

Painting Prussian Landwehr

The Troops

The *Landwehr* ('home guard') was a conscript militia force first organised in 1813 to augment the regular Prussian army during the Wars of Liberation against Napoleon.

Landwehr infantry and cavalry units were raised by province and were generally less well equipped, clothed and trained compared to regular Prussian troops. Unlike contemporary militia forces in Britain and other countries, *Landwehr* units could and did deploy beyond the borders of Prussia. This included service during the campaigns of 1813-14 leading up to Napoleon's first abdication, as well as involvement in the Waterloo campaign in 1815.

We'll be painting the 1st Battalion of the 1st Silesian *Landwehr* infantry regiment. This regiment was raised in the Prussian province of Silesia, today mostly part of Poland. In June 1815 the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 1st Silesian were all brigaded together as part of Friedrich Wilhelm von Bülow's IV Prussian Corps. At Waterloo, the battalion was involved in the bitter fighting to control the village of Plancenoit as Prussian troops arrived on to the eastern flank of the battlefield

Painting

The good news is that, as Napoleonic uniforms go, *Landwehr* infantry were dressed quite plainly. We don't have to worry about gaudy braid or multi-coloured plumes.

Below, we're going to go through the painting of a 20mm *Landwehr* infantryman step by step. You might have noticed that your batch of figures contains miniatures from two different manufacturers (both blue and grey coloured). This makes no difference – the figures are all dressed and equipped more or less the same.

We'll be using acrylic paints. With your figures, you'll have received all the colours you need for your troops, plus a brush. Acrylic paints have a lot of advantages compared to the tinned enamel paints some of you might remember. As well as being very quick to dry, they're also odour-free and water-soluble, which means you don't need anything stronger than tap water to thin them and clean your brush.

As well as this guide, a brilliant one stop shop for the specific uniform details of the 1st Battalion of the 1st Silesian is here:

http://centjours.mont-saint-jean.com/detail_uniformes_unitePR.php?rubrique=U&uniformes=100&drapeau=

If you have a colour printer, it's worth printing this page as a reference for you to glance at as you paint.

A couple of general tips:

- We're going for a simple, neat paint job. Each figure doesn't have to be a detailed work of art – they just need to have the basic colours reasonably neatly in place in order to come together en masse as a finished battalion.
- The step by step guide below covers a typical *Landwehr* infantryman, and so will work for most of your figures. However, there might be the occasional figure in your batch like an officer or a musician with slightly different uniform features. If you're puzzled over which colour should go where on any of your figures, just ask me.
- If possible, try to find yourself a work space where you can spread your figures and paints out and leave them undisturbed by family or pets in between painting sessions. Make sure it's well lit. By a window is always good, but you'll also need a desk lamp for painting in the evening. Before you start, it's a good idea to spread out some old newspaper to catch any rogue drops of paint.
- I've used a paint palette in the guide below, but an old or paper plate will do just as well to stand in as a palette. You'll also need an old mug filled with tap water. Make sure to wash your brush thoroughly in this water in between each colour, and wipe it off on kitchen paper.
- **Less is always more.** Rather than one thick coat of paint which can obscure detail on your figures, it's always preferable to use two or even three thin coats of each colour. Leave each coat to dry (it won't take long) and then check to see if any of the grey primer is still showing through on that area. You can then go back over with another coat if needs be.
- You don't have to completely cover the hairs of your brush in paint. Just the very tip of the brush is all you need.
- Rather than trying to paint all 50 figures in one go, a much better approach is to split them into batches of 5 or 10. This will make the task seem much less daunting. It also means that you can work on different batches at different stages of the production line as you wait for colours to dry, etc.
- Finally, and most importantly, don't feel rushed or under pressure – **take your time and enjoy it!** We have plenty of time to get our battalion painted up. You'll be surprised at how quickly your troops will start to come together with just a half an hour of painting here and there.

1. Cleaning

Before we pick up a paint brush, we have a few preparation steps. These are important, so it's worth taking our time on them.

The very first thing we're going to do is to use a blade or clippers to remove any obvious 'flash' on our figures. These are small lumps of plastic left over from where the figures have

been clipped from the frames they're cast in. Flash will be easy to spot, especially on the bases of figures.



Here, I'm using a craft knife to slice away a lump of plastic from a base. You can also use a pocket knife blade or even a nail clippers for this. You won't need to use much force to slice through the plastic.

2. Washing

This step is very important. A release agent is often used in the manufacturing process of figures like this to help remove them from their moulds. Traces of this agent can sometimes remain on the figures and can prevent paint from adhering properly. To avoid this, we're going to give our figures a little bath.



Dunk your figures in lukewarm water mixed with a dish washer liquid like Fairy or else with plain hand soap. Use an old soft bristle toothbrush to give each figure a gentle scrub, then leave them to air dry.

3. Mounting

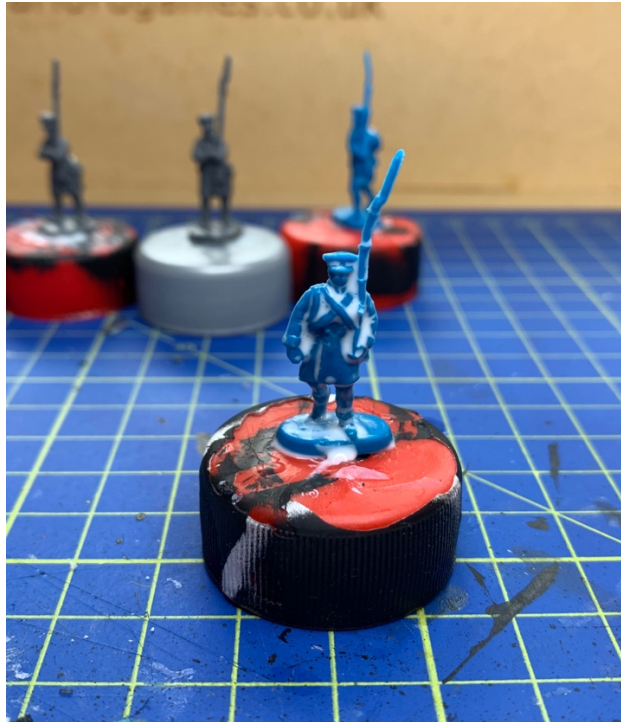
Ideally, we want to try to minimise contact with the figure itself as we paint. We don't want to run the risk of transferring oils from our fingers or smudging paint before it's dried. To help with this, we can use a small amount of PVA glue (available in any stationery or art store) to fix our figures to a temporary base. That way, we can hold the base rather than the figure as we paint.



PVA glue is strong enough to hold each figure in place, but will still allow it to be easily prised away using the tip of a blade once we're finished. I'm using old bottle tops here, but some people prefer wooden coffee stirrers to mount a couple of figures in a line.

4. PVA Priming

This step is optional, but recommended. Our figures are made from soft plastic, which can often pose challenges for paint adherence, even after we've washed them as above.



To give the figure a good surface for paint to grip, it can be helpful to give them a protective coating of a solution of PVA glue **well diluted with tap water**. Make sure that the solution doesn't try too thickly in any crevices on the figure, under arms or between legs. Provided it's well diluted, this coat will dry completely clear.

5. Paint Priming

Now we're on to actual painting! Before we apply any of the individual colours on our figure, we first need to apply a primer coat. This will give the figure a good, uniform surface of paint for our other colours to adhere to. We're going to give all of our figures a neutral grey undercoat.



For convenience, I'm using a grey aerosol primer from Halford's here. You can pick up aerosol sprays like this at most automotive shops. If you're spray priming your figures, make sure to do it outdoors or in a well ventilated shed on a clear, sunny day (humidity can affect the spray). Shake the can very well first and then spray your figures in short bursts from at least 1 foot away. Any closer and the spray will dry too thickly. Stick your figures on an old cardboard box or container that you can rotate around to make sure each side is evenly covered.

However, we can also brush prime our figures with bottled paint. For this, we'll use **Light Grey**. You can use your brush to give each figure a solid coat of grey all over. You'll probably need to use at least two thin coats.



For this step, and for all subsequent steps, it's very important to make sure that the bottled paint is properly thinned. Using paint straight from the bottle will often result in it drying too thickly on the figure and obscuring detail. Squeeze out a little bit of paint from the bottle on to your palette and then add a couple of drops of tap water with the tip of your brush. Mix them together with your brush. You're looking for the consistency of melted butter – not too thick, but not too thin and watery either. The picture above gives an example. This might take a little bit of trial and error, but you'll get the knack of it as you go.

6. Flesh

To start to bring our figures to life, we're going to use **Pale Flesh** for faces and hands.



At the risk of sounding like a broken record, make sure your paint is properly thinned and don't be afraid to use several coats to get a nice, smooth coverage. Don't worry if you overshoot a little with the flesh colour (or with any colour, for that matter). We can tidy this up later on.

7. Coat and Cap



Next comes the long *litweka* tunic worn by all our infantrymen, as well as their caps. We're going to use **Prussian Blue** for this.



Cover the entire tunic, but try to avoid crossbelts, cartridge boxes and haversacks. Same goes for the cap – leave the peak and a central band unpainted for now. Again, it's not the end of the world at all if you do catch some of these areas with the blue colour.

8. Trousers, Crossbelts and Shoulder Straps



We're now going to use **Matt White** for all white areas on the figure. This will mainly mean the white trousers, the crossbelts holding cartridge box and sabre scabbard in place, and shoulder straps. Painting the crossbelts neatly is fiddly, so don't sweat this too much. You can always come back later and use more **Prussian Blue** to tidy up any areas where the white has overlapped on to the tunic.



Some figures have two white crossbelts crossing at the centre of their chests, while others, like the one above, just have one white crossbelt for a cartridge box on their right hip, with the other strap belonging to the linen haversack on their left hip. Check to see.

9. Boots, Cap Peak, Pack Straps, Cartridge Boxes and Scabbards



Matt Black now, for all the black areas above on the figure. You don't have to paint the entirety of the boots black. They'll be half covered by grey gaiters, which we'll be painting later.





Some figures are wearing packs on their backs. You can paint these straps (running in a *H* shape across their chests) black.

10. Haversack



We're going to use ***Skeleton Bone*** for the linen haversacks most figures have hanging at their left hips.



Some figures will only have the haversack strap on this side. Others, like this one, will have the strap running parallel to a crossbelt holding a sabre or bayonet scabbard on their left hand side.

11. Facings



Each *Landwehr* regiment had a specific facing colour to distinguish it. For the 1st Silesian, this was yellow. We'll use **Daemonic Yellow** on the cuffs, collars and cap braid of each figure.



The high collar will be solid yellow. The cuffs have a thin band of yellow at their upper end, while the cap has a central band of yellow and a higher, thinner yellow stripe at its edge. The thinner yellow lines on cuffs and cap are quite tricky, so the best solution is to paint them a little broad and then use **Prussian Blue** to cut back in and neaten them up. **(Note that I haven't tidied up the yellow on the cuffs in these pictures – I caught that later.)**

12. Musket, Packs and Hair



Paint the musket entirely in **Leather Brown**. We can use this colour for any other wooden areas like pike shafts. We're also going to use this colour for any packs worn on the back of figures, as well as at the back of their heads between their cap and collars to give an impression of hair. You generally can't go wrong with making most figures brunettes, but for a bit of variety you can also use **Matt Black** or **Skeleton Bone** on the hair of the odd figure. If you're feeling really brave, you can even add the odd set of sideburns or moustache with a small dab of paint.

13. Gaiters and Blanket Rolls

On most figures, you'll just be able to see the bottoms of woollen gaiters coming out from underneath the ends of their trousers and half-covering their boots. Paint these **Light Grey**. The odd figure is wearing knee-length gaiters over their trousers. Look out for these.



Some figures have thick blanket rolls worn diagonally around their chest, at their backs or rolled up on top of the packs on their backs. We'll also paint these grey.

14. Metallic Parts



We're now going to use **Gun Metal** for any steel or plain metal features. The biggest area to cover will be the barrels, locks and bayonets of any muskets. We'll also use this colour on the metal buttons on the front of the coat, as well as the Maltese cross badge on the front of the cap.

15. Brass Parts

Finally, we're going to use **Greedy Gold** to pick out the brass barrel bands on muskets. There are three of these, running at right angles across the steel barrel of the musket to fix it to the stock. We'll also use this colour on sabre hilts (on figures carrying them), as well as for the brass tip at the end of sabre and bayonet scabbards.



16. Tidying

At this stage, it's worth taking the time to go back over your batch of figures and tidy up any small mistakes where two different colours have overlapped. For instance, you can use **Prussian Blue** to fix any places where paint from other areas has spilt over on to the figure's tunic.

With that, you're done! You should have a finished figure that looks like this:

