

Hints and Tips -

Colour Guide - Zulus 1879

By Michael Farnworth

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150 Wargames Factory figures painted by Mick Farnworth

Item	Colour	Vallejo Model Colour and Games Workshop Paints
Skintone	Brown	Dark brown base colour, then Mahogany Brown 70.846 or GW Bestial Brown 61.13 (vary highlight shade - see text)
Hair	Black	Black 70.950 or GW Chaos Black 61.51
Metal parts	Silver	Natural Steel 70.863 or GW Chainmail 61.56
Wooden Parts	Brown	Mahogany Brown 70.846 or GW Bestial Brown 61.13
Skirt at Front	Grey	Neutral Grey 70.992 or GW Codex Grey 61.52
Bum-flap	Leather	Desert Yellow 70.977 or GW Snakebite Leather 61-14
Shield	Black	Black 70.950 or GW Chaos Black 61.51
Shield	White	White 70.951 or GW Skull White 61.54
Shield	Red Brown	Cavalry Brown 70.982 or GW Dark Flesh 61.18
Shield	Dark Brown	German Camo Black Brown 70.882 or GW Scorched Brown 61.12
Shield Trim	Grey	Neutral Grey 70.992 or GW Codex Grey 61.52
Shield Back	Sand	Vallejo Iraqi Sand 70.819 or GW Bleached Bone 61.17

Notes

Zulus went into battle with very basic clothing. Married men wore a ring shaped hairpiece. Unmarried men wore close cropped hairstyles.

Fancy headdresses, collars, belts and leggings were usually reserved for ceremonial occasions. These were made from a variety of animal products selected for colour and pattern. Popular were spotted leopard skins, feathers, and banded monkey tails.

Shields were made from cow-hide so each one was slightly different. However they were carefully selected and distributed through the army. Shield colours were used to signify regiments so units had similar shields.

The colouring denoted seniority. Young inexperienced troops had dark solid coloured shields. Married men had red brown shields. Experienced soldiers had increasing amounts of white patches on the shields. Veteran and elite troops carried virtually white shields.

In battle, the formation consisted of a central block called the chest which was made up of experienced soldiers. Two horns of young troops ran forward on each side to outflank the enemy. Older warriors in a unit called the loins were held back in reserve.

In very simplistic terms, the warriors in the horns would have had black shields, some with white patches. The warriors in the chest would have had more white on the shields with black patches for unmarried troops and red brown patches for married men.

Bases

For skirmish games, most rules suggest individual bases. Mass battle games often specify multiple bases to represent regiments. It is worth deciding on the rules that you are going to use before you start to base and paint the figures.

Plastic bases (e.g. Slottabases), washers or coins are all suitable. Some rules suggest 25mm diameter bases and some suggest 20mm diameter bases. 20mm steel washers can be used with magnetic bases so that the figures can be adapted to many different sets of rules.

Make a Plan

With a large army, it is a very good idea to have a plan before you start.

This table will help you with planning. For more information look at the article “The Zulu Army in 1879” by Michael Farnworth which is also on the Wargames Factory website.

The regiments at the major battles were as follows. -

	Married or Unmarried	Eshowe (22nd January 1879)	Isandlwana (22nd January 1879)	Rorke's Drift (22nd January 1879)	Ntombe Drift (12th March 1879)	Hlobane (28th March 1879) (note - few involved)	Khambala (29th March 1879)	Gingindlovo (2nd April 1879)	Ulundi (4th July 1879)
Total impi size		6000	24000	5000	1000	21000	21000	14000	27000
1821 amaKwenkwe	Married								
1833. umKhulutshane	Married		500						
1843. uDlambedu (iNgwegwe)	Married	500							
1844. iNgulube (izinGulube)	Married	500							500
1846-51. amaPhela	Married	500							
1852. IsAngqu (iSangqu)	Married		1500			1500	1500		1500
1854. UThulwana	Married		1500	1500		1500	1500	1500	1500
1857. iMbube	Married		500			500	500		
1857. inDlondlo (iNdlondlo)	Married		1500			1500	1500		1500
1858. uDhloko (uDloko)	Married		2500	2500					2500
1859. uDududu	Unmarried		1500			1500	1500		1500
1860. iQwa	Unmarried	1500							1500
1861. umXhapho	Unmarried	1500							1500
1862. inSukamngeni	Unmarried	1500							1500
1863. uMbonambi	Unmarried		2000			2000	2000	2000	2000
1865. uNokhenke	Unmarried		2000			2000	2000		2000
1866. iNdluyengwe	Unmarried		1000	1000		1000	1000		1000
1867. umHlanga	Unmarried		1000					1000	
1868. umCijo (uKhandempemvu)	Unmarried		2500			2500	2500	2500	2500
1872. InGobamakhosi	Unmarried		4000			4000	4000	4000	4000
1875. uVe	Unmarried		2000			2000	2000	2000	2000
1878. uFalaza	Unmarried								
abaQulusi	mixed				1000	1000	1000		
coastal allies	mixed							1000	
Swazi allies	mixed								

I decided to represent ten of the most active regiments in the 1879 war. I took one possible design of shield for a regiment and painted the shields to this pattern. In many cases, the regiments had similar shield designs, so some units can represent two historical regiments. Others units can be combined to form larger regiments with mixed shields.

I decided to do 10 units of 16. The figures are based with 25mm circles (EM4 and Litko) and in GW "War of the Ring" movement trays of 8.

2 white shield units	32 figures
2 red shield units	32 figures
4 black shield units	64 figures
2 mixed shield units	32 figures
<hr/> Total	<hr/> 160

In addition, there are 11 extra figures for command groups and so that I can add more rifles to units. The Zulus acquired Martini Henry rifles at Isandlwana.

I armed the figures in the following way -

- White shield regiments (old married guys) - Traditional ikwa and clubs, some javelins
- Red shield regiments - (middle aged married guys) - Traditional ikwa and clubs, some javelins, some muskets.
- Black shield regiments - (25-40 year old unmarried guys, the core fighting soldiers) - ikwa or club plus muskets or javelins.
- Mixed shield regiments - (young unmarried guys, mainly in the horns) - ikwa or club plus muskets or javelins

Painting Zulus - step by step

There are many ways to paint 28mm figures. Many people paint the clothing with a dark shade then the main colour and then a highlight colour. For wargaming, where you want to get reasonably good results quickly, it is easier to paint only the main colours and then add shade with a wash of dark transparent stain.

Here is a basic assembly and painting sequence for typical Zulus. The process is intended for painting huge quantities of Zulus quickly. I found that batches of 30 to 50 worked well. It is a good idea to do a "practice run" on 10 - 20 figures first.

1. Remove the parts from the sprue using side cutters. Cut away the remaining sprue tab with a scalpel on a cutting mat.
2. Clean up any obvious mould lines either with a scalpel or with a needle file. Pay particular attention to the head, the neck, the spear shaft and the arms as any remaining sprue tabs will show up later. Sort out the parts into boxes of bodies, heads, right arms, left arms, shields and weapons.
3. Before you start to assemble the figures decide on whether you want to paint the shields on the figure or separately. If the shield is large and close to the body, painting the body is difficult.

TIP - With Zulus, it is much easier to add the shields before painting.

4. Glue the figure to a base. If you are going to use individual bases, this will be the final base. If you are going to use multiple bases, use a coin as temporary base so that you can hold the figure for painting. For plastic figures on plastic bases, use polystyrene cement. For plastic figures on

metal bases use cyanacrylate adhesive (superglue). For temporary bases, use PVA glue, as it is easy to remove later.

5. Assemble the figures using a polystyrene cement. For best results use a brush on liquid adhesive such as Revel Contacta Liquid. Start with the right arm, then weapon then the left arm and the shield. Lastly add the head.

TIP – When you add the head, it should usually be pointing slightly towards the left arm so that the figure looks logical when the shield is attached.

TIP – I sprayed some shield fronts white before assembly and then masked them with Blu-tack before spraying black and brown. The Blu-tack was removed one hour after spraying



6. Prime and undercoat the figure. For plastic figures spray undercoat usually works well. A black undercoat such as GW Chaos Black is usually easiest as it also acts as the darkest shade. You could undercoat using Army Painter Brown Spray but I have not tried that.

TIP - It can be difficult to get the spray paint on the under surfaces of the figure. A simple method is to lay the figures on their side on a paper and spray. When the paper has dried to matt black, turn the figures over and spray again. Then stand the figures upright and spray from all sides.

7. Next, over-spray the figures in brown. I used Tamiya TS 1 Brown.

8. The next step is optional but worthwhile. Using a damp bush technique and a big brush, quickly highlight the flesh with a second shade of brown. I varied the shade – 25% with reddish brown (GW Dark Flesh), 25% with brown (GW Bestial Brown), 25% with Yellow Brown (GW Snakebite Leather). The remainder were left untouched. GW Graveyard Earth would probably also work

TIP – I did the second batch as 100 figures to the spraying stage. I painted the shield designs roughly at this stage so that I had units of 16 figures. I then did the rest of the painting as batches of 48.



9. Paint the waistband, bumflap and powder horn straps with dark sand (GW Kommando Khaki). Also paint the back of the shield but avoid the pole and the javelins.

10. Paint the shield top and monkey tail skirt at the front in light grey (GW Fortress Grey).
11. Paint the hair black. Leave the head ring on the married heads brown.
12. Paint the spear points and gun barrels silver (GW Chainmail)
13. Using the flesh highlight colour, correct any mistakes.
14. Shade the whole figure a dark wash applied with a brush (Army Painter Strong Tone or Vallejo Transparent Smoke 70.939 or GW Devlan Mud Wash).

TIP - Army Painter Strong Tone worked very well. Be careful not to let it pool too much or they look like they have had a mud bath. I prefer the result from a brush as the results from a dip is rather dark. Dipping is also very messy. Note that Army Painter is an oil-based gloss varnish and needs at least 24 hours to dry.

TIP - For a more sophisticated result, use different coloured washes in different areas. (GW Devlan Mud on the bronze parts, GW Sepia Wash on the flesh and wood and GW Badab Black Wash on the silver.

15. If you decide to paint the eyes, using a fine brush and dilute paint, paint the eyes as a horizontal white dash.
16. Dot the eyes with black or dark blue. A cocktail stick can be used instead of a brush.
17. Paint in the shield trims. If the shield is white, the trims are red or black to match the spots. If the shield is black or red, the trims are usually white. These are best painted individually with a small brush. (Drybrushing does not work very well.)
18. Touch up any mistakes and add highlights as desired.
19. Varnish with a spray of gloss varnish to protect the figure. This is not necessary if you have used Army Painter Strong Tone. After this has dried overspray with matt varnish.
20. Decorate the base. The easiest way is to paint on PVA glue and dip the base in sand. I glued on the sand in two stages. The first time, I covered the upper surface of the base with PVA and dipped it in sand. Once the first stage was dry, I added more glue and sand to make sure that the step left by the plastic base was hidden. Once the glue is dry, shade the base with a brown wash mixed with a little PVA glue. This also fixes the sand.
21. Highlight with a pale sand colour (GW Bleached Bone 61.17) lightly dry-brushed onto the sand.
22. Add static grass if you want to. I chose green grass after seeing a picture of Isandlwana in January.



WF figures painted to represent 1852 IsAngqu or 1854 uThulwana regiments.



WF figures painted to represent 1857 inDlondo.



WF figures painted to represent 1859 uDhloko.



WF figures painted to represent 1859 uDududo



WF figures painted to represent 1865 uNokhenke



WF figures painted to represent 1859 iNdluyengwe



WF figures painted to represent 1859 umCijo



WF figures painted to represent 1872 iGobamakhosi or 1875 uVe regiments



Comparison of Black Tree Design figures in front with Wargames Factory figures in the back row.

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Black Tree Design figures for uThulwana in ceremonial dress, captains (induna) and witch doctor.

Further Reading

Books

Osprey Men-at-Arms 57; The Zulu War by Angus McBride

This book is my favourite. It gives a very concise but complete summary of the events and both armies. It also includes a table of Zulu regiments explaining incorporation dates and alternative names.

Osprey Elite 21; The Zulus by Ian Knight and Angus McBride

Extra information on the Zulus

Osprey Warrior 14; Zulu Warrior 1816-1906 by Ian Knight and Angus McBride

Currently out of print.

The Zulu Kings and Their Armies by Jonathan Sutherland and Diane Canwell

Published by Pen and Sword Military in 2004, this book includes detailed descriptions of the minor battles and a second view on the regimental histories. It also includes a timeline.

Osprey Campaign 14; The Zulu War 1879 by Ian Knight and Ian Castle

This book focuses strongly on two battles - Isandlwana and Kambala. The book also includes a table of Zulu forces and a detailed timeline of the 1879 events.

Osprey Elite 32; British forces in Zululand 1879

Covers the British Forces and their allies.

Osprey General Military; The Zulu War by Ian Knight and Ian Castle

This book is a combined volume of Campaign 14: 'Zulu War 1879', Elite 32: 'British Forces in Zululand 1879' and Elite 21: 'The Zulus'.

Also of interest

Soldier - A Visual History of the Fighting Man by Colonel Tim Collins (Dorling Kindersley)

This giant coffee table book describes soldiers from Greek Hoplites up to Modern Western Infantry. 45 soldiers are described in detail. Zulus are described in 6 profusely illustrated pages.

The Washing of the Spears by Donald R. Morris

This comprehensive and long book was written in the style of a historical novel in the 1960s. It remains a reference work today.

Websites

Wikipedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zulu_army

This page is a useful introduction to the Zulu army with links to references to the battles of 1879.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IsiZulu>

An explanation of the Zulu language

isiZulu.net

<http://isizulu.net/>

This site offers an on-line dictionary English to isiZulu and vice versa. There is also a forum where you can get help with translations. The forum users at isiZulu.net were very helpful.
<http://izn.2.forumer.com/index.php?act=idx>

British Battles

www.britishbattles.com provides a list of the British forces at each battle and a summary of events.

Birmingham's Guards Wargames' Club

<http://members.tripod.com/kriegsmann/lklwa.html>

This has a website page which shows shields for various regiments in the Zulu Army. Note -

Empress Miniatures

<http://www.empressminiatures.com/page10.htm>

This has a website page which describes various regiments in the Zulu Army. Note - sometimes the information is slightly different to this article.

Films

Zulu

This classic film depicts the defence of Rorke's Drift in 1879

Zulu Dawn

This is a prequel to Zulu and depicts Isandlwana in 1879

Both of these films were made in summer so the grass is straw coloured. I saw some pictures of Isandlwana in January and the grass was green.