



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

Flats in Focus

Graham Dixey shows how to paint a dark bay horse - mount of a Polish Winged Hussar

The next horse 'type' that I want to show how to paint is a 'dark bay'.

These are a very common colour variety and quite easy to paint.

For this particular example I have chosen one of the more colourful cavalry types, a Polish Winged Hussar. There are several makers of these exotic figures; the one shown here is from the catalogue of A. Ulrich Koch (Verbindungsweg 22, Friedrichsfehn, D 26188 Edewecht, Germany) and, if it looks at all familiar to you, then it may just be because it is almost a dead ringer, in dress anyway, if not in stance, for the one on the cover of the Osprey Men-at-Arms title, *Polish Armies 1569-1696 (1)* by Richard Brzezinski and Angus McBride. It's not absolutely identical, but the differences are small enough to be ignored so I have used it as a colour reference for painting this figure.

As for size, it is 45mm (rider's eye height). As usual I have fully painted the figure prior to attempting the horse. The figure at this stage is seen in **Figure 1**. The horse furniture has also been painted at this time. Compared with the amount of time and effort put into painting the rider, etc., the painting of the horse almost constitutes a rest! Such highly detailed figures give a great deal of satisfaction (well, when things go right, anyway!). The rather larger scale of 45mm does make life that bit easier though there are those out there who could paint 30mm examples even better than my own efforts.

In case the subject has whetted your appetite, I will mention that there are two other makers who produce Polish winged hussars. One is Hans-Dieter Oldhafer (D-2162 Grünendeich, Huttfleth 48, Germany). The strength of his catalogue lies in the fact that the Polish figures are complemented by a good number of Turks, both foot and mounted, making a '1683' diorama a possibility. However, the poses do tend to be a little for-

mal. Size is 30mm. The other maker is PELTA S.C. (ul. Swietorzyska 16, 00-050 Warszawa, Poland) whose catalogue shows 10 very spirited Polish cavalry, though not all with 'wings', again to 30mm size.

And now for a spot of painting. The horse that I am going to provide for this rider is a 'dark bay' or even a 'brown bay'. It is really more or less a question of tone, the brown bay being a shade darker. What is characteristic about all bay horses is that their 'points' are always black. The points of a horse you may remember are the mane, tail and lower limbs. White face markings are an option and I have decided to omit them. I mentioned earlier that the figure is highly detailed.

Particular problems for the painter are the horse blanket (actually an oriental rug), the design on the flag and the armour. I will just mention the painting of the armour now. It needs an article (or two) to itself to do it full justice.

Highly polished bright steel armour can be simulated with a range of greys from pure black to pure white, sometimes with a tinge of blue. In a real situation, such a highly polished surface would act as a mirror and reflect a distorted image of any nearby objects. However, this is getting just a little too clever and it is wise sometimes to ignore the real world and aim for an effect that merely suggest the nature of the surface. What you need are a number of tones that you can place alongside each other (where to place them is one of the trickiest tasks) to suggest depth in the usual way, with the added dimension that the extremes of shadow and highlight then suggest a polished effect. In this case, I used the following tones:

Middle tones: cold grey (use Rembrandt or mix black/white); modify by adding more Ivory Black or white.

Extreme shadows: Ivory Black.

Extreme highlights: Titanium White.

Middle highlights: a pale blue mixed from Cobalt Blue/Titanium White.

I'll have to leave the painting of the armour there and get on with the horse. I hope it gets you started with a similar figure.

I will mention at the beginning that this horse was painted at a single sitting. Therefore, the next stage of painting was always applied while the previous stage was still wet. Artists call this 'wet-in-wet' painting. It needs a little more skill to get the tones right, because the paint already in place tends to dilute the effect of the new paint. It has the advantage of quickness and 'mixing the paint' on the model can be quite satisfying. It does help, however, if you don't apply your oil paint too thickly, hence the use of the dry brush in the first stage.

Painting the dark bay

We start off by applying a base colour to the whole of the animal's body, but leaving the hair unpainted and skirting round the eyeball and hooves. This base coat was Burnt Umber that was applied evenly and not too heavily. In fact, when the body was covered, I then took a largish, soft, dry brush and, with a dabbing motion, used it to eliminate brush marks and lift off any excess paint. This brush was wiped periodically on a piece of rag, (**Figure 2**).

Now we come to the shading, for which we use Ivory Black only. The effects of black onto dark brown can be quite subtle but are still essential and effective. Note in particular that the furthest legs have been shaded to separate them from the nearer legs. This is a point that we always have to bear in mind when painting flats, that parts of the figure that are further from us should be made deeper in tone to show that they are further off. I will come back to this point in a later article when dealing with a number of figures in a multiple casting. Other items shaded include the various muscles (note the long neck muscle) and some facial details. (**Figure 3**).

Highlighting is the obvious next stage and, once more, I kept things simple by using just Yellow Ochre. It is principally the muscles that get highlighted but touches of highlight where the body turns toward the light will help with the sense of depth. As it happens, much of the horse's body is covered in this case, but I'm sure by now you know where to place the highlights on your own figure. Don't forget some highlighting on the face and the ears. Because the Burnt Umber base coat is still wet, the first touches of Yellow Ochre may produce little effect. Just add a little at a time, blending it in as you do so, and you will get there eventually. (**Figure 4**).

Now we come to the points. Again, the choice of paint is simple — just ivory black with some highlighting at the tops of the mane and tail. The highlighting colour was a lightish grey mixed up from black, white



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

and a little Burnt Umber, to give a warm grey. The addition of these highlights (I picked out a few strands of hair as well) give form and life. (Figure 5).

Now for the last stage. The horse is very nearly alive but needs the final details to complete the transformation: Some work is needed on the face. The eyeball is white with a Burnt Umber iris; the eye socket is lined with fine lines of ivory black. The nostril is filled in with ivory black as well. The muzzle is painted in a warmish grey — you can simply use the same mixture that was used for highlighting the hair, but add a little red to it if you wish, to give a slightly pinkish tinge. Finally, the hooves were painted in a greyish brown, shaded Burnt Umber and highlighted white, and there you have your dark bay. (Figure 6).

I hope you will agree, that the dark bay is one of the easiest horses to paint.

This issue's 'hot tip'

This time it's not so much a matter of 'do this' as don't do that!' I am referring to a technique that some flats painters employ in which the horse's muscles are over-emphasised to such an extent that they make the poor animal look like a sack of cannonballs! Never shade and highlight to this exaggerated extent. It merely makes the end result look quite unrealistic and totally grotesque. Before painting anything, make sure you know what it looks like in the full size. If your memory is unreliable — and it's surprising how often it can be — look at a suitable reference beforehand.

Some subjects are not so accessible; you'd normally need to go to a zoo to see an elephant or a camel. Horses most people can get to see fairly easily; failing that, get a book from the library. You'll soon see that even the restrained emphasis that I use when shading and highlighting is still a little larger than life. However, some degree of exaggeration is necessary with such small figures to get the 'presence' that we require.

In the next article I shall be painting a black horse — and some more armour, this time polished, blackened steel!



Fig. 6