

THE 3RD NEW JERSEY VOLUNTEER CAVALRY, 1863-65
Written and Photographed by Bob Knee, Jr.

History

It was midway to late in the Civil War, 1863-64, that the 3rd N.J. Cavalry was formed up on a volunteer basis. A special uniform with the jacket cut on a hussar pattern along with a colorful cloak (talma) was issued. This served as an inducement for enlistments. It succeeded.

The unit was equipped with the newly issued repeating carbines, mainly of caliber .52. The Spencer, as it was called, could lay down tremendous fire power. And well it did, as the 3rd acquitted itself very well with Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley, VA., campaign. The old timers jokingly referred to them as the “butterflies,” but they could “sting like a bee” with their Spencers.

The Figure

This miniature is extremely well designed and cast by Verlinden Productions. Of course, the sprue must be removed, but after the parts are totally cleaned and prepared, assembly is a joy. As photos 1 and 2 show, the arms are fit downward into the torso.

A suggested sequence for assembly is: torso to thighs; boots to thighs; hands into arms; arms down into torso. (Photos 1 and 2.) As the talma is cast separately with hood and collar, it is best to treat the entire piece as a sub assembly. Affix the head/cap into the collar. (See photos 1 and 2 for completed torso assembly that is partially painted.)



Take particular care when removing the sprue and cleaning the hand guard of the 3-bar knuckle guard for the light cavalry sabre. The sabre handle is separate and should be dry fit along with the hand guard to check on alignment. The sword knot fits perfectly.

I advise a dry fit of the carbine butt to the hip. I used some A&B putty to obtain a cleaner fit to the right hip area. I completely painted separately the two sub assemblies, torso, etc., and talma/head, before assembly. Of course, you must affix the sabre slings to the body prior to placing on the completed talma assembly.

During the assembly process, I used brass rods on the stress areas. Some filling with A&B putty is required around the joint fittings -- not much.

Painting

After I thoroughly cleaned the resin sub assemblies with a detergent, I sprayed all parts and assemblies with a gray primer. Thereafter, I undercoated the figure with Vallejo Vinyl Acrylics. For all of the gunmetal finish I used a mix of the following Vallejo metallics: Gunmetal Grey #863; Natural Steel #864; Dark Prussian Blue #899. The combination of the three gives a fine blued gunmetal.

I paint all my figures in artists' oils with Permalba Artist Oils, by Martin F. Weber Co., Philadelphia, PA. For a standard Federal Blue I use Phthalo Blue or Ultramarine Blue plus Mars Black. This will give a universal military dark blue. Highlight with Turquoise Blue and shade as necessary with Mars Black. (See all photos.)

For all of the yellow piping, stripes and cording, I used Cadmium Yellow Medium with a touch of Cadmium Yellow Deep for shading. (Photos 1 and 2.) The orange is an interesting color. I used Permalba's beautiful Perinone Orange for the base coat and Quinacridone Violet for the shade color. (This is a complementary color relation and will give a beautiful shade tone for the orange.) The highlights for the orange were done with Cadmium Yellow Medium with some Permalba White on the high spots. (Photos 3 and 4.) These show the completed figure, front and back. I used a combination of 5 minute epoxy glue and thick instant glue for adhesives.





Conclusion

This is one of the more colorful pieces for your Civil War collection. Verlinden Productions has done a superb job with this offering. It should be available in October 2002. The design, sculpting and casting will present you with a very fun miniature to complete. Keep your paint brush wet!

References

Troiani, Don; Don Troiani's Civil War, Pg 171; Stackpole Books.

Troiani, Don; Don Troiani's Soldiers in America, 1754-1865, Pg 215; Stackpole Books.

Time-Life Books; Echoes of Glory, Arms and Equipment of the Union, Pg 109; Time-Life Books.