

# ITALIAN ARMY



The early propaganda from Mussolini would have you believe that the Italians could muster “eight million bayonets”. The actual number was around half that. Although the Italian Army units, commanders, and equipment were of variable quality, these men fought in North Africa, the northern Mediterranean, the Western Front, the Alps, and even on the Eastern Front. As such you have quite a wide variety of painting choices when putting together your Italian forces for Bolt Action.

This Painting Guide will provide you with a step-by-step guide to painting the basic infantryman of the Italian Army in their grey cotton uniforms (perfect for summer marching and fighting) and the Italian answer to the StuG - the Semovente 75/18. Our research has shown that outside of the North African theatre, there were no particularly common camouflage schemes for Italian armour, with a mix of single-, two-, and three-colour schemes being found.

Following the step-by-step painting guides, you’ll find a collection of other units from the Italian forces that display the variety of painting possibilities when collecting these models.



There are many paint ranges available for painting up your miniatures, and it doesn’t really matter which paints you use. That’s completely up to you. We used a variety of paints in preparing this guide, and named them with abbreviations.

These can be deciphered below:

VMC = Vallejo Model Color

AP = Army Painter



# PAINING YOUR ITALIAN INFANTRY



The first step is always to prepare your models for painting. After assembling a squad of five models, we applied a layer of fine basing grit, and let the glue dry.

Many people undercoat their models with black or white sprays. We chose to spray each model with AP Uniform Grey spray as sometimes a black undercoat can mean you have to apply multiple coats of your other paints, and white can leave the colors appearing much brighter than the desaturated uniform colors of WWII.



The next step includes painting the basecoats over the largest areas. We started with VMC Olive Grey for the helmet, puttees, and camo smock rolled up around his backpack. We then painted his face and hands with AP Tanned Flesh, a good base colour for Caucasian skin. Then we moved on to the wooden stock of the rifle and entrenching tool, painting them with VMC Beige Brown.



The next step was to paint the blanket. For this we chose VMC English Uniform. After this we painted much of the webbing and backpack with VMC Khaki.

If you are painting a lot of models at once and are on a tight timeframe, you might also choose to paint the black and silver areas (covered in Steps 7 & 8).



We followed up Step 3 by painting a layer of AP Strong Tone Wash over the entire model and let it dry thoroughly.

If you are painting a lot of models at once and chose to paint the black and silver areas before the wash, you could finish your painting here, although your models would look quite dark and not quite as nice as they could if you decided to push on.



While the wash adds great shadows to your model, to make it really pop you need to go back and add some highlights. We started by highlighting the uniform with VMC Basalt Grey, then the helmet, puttees, and camo smock with VMC Olive Grey. Where appropriate the webbing was highlighted with VMC Khaki.



In order to help them stand out a little more from the equipment, the straps were highlighted again with a 60/40 mix of VMC Khaki/VMC Pale Sand. The camo smock and puttees were highlighted with a 50/50 mix of VMC Olive Grey/VMC Pale Sand. Finally, the skin was highlighted with a 50/50 mix of AP Tanned Flesh/VMC Flat Flesh.

7



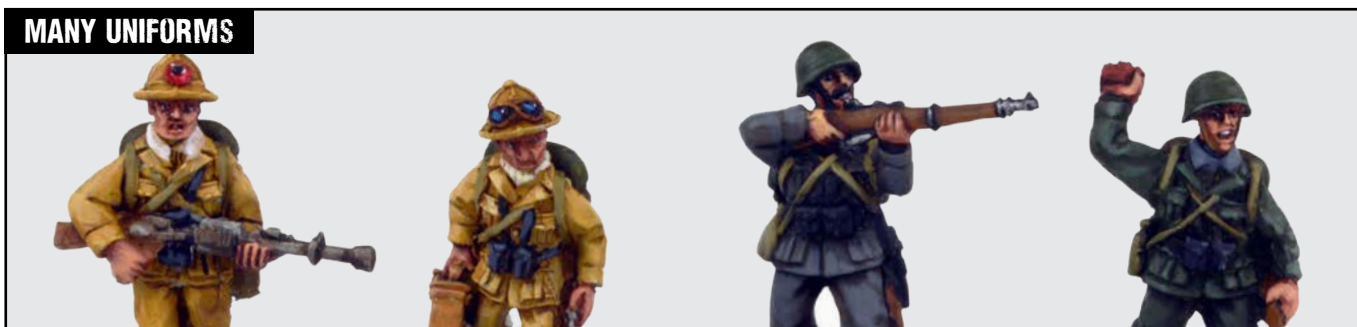
For the next stage of highlighting, we touched up the highlights on the face with VMC Flat Flesh. We then painted the boots and any leather webbing with VMC Black.

8



The next step was to highlight all the metal areas with AP Gun Metal. The leather webbing was given a quick highlight with VMC German Grey.

## MANY UNIFORMS



The enduring image of the Italian soldier during World War II is undoubtedly in their desert uniform, fighting against the Allies in the North African theatre (the first two models shown above). Obviously the Italians also fought in other theatres during the war, all across Europe, including the defence of Italy in 1943.

We chose to paint our Italians in their cotton uniforms, the mid-grey (third model shown above), used when on the march or labouring. Their woollen uniforms were a darker green (we used VMC Olive Grey for our model on the right, above), but otherwise their basic equipment remained essentially the same, regardless of theatre.

## BASING



Basing is the thing that really helps tie your army together. There are many, many ways you can do your basing, depending on where you want your troops to be fighting, and what your gaming table looks like. For our purposes, we painted the base completely

with VMC German Camo Brown-Black, drybrushed the grit and painted the edge with VMC Beige Brown, drybrushed again with VMC Dark Sand, and then glued down different flocking materials to give a variety of colours and textures.

## THE COMPLETED ITALIAN INFANTRY SECTION



This completed Regular Infantry Section (using the squad listing on page 14 of *Armies of Italy and the Axis*), has the minimum five men, including an NCO with a submachine gun.

# VARIANTS OF ITALIAN UNIFORMS



▲ This Regular Infantry Section is dressed in their desert uniforms, as they would be in North Africa. While their equipment and weaponry have been painted in the same way as for Italian troops in other theatres, their cotton uniforms and sun hats have been painted a light tan/yellow.



◀ The Paracadutisti (paratroopers) shown here wear three-colour camouflage smocks over their blue-grey uniform shirts and trousers - which are bloused out over their boots in the manner common to the paratroopers of many nations. Their helmet covers also have the same camo pattern as their smocks.

▶▼ The Bersaglieri regiments were well-trained, elite troops often employed in classic light infantry roles. Their uniforms matched those of the regular infantry units, with the exception of the cockade of black capercaillie feathers.



◀ These Italian tank crew models are dressed in either blue-grey overalls (similar to the Paracadutisti) or lighter, desert-coloured jackets (like the North African uniforms). Regardless of uniform, they wear black, leather tanker helmets.

# PAINING YOUR ITALIAN TANKS



**1** Much like the infantry, once the tank was assembled we undercoated it with AP Uniform Grey. Once the undercoat was dry, we used a large brush to apply the basecoat - VMC Middlestone. We thinned the paint a little to ensure it went on smoothly, and so had to apply two coats for a solid coverage. If you have an airbrush and are painting quite a few vehicles, you could spray on your basecoat.

**2** The next step was to add some depth to the base green colour. We gave the Semovente a wash of AP Strong Tone and let it dry thoroughly before coming back with a drybrush of VMC Middlestone.



**3** Our next step was to paint on VMC Reflective Green patches to serve as the basis for our camouflage shapes on the tank. These were applied in two thin coats.

**4** We then applied brown patches, filling in the gaps and leaving the yellow showing through. Much like the green, these patches of VMC Flat Brown were applied in two coats for a solid coverage.



**5** The brown and green patches were looking a little flat, so we decided to hit them with a wash of AP Strong Tone. This gave us a lot of depth, particularly around the details.



**7** For this assault gun we chose this stage to affix the decals to ensure that any weathering we applied would be applied to the decals too.

When you are applying decals to detailed surfaces - like the front hull of this Semovente, for example - we recommend you use a decal softener (such as Micro Sol).

**6** Once the wash was completely dry, we felt that some of the brown patches and yellow lines were too dark (a side effect of the wash) so we went back and highlighted them with VMC Flat Brown and VMC Middlestone.



**8** The next step was to apply a bit of 'chipping' - areas where the paint has been scratched or worn off and reveals the original primer coat underneath. For this we simply sponged on VMC Hull Red using a folded piece of sponge from a Warlord Games blister pack. Be careful to apply the chipping in areas that would see the most wear and tear. Of course, if you want your tanks to be factory-fresh, you can skip this step.

**9** The next step was to paint the tracks with AP Matt Black. We then drybrushed them with VMC Dark Grey.



## THE COMPLETED SEMOVENTE 75/18

And finally...

To give it the 'slogging around Europe, seeing lots of action' look we drybrushed a mixture of browns onto the tracks and undercarriage of the tank, simulating a few layers of road dust.



# VARIANTS OF ITALIAN ARMOUR



◀ Along with the M14/41, the M13/40 (pictured here) was the most common Italian tank of the War. It saw service in France, North Africa, and back in Europe again. At the outbreak of war, it was reasonably suited against most Allied armour, but it struggled later on. This example has been painted in a subtle three-colour camo scheme - and olive green, tan yellow, and black.

▶ Although the Italian Army lacked the heavy tanks of many of their contemporaries, they did make use of a variety of light tanks. This FIAT-Ansaldo CV33 tankette has probably seen service in North Africa, and may have had the green camo patches added after returning to Italy.



◀ This Semovente 75/18 Assault Gun is the same as the one we painted for our step-by-step, except it has been painted in the somewhat simpler desert scheme. When you paint a single, light colour such as this desert yellow, you can spend a bit more time with your shading and weathering to get some wonderful results.



▲ The Italian Army made use of a number of different armoured cars and scout vehicles for reconnaissance purposes in all the theatres they fought in. The Sahariana (above left) is painted up for recon in the North African desert, while the Lince (above right) is painted for action in Italy, Greece, or even the Eastern Front.