

Painting Late War German Cavalry

By Chris Hindmarsh

In this guide we will tackle German cavalry for late World War 2, focusing on some of the more intimidating aspects of such a project such as camouflage and horses.

The method outlined here uses translucent paints and glazes applied over a zenithal undercoat to provide a base layer from which we can apply further shading, highlighting, and other details. With this technique we're hoping to get a sense of light falling on the miniature to create contrast that will make our cavalry pop on the gaming table, without having to spend hours and hours on every model.

In this guide you'll notice I mix a lot of colours. Often this is simply because I'm trying to achieve a certain shade but I don't have the perfect paint on hand. Don't worry if you don't have the same paints as me. There are usually many different ways to achieve the same colour, so I encourage you to experiment with what you already have to get a similar shade.

Our subjects for this guide will be some 3D printed German cavalry figures from Just Some Miniatures.

In this guide I will abbreviate the following miniature paint brands:

- AP = The Army Painter
- AK = AK Interactive Acrylics

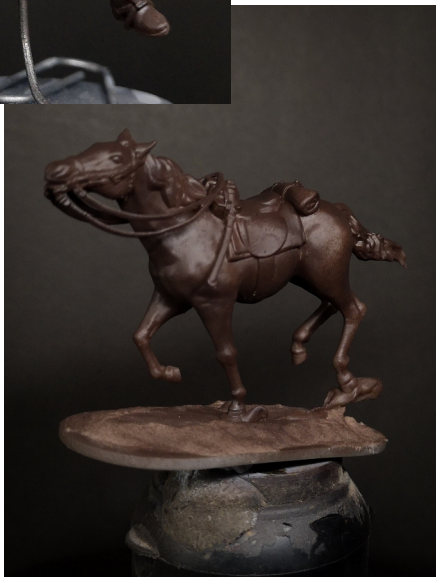


Undercoating

The first step after cleaning your miniature is to prime it. I use a dark brown primer through the airbrush, but a rattle can will work just as well.

We'll follow that up with a zenithal highlight of white acrylic ink (I use Liquitex Titanium White) through the airbrush. This highlight is delivered mostly from above the model, aiming to simulate the way sunlight falls on the upper surfaces of the model and leaves shadows in other areas. We'll take our time with this, building up the ink layer slowly, so the surfaces that would reflect the most sunlight are more intensely white.

After the initial zenithal highlight is complete (and after the fragile ink layers have had a couple of hours to fully cure) we thin down a pure white paint with water and apply it to the parts of the miniature that we want to be the brightest.



Preparing to Paint Oak Leaf Camouflage

Now that we have our light volumes sketched in, it's time to add some colour! For most of the basecoats I use translucent paints to allow some of our light sketch to show through. I mostly use AP Speedpaints, but feel free to experiment with other brands like Citadel Contrast and Vallejo Xpress Paints.

Our figures from Just Some Miniatures are wearing reversible winter parkas that are white on one side and camouflage on the other side. Some are also wearing helmet covers which could be white or camouflage.

When painting camouflage patterns for the tabletop, we usually want to give the impression of the pattern, rather than trying to accurately replicate it in scale. That means that we will likely have to increase the size of the pattern's elements, as well as increasing the contrast between those elements.

To paint our oak leaf camouflage, we'll start by applying a base coat mixed from the following AP Speedpaint colours: 4 parts Pallid Bone, 1 part Dark Wood, 1 part Burnished Red, 1 part Speedpaint Medium.

From here we can create either an autumn or spring camouflage.



Autumn Oak Leaf

Taking our time, we'll use Dark Wood Speedpaint to create "amoeba" shapes on the parka. We'll vary the size and placement, making sure to leave enough of the base colour showing. Remember that the shapes will cross under webbing and straps, but they will not cross seam lines where the different parts of the parka are sewn together.

Inside the brown patches we add some orange. I mix mine from AK Deep Orange and AK Ochre. This can also be applied to form larger patches of the orange over the basecoat that butt up against the brown patches. You may need a couple of coats to achieve full coverage.

We can then highlight the orange by adding more Ochre into our orange mix. I like to focus the highlight toward the top part of each orange shape, or over any edges of the model.

Using our original Dark Wood Speedpaint, we can then add a few more dots inside some of the orange patches.

Spring Oak Leaf

The same process can be followed for Spring Oakleaf (as seen on the helmet cover in our example) by swapping out the colours. For the first amoeba shapes, we use a 1:1 mix of Dark Wood and Absolution Green Speedpaints.

The brighter green patches are painted with an appropriate grass green, such as Golden Olive from Vallejo. These green spots can then be highlighted with a mix of this green and some Ochre, or even a pure Ochre.



Highlighting and Shading the Camouflage



The light brown base colour can now be highlighted in places where it is still visible, especially at edges, around the shoulders and collar, and any other part of the uniform that might catch the light. We'll use a mix of AK Light Earth and Ice Yellow, with some pure Ice Yellow for a few extreme point highlights.

Finally, to deepen the contrast across the parka and help blend the camouflage patterns in, we need to darken the shadows, for example under the armpits and on the underside of folds in the fabric.

To do this we selectively apply a thin brown glaze to these areas. For the glaze we can use our original base colour, perhaps darkened further with additional Dark Wood Speedpaint, and thinned as necessary with Speedpaint Medium and/or water. It's best to keep this glaze thin and transparent, applying two or three coats as needed to the deepest shadows.

And with that, our camouflage parka is complete!





Painting a White Parka

As mentioned, the camouflage parkas our figures are wearing were reversible, with a winter white on the other side. The reference images I've seen suggest they often became a warm, dirty off-white with use, so that's what we'll go for.

When we're spraying on our white zenithal layer during the undercoating step, it pays to apply the white ink a bit more liberally for these figures than we would for those wearing oakleaf. This will give us a brighter undercoat to work from.



Using Speedpaints, we will mix up a thin dirty brown wash to apply all over our white parka. I used about 3 parts Pallid Bone, 1 part Dark Wood, and 3 parts Speedpaint Medium. Once this first layer is dry, we can come back in and selectively apply a second layer as a glaze into any areas we want to deepen the shadows, for example under the armpits.

Now we simply need to apply some thin off-white layers, aiming to create a transition from shadow to highlight. For this we can use a mix of AK Grimy Grey and AK Ivory, adding more Ivory for the higher highlights and perhaps even mixing in some pure white for the sharpest highlights. We can keep our paints thin and go pretty quickly here, not worrying too much about full coverage at any one step.



For example, we might begin with a layer of approximately 1:1 Grimy Grey and Ivory, then 1:2 Grimy Grey and Ivory, then pure Ivory or 2:1 Ivory and White. I tend to avoid using pure white by itself, as I prefer a more weathered look.



Painting Horses

As before, we start with our zenithal undercoat and then apply translucent paints as our basecoat. Horse coats can be quite glossy, so it can be helpful to have quite a lot of contrast between the darkest and lightest parts of our zenithal undercoat, with some sharp white highlights selectively placed toward the top of certain muscles to sell that shiny coat.

Before we start applying our basecoats, it can be helpful to have some reference pictures to work from. In this guide we'll be painting up two different horses, one a dark chocolate brown and one a chestnut, though the same basic technique can achieve horses of any colour.



For a brown or chestnut horse, I like to mix a colour using a combination of Speedpaints: mostly Dark Wood, Burnished Red, Hardened Leather, and Sand Golem. By varying the ratios of each, we can achieve different tones. Dark Wood will make the paint more chocolate brown, Burnished Red more reddish brown, Hardened Leather more reddish-orange, and Sand Golem more golden yellow. It can also be helpful to add in a little Speedpaint Medium to keep the colour from being too strong.

Using a large brush and working in sections, we'll apply the custom Speedpaint mix all over the horse. It's usually best to draw the brush downward and toward crevices, as the brush will deposit more paint when we lift the brush away. Over the large areas of horse musculature, we'll get a better result if we use long, smooth strokes rather than lots of little brush movements.

Additional shading can be added using the original mix or a similar mix with added Dark Wood, thinned with medium. We'll apply this to the underside of muscles and where the tack and harness meet the horse.



Highlighting

Our highlight colours will depend on the colour of our main basecoat. AK Ochre is often a good starting point for any chestnut or lighter coloured horses, possibly with some AK Ice Yellow added in. We'll thin our highlight colour with water and/or medium and apply it as a glaze toward the tops of the horse's muscles, remembering to draw our brush in the direction we want the highlight colour to be strongest (i.e. toward the top of the muscle). We can also use a clean, very slightly damp brush to feather the bottom edge of the glaze. This is especially useful when we have large, exposed sections of musculature.

If you wanted to make the horse's coat appear very glossy, you could push the highlights even further than we have here, with sharp off-white highlights at the very extreme tips of certain muscles. A good reference image is invaluable for helping us find the right places to place the highlights.

Finishing Touches

Again referring to our reference images, we can choose to apply some markings to the horse's head and legs, using an off-white such as AK Ivory. We'll paint our hooves with AP Speedpaint Grim Black, and use a light drybrush of AK Rubber Black around the muzzle.

For the leather of the saddle and harness we'll use a mix of AP Speedpaints Hardened Leather and Burnished Red, highlighted with AK Ochre.



Everything Else

This tutorial primarily focuses on camouflage and horses, but for those interested I'll quickly list example colors for some of the other equipment on the models. Most follow the general method of a translucent base layer followed by standard acrylic highlights applied as a glaze.

- **Field Grey:** AP Gunner Camo Speedpaint, highlighted with AK Grey Green and AK Ice Yellow.
- **Gloves:** AP Runic Grey Speedpaint (two coats), highlighted with AP Gorgon Hide
- **Webbing and boots:** AP Grim Black Speedpaint, highlighted with AK Grey Green
- **Helmets:** Mix of Speedpaints Grim Black, Gravelord Grey, Absolution Green, Cloudburst Blue, Speedpaint Medium.
- **Rifle furniture:** AP Hardened Leather Speedpaint, highlighted with AK Ochre
- **Metallics:** Vallejo Metal Colour Dark Aluminium, washed with 1:1 mix AP Grim Black and Gravelord Grey Speedpaints, highlighted with Dark Aluminium.
- **Skin:** Base coat of AP Mummy Robes, coat of diluted Citadel Contrast Guilliman Flesh, selective glaze with Citadel Carroburg Crimson. Highlight with mix of Mummy Robes and AP Elven Flesh. Stubble achieved with a glaze of Citadel Contrast Gryphcharger Grey.

To protect our hard work, we hit the miniature with some varnish (I use AK Ultra Matte varnish through an airbrush), pop a base on it, and we're done!

