

Introduction

So why a complete article on basing figures? It's hardly the most inspiring subject on the wargamer's agenda. But a good base to figure can really accentuate a first class paint job but for many modellers the basing is an after thought. I hope to show you how you can really make the most of your figures by some simple tips and ideas to help your basing.

Basing techniques.

I use plastic sheet or card mounting board (which is much cheaper but a bit less durable) to base on. Cut this to the size required by your rule set.

Next glue your figure to the base. Some glues stick better if you score the base with a fine blade in a hash pattern. Take a good look at the pose and think about what you want the figure to be doing. Usually the pose is self evident but it is worth trying out a few positions on the base. I find that putting figures at a slight angle to the base helps to create a more dynamic pose. Also consider raising one side of the model by a fraction (half a millimetre) This can help the figure to lean into or away from the enemy and create more of a feeling of motion. Note this should be really subtle.

I sometimes cut away part of the base, to leave one foot free. This means with a little gentle manipulation I can place that foot on something a small rock or a scenic item. With horses you can cut the figure stand between the fore and back legs and have the horse jumping a piece of scenery. This really adds to the impression of the figure standing on scenery rather than just being glued to a flat base.

Now you need to blend the model base to the base. I use tile adhesive (it's expensive but dries really hard and tough) but you can use milliput etc. Remember that ground is seldom flat so it's ok to have slight slopes holes etc. In fact a dip between a figures legs really gives the impression that he is stepping over something.(you will have to cut the figure's base in the middle)

Once the base is glued in place I add grit. Brush some PVA (white) glue onto the base and shake the grit over it so that it sticks to the glued areas. The best effect is when you dab glue in spots rather than covering the whole base. I find the best grit for 25mm figures is builder's sharp sand. This is great because it is not uniform size.

Once this is dry you are ready to undercoat the figure. Yes that's right, only now do I undercoat. I use a spray can to undercoat with. The advantage of this method is that the paint helps to bond the grit to the base.

Right now you can paint your figure!

After I have finished painting my figure I paint the base. I use white undercoat for most of my figure. This gives a really easy technique to produce a stony chalky effect. Simply wash with burnt umber paint. The white of the larger grit will show through and it means you don't have to dry brush!

Now varnish your figure.

Once the figure is varnished I add green flock and static grass - the technique is the same as for the grit. Put blobs of PVA glue on and sprinkle the flock.



Special Detail.

I like to add special details to really outstanding figures. If your rules call for multiple figures on a base then you can really go to town. Use your imagination and add arrows, broken weapons etc to your bases. I have cavalry figures jumping dead bodies and other ideas. This is the only time that I agree with manufacturers who sell shields and weapons separately as this usually gives you spares to add to bases.