting the lower legs and footwear on the figure, your sausage fingers will constantly be smudging or rubbing off the paint you've just applied.
- It's the face that 'sells' a figure most persuasively, and rewards particular care and attention. So paint the face first, while your enthusiasm is high and the point of your brush at its sharpest.
- I don't paint eyeballs. Unless you're exceptionally good at it, they just make a figure look comical. If, like me, you're old enough to remember boggle-eyed comedian, Marty Feldman, this is not the look you want on your wargames figures. More to the point, if I view someone from a distance that makes them appear about an inch tall in my vision, all I can make out is the shadows of their eye sockets. Someone's got to get pretty close to you before you can actually see the whites of their eyes. Sculptors know this, which is why they generally sculpt eyelids, but not eyeballs. I leave the eyes as dark slits.



*Fig 9 :  
Rosemary & Co. Series 33  
Kolinsky sable brushes*

- After the face, try to paint the middle parts of the figure next - the torso, as well as any belts and equipment around it. Then work outwards towards the limbs, weapons and headgear.
- If you leave painting the most difficult-to-get-at areas of your figure until last, you'll probably end up having to do a lot of retouching on the outermost areas you painted first.
- The third layer - the lightest, topmost highlight - is what really makes a figure 'pop'. You won't be able to judge the effectiveness of your handiwork until you've applied this last transformative highlight (So don't sell your figure short with only one highlight layer).
- Washes. In the layering method, washes, inks, glazes and filters should be used sparingly. Once the figure is painted, a light overall wash can help smooth the transitions between layers and tie the whole scheme together. Some painters do this routinely. But an all-over wash will also darken all the colours slightly and deaden your painstakingly applied highlights. There's a place for washes – which we'll come to - but used with precision, not as an indiscriminate drench. Of course, that's just my opinion.
- Some people prefer subdued, 'realistic' colours on their historical wargames figures. Personally I like my figures to stand out on the tabletop, so use punchy colours with plenty of contrast. But whether you go for a vivid palette or more restrained tones, the technique is the same.



*Fig 10 :  
Work from the middle outwards*

## PART 3: A BLOW BY BLOW PAINT JOB

Here's a step-by-step run through on a pair of 28mm Bloody Miniatures. In order to show different painting techniques on various characteristic items of mid-17th gear and clothing, I'm using two different figures (both of which have had head swaps from our 'Getting Further Ahead' pack of separate heads).

Figure one is a marching musketeer wearing a montero cap and a soldier's short coat, breeches, stockings, latchet shoes and the characteristic bandolier of 'apostle' powder flasks.

Figure two is a dismounted harquebusier also wearing a montero, in back-and-breast, buff coat, gauntlets and cavalry boots.

All paint colours given are from the Vallejo 'Model Color' range, unless noted otherwise.

### Primary Colours

I prime my figures with a light grey spray car primer, and base them individually on 25mm diameter steel repair washers. If you're going to mount your figures on multiple figure bases, you can obviously skip this step.

Spray from about eight inches away with repeated light passes of the aerosol to gradually build up full coverage. Try not to splurge the spray paint onto the figure at close range, or you'll risk clogging up the finer details.

Having attached each figure to its base with superglue, I then temporarily mount them onto plastic bottle tops for ease of handling during painting. After priming, I undercoat them with a matt dark brown spray paint. If you're in the UK, I recommend Halfords 'Camo Brown', as used here.

*Fig 11 : Grey primer*



It's dark enough to provide a strong underlying tone, but (unlike black) also light enough to let you see what you're doing. It's a fast drying, dead flat matt, and provides an excellent base for acrylic paint to key onto.

A dark undercoat also lets you create some delineation between different areas on the painted model. In essence, this means leaving a hairline of undercoat showing between adjacent colours – where the collar joins the neck, for instance, or where the breeches join the stockings. Some painters deliberately 'black line' their figures – outlining things like webbing and accoutrements to make them really stand out. For my taste, this can result in rather too stark an effect. But the merest whisper of a dark keyline left between different parts of the painted figure will certainly give it more visual impact.

### On the brushes

The first thing to paint is the face. My base skin tone is a 50:50 mix of 'Dark Flesh' and 'Red Leather', thinned with a drop of water. Apply this base coat straight onto the face and hands, leaving the dark undercoat to show through between the lips, fingers, and eyelids. A suggestion of more pronounced shadow in the hollows of the cheeks, under the chin, and down the sides of the nose, can be achieved by letting a hint of the dark undercoat show through this base skin tone. It doesn't matter if your paint strays onto hats, hair, collars, cuffs etc., at this early stage. You can overpaint any errant smudges when you move onto painting those areas.

*Fig 12 : Dark brown undercoat*



*Fig 13 : Basecoat skin tone*



Next, touch in the bottom lip. Stir the merest touch of 'Burnt Red' into your base skin tone, then apply this to the lower lip. (The upper lip isn't usually visible, so don't worry about that). You can highlight the lower lip slightly – just spot a dot of a slightly lighter shade of the same colour, onto the middle of the lip. If the teeth are showing, a tiny line of 'Ivory' or Citadel 'Bleached Bone' will suffice. Most people don't have pearly white teeth. They certainly didn't 400 years ago.

Next, highlight the face and hands to start to emphasise some of the raised detail. Mix a touch of 'Ivory' into your base skin tone – again, thinned with a drop of water. ('Ivory', AK Interactive 'Pale Sand', or some other warm off-white works better than pure white, which tends to give skin highlights a slightly chalky appearance). Now, using the finest point brush you own, apply this lighter colour to the bridge and tip of the nose, the flare of the nostrils, the cheekbones, chin, jawline, muscles around the mouth, and so on. Leave the base skin tone showing only in the recesses.

Remember, paint dries darker. What may look an alarmingly bright highlight when you first apply it, will dry within a few seconds to give a much subtler transition.

Now mix in a tiny bit more 'Ivory' to your highlight shade and repeat the process - only even more sparingly. Now you're just applying small dots of this second, lighter highlight onto the most prominent features - the tip of the nose, the point of the chin, the top edge of the cheekbones – just spotting on tiny touches of the lighter colour. Use the same technique on the hands, using a couple of layers of highlights to make the knuckles, fingertips and tendons stand out.

*Fig 14 : Lips*



*Fig 15 : Skin tone highlights*



*Fig 16 : Skin tone topmost highlights*



Skin completed, next up - hair. In the British Isles at least, most white-skinned people have brownish hair - either lighter or darker. But in the interests of making my figures stand out, I rarely paint dark brown hair. It just looks boring. And very dark or black hair just disappears on a figure. So I tend to go for fair, reddish, grey, or light brown hair.

For the musketeer's hair I've used 'Natural Woodgrain' for the basecoat, which gives a dark blondish colour. For the harquebusier's lustrous locks I've used a mix of 'Natural Woodgrain' and 'Flat Earth', although the two colours look pretty much the same in the pictures. Then small amounts of Pale Sand blended into both base colours for the highlights.

It only needs a couple of tiny downward strokes on either side of the 'tache to suggest its bristles. Pay particular attention to the wisps of hair nearest the face - paint these with the lightest highlight you can get away with, because lighter locks framing the face, make the face itself stand out more clearly. It's all about contrast.

The hair is one of the few places on a figure where I do usually add an acrylic wash to tie and blend it together and emphasise the recessed detail. In this case, I've used Army Painter 'Soft Tone' wash - a very small amount and over the hair itself only.

*Fig 17 : Hair basecoat*



*Fig 18 : Hair highlights*



*Fig 19 : Hair wash*





Now, metalwork. You really don't need a fancy ten-shade 'metallics' paint set for this, just black and silver thinned with a little water. Mix together and – Miraldo! - you've made 'gunmetal'. Paint the armour, helmet, priming flask, and metal parts of all the weapons. Leave any small buckles, buttons and so on though – they come near the end.

The second step on the metalwork is to apply a watered-down acrylic silver. Gradually add highlights of this thin, translucent silver, building up a gleaming patina to mimic the play of light upon steel. Pay particular attention to rims and the top of convex surfaces (like the crown of a helmet or the bulge of a breastplate).

The next step is to apply a wash to all the metalwork, to bring out the detail. For this job I use ultra-thinned oil paints, which I find infinitely better than acrylic washes or inks.

Artists' oil colour, even the cheap stuff, is so intensely pigmented that you need only the merest touch of paint, thinned 1:10 or 1:15 with artists' quality white spirit, available from art shops. Artists' quality white spirit isn't cheap, but flows like a dream and, unlike decorators' white spirit, is completely odourless.

*Fig 20 : Metalwork basecoat*



*Fig 21 : Metalwork highlights*



*Fig 22 : Making an oil paint wash*



I use a tiny touch of 'Payne's Grey' oil paint mixed with an equally tiny amount of 'Burnt Umber'. Thin the oil paint with the white spirit to an ultra-dilute mix. Then, using the point of a very fine brush, carefully run this wash into all the recesses and joints on the metalwork, and around the raised detail.

This is what AFV modellers call a 'pin-wash', and it's very, very effective. When dry, the spirit evaporates, and you'll find the pigment has gathered subtly but convincingly around things like rivets, helping them to really stand out. If you want more definition, just repeat the process to build up the effect. You can also use this oil wash to weather and distress armour and weapons. Apply a soupcon of a thin Burnt Umber wash here and there to suggest wear, tear, dirt, and dried blood. Or a pinprick of Burnt Sienna wash, to suggest the beginnings of rust.

Of course, off-the-shelf acrylic washes or inks are available, but for most jobs, I don't find them anywhere near as effective or precise. Acrylic washes tend to smother and obscure, where oil paint washes accentuate. Ultra-thinned oil washes also dry to a flat matt finish, whereas acrylic washes often dry to a nasty shine.

Lastly, a very final highlight using neat silver, barely thinned at all, applying just a dot here and there - where the light would catch polished steel... On studs, rivets, pommels and the like.

On firearms, another useful trick of the trade is to dot a tiny spot of black in the centre of the end of the gun barrel, suggesting the bore.

*Fig 23 : Metalwork with thinned oil wash*



*Fig 24 : Metalwork with final highlights and gun barrel*

And onto the clothing.

Now, I'm giving the musketeer a light red coat, and the dismounted trooper, a sleeveless buff coat. For the musketeer's coat, I've used a base of 'Burnt Red'. For the buff coat I've used a base of 'Desert Yellow'. I've given the harquebusier a purple coat under his buff coat – 'Royal Purple' cut with 20% black for the base coat.

I've used a dark blue basecoat ('Royal Blue' cut with 20% black) for the musketeer's breeches, and dark olive green ('Russian Uniform' cut with 20% black) on the harquebusier. For the time being I've painted the tape tie on the breeches the same colour as the garments, but I'll come back to those later and pick them out in a contrasting colour if necessary. Just to add another little point of visual interest. I've also painted their distinctive montero caps...

Despite the widespread adoration of the montero amongst ECW re-enactors, there's actually a miniscule amount of historical evidence for the use of this peculiar looking style of headgear. There appear to have been different variants – one essentially a peaked balaclava, the sides of which could be rolled and folded up to form a doughnut around the crown; and another type resembling a deerstalker with fore and aft peaks, sometimes portrayed with a scarf tied around it. Both types can be seen here. I've given the musketeer a grey cap with a red scarf, and the harquebusier, a rolled up purple balaclava style montero to match his coat.

*Fig 25 : Clothing basecoat colours*



Next, apply the first highlight layer to this clothing.

You don't need a whole lot of accuracy at this stage. You are effectively just drybrushing the highlight colour over the basecoat to pick up the folds in the clothing, leaving the basecoat colour in the folds and recesses. The tidying up comes with the next, topmost highlight colour. For the musketeer's coat and cap scarf I've used 50:50 'Carmine Red' and 'Dark Vermillion'.

For the harquebusier's buff coat, I've mixed 'Pale Sand' into the 'Desert Yellow' in roughly equal proportions. For the purple coat and the green and blue breeches, I've used neat 'Royal Purple', 'Russian Uniform' and 'Royal Blue' respectively.

Each successive, lighter layer should pick up more sparingly on the most pronounced raised creases, leaving the folds in the darker base tones. This is quite easy on the musketeer's coat with its well defined creases – trickier on the buff coat, since its surface is flat and relatively featureless in terms of folds and creases. Just paint on some splotches to suggest some undulation in the leather. But be wary of painting on too many explicit folds and creases where none exist. You can end up with a somewhat implausible 'tiger stripe' effect.

For the top highlight layer, I've mixed a small amount of 'Pale sand' into each of the topcoat colours. Always use a yellow tone to lighten reds for highlights. If you want a deep red, use yellow. For a more pinky red, use pale sand. Don't use white, or you end up with a chalky pink. The topmost highlight on the buff coat is 90% Pale Sand with just a small amount of Desert Yellow left in the mix.

This is the stage where the painting will make your figures really sing, so you're looking for a bit more accuracy with this top highlight. Paint carefully along the raised areas to make them stand out. Pay particular attention to the edges and most prominent areas of detail, mixing in a little more of the Pale Sand to make them really stand out

*Fig 26 : Clothing highlights*



*Fig 27 : Clothing topmost highlights*



*Fig 28 : Leatherwork basecoat*



Now paint the leatherwork – belts, boots, pouches and scabbards. Ordinarily I use a mix of several different leather colours on a figure, but for ease of demonstrating the approach here, I'm using just two leathers: A yellow leather - Citadel 'Snakebite Leather' (one of my favourite colours, now sadly discontinued by Games Workshop - although I believe 'Balor Brown' is the updated version). And a red leather - Vallejo Model Colour 'Red Leather'.

For the first highlight coat on the leather areas, mix 'Bright Orange' into the 'Red Leather' at 50:50, and 'Pale Sand' into the 'Snakebite Leather' in the same proportion. Now start to highlight the raised areas on the belts and straps.

*Fig 29 : Leatherwork highlights*



On the scabbards, paint a line of the highlight colour down either side of the sheath. On a sword hilt, a couple of horizontal freehand strokes can suggest leather wrapping on the grip. On the boots, use the highlights to pick out the top rim of the boots, stirrup guards, straps or ties, and the toe and heel. Add a couple of transverse strokes of the highlight colour across the instep.

For the topmost highlight, mix a generous touch of 'Ivory' into both your red and yellow leather highlight shades. Now apply this topmost highlight sparingly to the previously highlighted areas - leaving some of the first highlight showing. Pay particular attention to fine raised details.

*Fig 30 : Leatherwork - Boots*



Finally, on the harquebusier's folded down bucket top boots, apply a 50% dilute wash of Army Painter 'Strong Tone'. Despite my general antipathy to the smothering effects of acrylic washes, I always apply a wash to ECW cavalry boots, because it really brings out all the details of the folded bucket tops and stirrup guards. I also feel boots should have a slightly grimy look, and an acrylic wash helps with that too. (The wash will leave the boots shiny until you've matt varnished the figure at the end of the process – although I've immediately matt varnished just the boots here, for the purposes of this walk through).



Next, paint the shirt collars, cuffs, turnbacks and stockings, using 'Medium Grey'.

Mix a little white into the 'Medium Grey' and highlight the corners of the collar, edges of the cuffs, and the calf muscles and creases on the stockings.

Now to touch in some of the smaller details, such as the tape ties on the breeches, the cords on the musketeer's priming flask, and the 'apostle' powder charges hanging on his bandolier. The cords will match his red coat, starting with a 'Burnt Red' basecoat. For the apostles I've used AK Interactive 'Turquoise' cut with 20% black.

I've left the musketeer's tape ties the same blue as his breeches, but retouched the harquebusier's in purple to match his coat and hat.



*Fig 31 – Linens basecoat*



*Fig 33 – Details basecoat*

*Fig 32 – Linens highlights*





*Fig 34 – Details highlights*

I've then highlighted the apostles with increasing touches of white mixed into the turquoise mix, and highlighted the red cords and tapes with the same 'Carmine Red' / 'Dark Vermillion' mix used on the coat. To help give some extra definition to this cluster of small components, I've then given this whole area a pin wash using an ultra-thinned Raw Umber oil paint wash. This also tones down the brightness of the colours a little.

The penultimate step is to touch in any remaining metalwork like buckles, buttons and spurs. I've painted these in neat silver, then applied a pin-wash of ultra-thinned 'Burnt Umber' oil paint around each item to dull them down a fraction and help them stand out.



*Fig 35 – Oil wash the apostles*

At the same time I've also applied a very subtle pin-wash of the same ultra-thinned 'Burnt Umber' oil paint to help delineate belts and sword belts, the edge of the cuffs and gauntlets, the flaps of the skirt of the buff coat and so on. This just helps to lift out these details by effectively creating a slight shadow around them.

*Fig 36 – Touching in the last details*



This only leaves the firearms. The metalwork is already done, so it's just the woodwork. I've gone with a worn 'natural' wood and painted the stocks in 'Flat Earth', leaving a few streaks of the undercoat showing through. This helps create the suggestion of woodgrain. Then, for the first highlight layer, mix some 'Desert Yellow' into the 'Flat Earth' and apply this in lengthwise streaks, especially along the edges of the fore-end of the stock and on the butt.

For the second highlight, add some 'Pale Sand' into the mix to lighten it further, and use this to paint a few more lengthwise streaks along the weapon to reinforce the illusion of woodgrain. And finally, run another pin-wash of heavily diluted 'Burnt Umber' oil paint, along the sides of the gun barrels, and the ramrods. This wash will really help the metal of the barrels stand out from their stocks. I've treated the small cask under the arquebusier's arm in exactly the same way.

Finally, give the figure the once over and check for any tiny corrections required. There's almost always something – an item missed, a scrape, or a tiny smear of errant paint in the wrong place.

Once you've made any final adjustments, a liberal coat of matt varnish (I use Winsor & Newton Galeria matt varnish, applied with a brush) seals and smooths the end product. When the varnish is dry, you can retouch the metal parts with a very thin wash of gloss acrylic varnish, to restore some metallic sheen. (Although personally, I usually leave my metalwork slightly deadened by the matt varnish. It looks a bit more battle-worn that way).



*Fig 37 – Firearms basecoat*



*Fig 38 – Firearms highlights*



*Fig 39 – Firearms topmost highlights and oil wash*



## All about the base

For the base texture, my go-to medium for figure basing and terrain projects of all sizes is homemade gloop - a blend of PVA, matt emulsion, sand, and (optionally) some fine model railway grit, all mixed into a thick paste.

Model paint manufacturers all sell small bottles of this stuff at ludicrous prices. But you can make your own 'basing compound' in inexhaustible quantities, at a fraction of the price, and in whatever colour and consistency you want. If you want a stiffer mix, add more sand. Coarser texture? Add more grit. It's easy to make, simple to apply, and sets rock hard to a plastic-like finish thanks to the PVA. Mix a large batch and keep it in an airtight jar. It will cost you literally pennies and last for years.

Anyway, while this basing mix is wet, sprinkle a little dry sand on top for added texture. When you come to paint the base, dry brushing will pick up on this surface texture. A few rocks add texture and visual interest. I use different types, grades and sizes, from aquarium gravel to model railway grit or 'talus'. Also various quantities of real gravel scavenged from different places, like black volcanic grit from Lanzarote, and fine ornamental gravel from garden centres. Every handful of foraged grit gets brought home in a small bag and added to the collection.

Once the basing compound has set hard, paint the base with a 50:50 mix of Black and 'Flat Earth'. This seals everything together. Don't make it too thick though, or you'll start to obscure the surface texture.



*Fig 40 – Basing compound applied*



*Fig 41 – Basing basecoat*

Drybrush with neat 'Flat Earth', and then drybrush again with a 50:50 mix of 'Flat Earth' and 'Ivory'. And finally, the merest touch across with Pale Sand to pick up on the highest points of the base texture. Touch in any large rocks with a grey or sandstone colour and drybrush them with a slightly lighter shade for highlights. Finally, dab the rocks with an ultra-thin greeny-yellow wash (algae!), then give the whole base a generous coat of matt varnish. Once the varnish is dry, add a few grass tufts and flowers, and you're done.

A word on tufts... Most wargamers will already have their own preferred static grass, turf, flock, tufts – whatever you prefer to use to add a little greenery to your bases. It's amazing how the addition of a few bits of greenery really helps to lift your finished item, bringing it to life. For many years I used the Mini-Natur/Silflor range of tufts and flowers, although these have become difficult to get hold of in the UK, and 'Gamers' Grass' seems to have taken over. I find their tufts rather too large for 28mm single figure infantry bases, but their 'Tiny Tufts' are perfect. Try to mix different coloured tufts for some natural variation, and if you're adding flowers, use either a colour that matches the predominant colour on the figure itself, or a strongly contrasting colour.

And there, you're finished.



*Fig 42 – Basing detailing*



*Fig 43 – Greening the base*

*Figs 44 and 45 – The finished figures*



The completed figures join their respective skirmish units for 'The Pikeman's Lament'.



*Figs 46 and 47 – the completed figures join their units*



And that's it. Any questions, feel free to ask.

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Don't even get me started on painting plaid...

### Further Reading

If you'd like to read more about the arms, armour, dress and equipment of English Civil War armies, my go-to volume is Brassey's 'History of Uniforms' series, 'The English Civil War' by Philipp J C Elliott-Wright (Brassey's, 1997) ISBN 1857532112. Sadly it's long out of print, but usually obtainable through second-hand sellers like Abe Books.

I also highly recommend 'Arms and Armour of the English Civil Wars' by Keith Downen (Royal Armouries, 2019) ISBN 0948092904. A succinct, informative, and very nicely produced little summary, with many superb photographs. Great value for money.

### Credits

All figures (except for a few in the orange-tawny regiment pictured on page 3) by Bloody Miniatures, painted by Richard Lloyd.

[www.bloodyminiatures.co.uk](http://www.bloodyminiatures.co.uk)

Layout and graphic design by Paul M Ford  
(A.K.A. Sir Edgar Fondling – a very fine tabletop general of the Civil War).

