

ARMIA KRAJOWA

MODELLING GUIDE

MODELLING GUIDE FOR AN ARMIA KRAJOWA ARMY
IN THE WARSAW UPRISING 1944



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FLAMES OF WAR
THE WORLD WAR II MINIATURES GAME

UNDER
REVIEW



RESEARCHING THE ARMIA KRAJOWA

One of the most remarkable things to come out of the Warsaw Uprising was the sheer number of photographs and films taken by the Polish insurgents themselves. It is even more amazing that these managed to survive to provide us with an intimate view of the battles that were fought.

Several civilians took it upon themselves to document the uprising through photography. They risked their lives to take many of dramatic and telling photos. After the uprising the Germans, and later the Soviets, actively pursued these photos and destroyed as many as they could find. Photographers began hiding their negatives to protect them. As time wore on and Warsaw was rebuilt many of these photos were lost. However, now and again a stash of negatives and photos are uncovered which tell new stories of the Uprising.

Its through the lens of the brave civilian photographer that we can see the Uprising unfold. Pictures of soldiers, terrain and equipment help us remember the sacrifices of the Polish people during the summer of 1944.

I've dedicated this section to showcase the source material available on the Warsaw Uprising, including some interesting photos. These highlight the wide variety of people and equipment that fought. Hopefully, you will find these photos helpful when you start you own Armia Krajowa force for Flames Of War.

I've also included a bibliography of sources that I found useful when researching the Warsaw Uprising so that you can begin your own research into this historic event.

WARSAW UPRISING BIBLIOGRAPHY

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<http://www.resistance-archive.org/>

Poland on the Web
(Essays on the Warsaw Uprising)
<http://www.info-poland.buffalo.edu/web/history/WWII/powstanie/link.shtml>

WarsawUprising.com
(General History of the Uprising)
<http://www.warsawuprising.com>

Muzeum Powstania Warszawskiego
(Museum of the Warsaw Uprising)
<http://www.1944.pl/>



Above: These Polish soldiers demonstrate the variety in uniforms that the AK employed. They are wearing Waffen-SS camo smocks with non-SS trousers, most likely of old Polish army issue. They are also wearing both jack and low boots.



Above: More than 4,000 women fought in the Warsaw Uprising. Initially, they served in support roles such as this dispatch runner. However, as the rebellion progressed they began to take up arms along side the men and fight. After the uprising, over 2000 women soldiers marched into captivity, having proudly served the cause.



Above: This photograph demonstrates further diversity in Polish AK uniforms and equipment. The soldier to the left and right appears to be wearing German fieldgrey Panzer style jackets, while the one on the right has found a Waffen-SS smock.

Also of note are their helmets. The man just right of the woman is wearing an Polish wz.31 helmet and the others have standard German helmets with Waffen-SS helmet covers.



Above: AK troops don their new Waffen-SS uniforms.



Above: An AK-controlled 5cm PaK38 anti-tank gun. The crew is wearing full SS uniforms including trousers, boots, soft caps, and jacket. The gun itself appears to have been left in its original camouflage.



Above: This heavy weapons squad is taking a break between missions. Again you can see the difference in the sorts of uniforms worn by AK soldiers. Their trousers and shirts are various colours and most likely a mix of civilian and military issue.

They have also white eagles painted in white. The eagle insignia is based upon the Polish coat of arms. They have been painted very large to help in identification and provide an interesting painting opportunity.

MODEL CHECKLIST FOR AN AK ARMY

Building an AK army can be challenging and one of the most difficult tasks is sorting out which models you need for your army. Below is a list of models you can use for your army sorted out by infantry, gun and vehicle teams.

The AK's variety of equipment offers great modelling potential. For example, their heavy machine guns varied from Maksim

guns to captured German ones. So modelling your heavy machine-gun platoon with both examples would help replicate the hodge-podge nature of AK equipment.

Infantry platoons also offer excellent modelling opportunities where you can pull figures from a great deal of sources for your teams. You can be as creative as you like building an AK army!

INFANTRY

Polish Unit	Model to Use	Original Nationality	Product Code
AK and Kedyw infantry & gun teams	SS-Panzer Grenadierkompanie	German	GBX18
AK and Kedyw infantry teams	SS-Panzer Grenadier Platoon (Mid)	German	GE791
AK mortar teams	SS-Mortar Platoon (Late)	German	GE815
AK, Kedyw, and Polish Strelkovy infantry teams	Battle Hardened Strelkovy Platoon	Soviet	SU802
AK infantry	Partisans & Polizei	Soviet	SBX09
AK and Kedyw flame-thrower teams	Flame-Thrower Platoon (late)	Soviet	SU737

GUN TEAMS

Polish Unit	Model to Use	Original Nationality	Product Code
AK machine-gun teams	Machine-Gun Company (late)	Soviet	SU734
AK anti-tank gun teams	3.7cm PaK36 gun (x2)	German	GE501
AK anti-tank gun teams	5cm PaK38 gun (x2)	German	GE510
AK Artillery Battery	Artillery Battery	German	GBX13
AK Artillery Battery	10.5cm leFH18 howitzer (x2) (Late)	German	GE572
Polish Strelkovy Company	45mm obr 1937 gun (x2)	Soviet	SU500
Polish Strelkovy Company	Mortar Company (late)	Soviet	SU735
Polish Strelkovy Company	Anti-tank Rifle Platoon (late)	Soviet	SU738

VEHICLES

Polish Unit	Model to Use	Original Nationality	Product Code
Kedyw Assault Platoon	Panzer Grenadier Company HQ	German	GBX17
Kedyw Tank Platoon	Ernst Barkmann	German	GBX21
Kedyw Tank Platoon	Panther A	German	GE061
Kedyw Tank Platoon	Panzer IV H	German	GE046
Kedyw Tank Platoon	Hetzer	German	GE101
Kedyw Tank Platoon	Tiger I E (Zimmerit)	German	GE071
Kedyw Armoured Car Platoon	SdKfz 221 (MG)	German	GE300

BE CREATIVE!

Remember, at its very core the AK army is ad-hoc. This gives you a great deal of latitude as you construct your force. Using all sorts of figures and bits from your collection will give the army a very different look from a normal Flames Of War force.

BUILDING AN ARMIA KRAJOWA ARMY

In order to make themselves look professional the irregular troops the AK attempted to use a standard uniform whenever possible. A good portion of these were captured off the Germans during the uprising. The SS uniforms captured on the first day went a long way to adding a sense of uniformity to the AK. However, not all the troops had access to the uniforms and used whatever they had on their backs.



MODELLING AK INFANTRY

The AK's mixture of uniforms can easily be replicated using figures from several sources. When I began working on my AK army, I collected some Waffen-SS, civilian, and Soviet figures.

The bulk of my army will be sporting SS uniforms. For the most part I used the late-war Waffen-SS figures. Some old veterans of the Polish Army wore captured SS tunics and their old army-issue brown trousers and black boots. For these troops, I used a few mid-war SS figures.

The SS-Panzergranadierkompanie box set (GBX18) is an ideal place to start since it includes anti-tank guns, machine-guns and infantry—indeed, an entire AK army in a box!

I started by picking out all of the figures armed with rifles and setting aside all the SMG and MG teams. The AK didn't have many machine-guns at its disposal and those they did have were organised into heavy machine-gun platoons.



Converted SS Rifleman

from Soviet, German and old Polish helmets, to soft caps and berets. The old wz.31 model Polish helmet looks similar to the Soviet helmet, so I swapped several Soviet heads with German ones, being careful not to destroy them so I could use them later.

PAINTING AK INFANTRY

Once I got all of the assembly things worked out, it was onto painting—and lots of it! As demonstrated by the historical photos shown here the AK troops had a large variety of uniform colours.

I made use of the Partisan & Polizei box. Setting aside the Polizei for another project, I used the Russian civilians to augment the German figures.

Painting civilian troops is rather fun in that your paint selection is widened beyond the usual camo tones to include whites, blues, reds and other bright colours.

You can also convert military tunics into civilian ones just by changing its colour. Civilian dress will yield all sorts of colour combinations if you think outside the box. I even found myself looking up 1930s fashions on the internet and watching period movies to get inspiration for civilian clothing.

I also painted the AK identification armband on each figure's right arm, and a similar band around most of the German helmets.



Soviet Rifleman with an SS head swap

There were many submachine-guns available as well, but these were largely reserved for the assault troops. So I set aside most of the SMG miniatures for SMG teams.

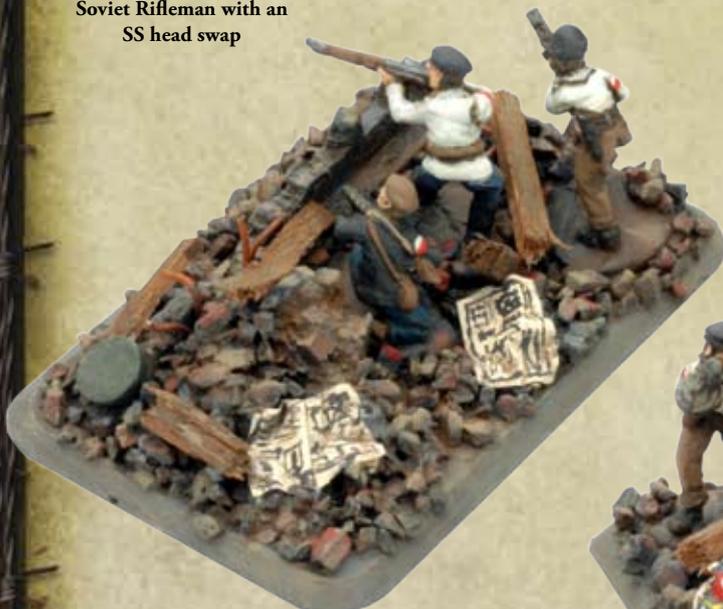
I also did several head-swaps throughout the whole force. The AK had several varieties of headgear, ranging



Partisan Figure from the Partisans and Polizei box set



Soviet officer with a British Commando head swap



Left & Below: The front and back of an AK rifle team from my AK force. I intentionally went with three guys on the stand so that I could add more detail to the base. More on basing tips later.



When large numbers of helmets fell into Polish hands, some AK squads painted the Polish eagle on them.

On some of the figures' helmets without covers, I painted the Polish eagle emblem. I painted a very simple 'V' with a line down the middle. Then, another small line at the bottom to simulate the eagle's feet.



Rifleman with an eagle emblem on the helmet

The Waffen-SS figures are ideal for Kedyw platoons as they used a significant portion of the captured uniforms. For my force I used the SS figures for all of my Kedyw troops with a few head swaps here and there.



Mid-war SS Figure (note the jack boots)

The most tricky of these would be the SS camouflage smocks and trousers. The AK's SS camouflage was in the Pea Dot pattern, so I used James Brown's excellent tutorial found in *Art of War II: Wehrmacht Edition* on page 30. For some troops I painted both tunic and trousers in Pea Dot, while for others I mixed in a few civilian pants here and there.

MODELLING KEDYW



Heer Panzerfaust figure, with civilian trousers.

The Kedyw were the elite troops of the AK. They were tasked with the most difficult assignments to secure critical buildings and locations. To complete their mission, they received a lot of the AK's precious few heavy weapons.

The Kedyw teams use the same equipment as the other AK teams, only they had many more submachine-guns and heavy weapons.

The Kedyw had a lot of hand-held anti-tank weapons as well, ranging from PIAT projectors to Panzerfaust launchers. German Panzerfaust figures are perfect for Kedyw troops. PIAT teams are a bit more tricky, but often a head-swap with a British figure or two will suffice.

MODELLING 'WARSAW' BASES

The key feature of the Warsaw Uprising was, not surprisingly, the city itself. The terrain enabled the AK fighters to contain German strongholds and force a fierce street-by-street fight.

Urban bases can be a bit challenging, especially when you have to cover a lot of bases in a large force. The secret is to keep the bases simple enough in construction to repeat across a large force, yet offer detail so as to not look too dull.

For my force I focused largely on strewn rubble. I used copper wire for exposed plumbing, small squares of aluminum foil for newspapers, balsa wood splinters for wood and assorted bits such as wagon wheels.

However, there was a fair amount of fighting in non-urban terrain such as parks, airfields, and forests so AK troops based accordingly would be just as accurate.



THE STUFF OF BUILDINGS

Consider how the building was built and what sorts of things would be exposed when it was destroyed, such as plumbing and timber frames. Was the building burned? Smoke and fire marks help tell the story of your building.

For the exposed plumbing, I used copper wire and stuck several pipes close together, bent every which way. Then I heavily washed them with watered-down black and brown paint to take some of the shine off the wire. The matt varnish at the end helps tie it into the base.

FABRIC & PAPER

In the example shown here, the disgraced flag and crumpled newspaper are made from aluminum foil.

Cut the foil to the right size, put some glue on the back side and set it on the base. Then take a stiff-bristled paint brush and press it into the base so that the foil takes on the shape of the texture underneath.

URBAN BASING THEORY

My theory of basing is that bases should set the scene for the story your army tells. Sometimes that scene is simple, like a late-spring pasture or a winter wonderland. Or, they can be complex, like urban basing. In the end basing is just as important (if not more) to me as the figures themselves.

For my Warsaw force, rather than just making random urban bases, I carefully thought about the scene and how and where each platoon in the force fit. Photographs really helped at this stage.

For example, anti-tank guns will be in the street with improvised cover around them. The infantry will be found in trickier terrain such as a destroyed building. But overall, these platoons are found near each other and thus similar rubble and wreckage will be found on each base.

Though a neat effect, bases don't have to be inter-connecting as if it were a puzzle. They just have to look as though they connect, and having a scene established in your head is a great way to make sure you don't deviate and end up with a random assortment of urban bases.

When working on rubble from a ruined building, it really helps to know ahead of time what your building looked like before and after it was destroyed, even if you aren't modelling the whole building. Basically, you want to know how the building lived, and how it died.

For example, if your troops will be fighting in and around a department store, think about the colour of the building and decorative architecture, such as fascades and cast-iron embellishments.

Also think about what was inside. Was it looted? Was it fully stocked? Is there anything inside that the civilians would have pulled out to make barricades?

In the example here I wanted to focus on the corner of an

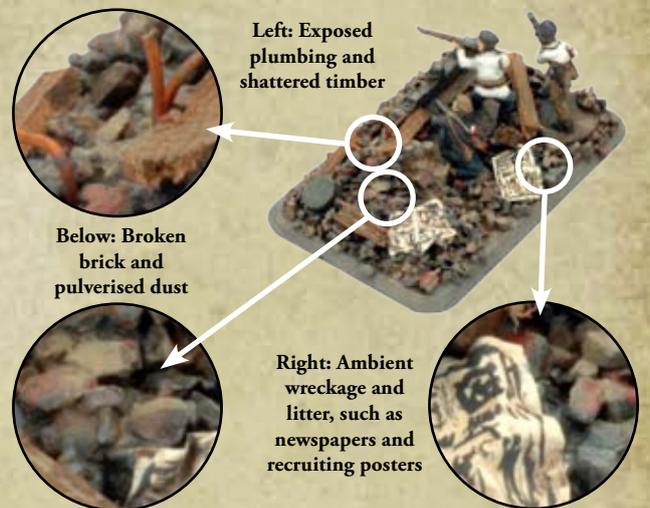
abandoned German HQ building (though you probably can't easily see it now!). This helps make the stand 'make sense' and scenic.

For rubble I used several sizes of model railway ballast. Mixing small and medium grains help vary the size of the rubble so that it doesn't look like the building collapsed in tidy, uniform, easy-to-clean bits.

When painting rubble remember the colour you chose for the building. The bricks or stone blocks would be painted on one side. I base coated all my rubble in a brick-coloured red-brown to simulate bricks. I then painted several light grey (the colour I chose for the exterior of my building).

Rubble isn't clean either. When a building collapses a good portion of the material is pulverised into dust and grit. At the end of the painting process, I dry-brushed the rubble with brick red and shades of khaki.

Then add ambient wreckage, from wood splinters, exposed plumbing, wall paper, recruiting posters, graffiti, and more.



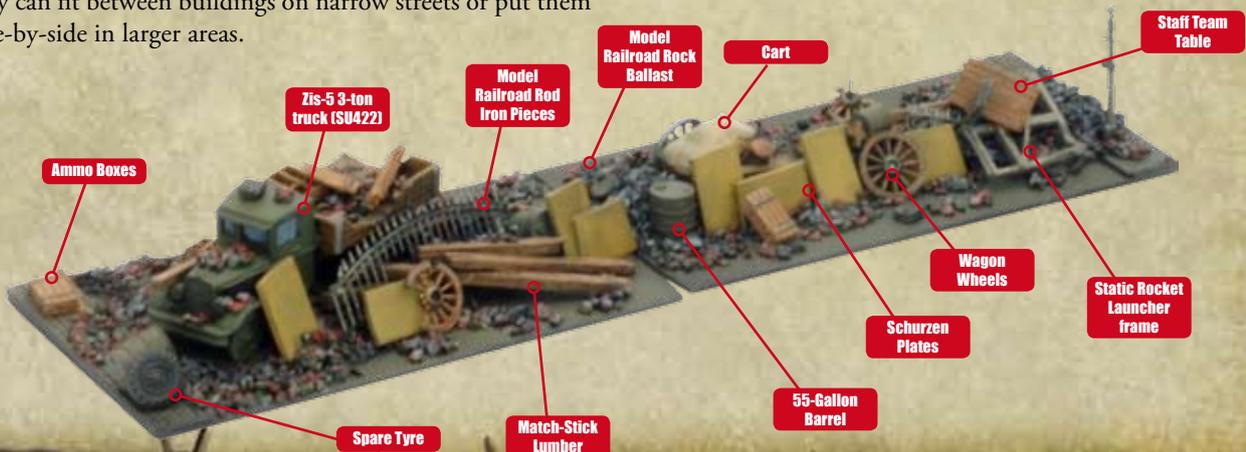
MODELLING A BARRICADE

Before I started modelling, I found several pictures from the uprising to see what sorts of things would be used in the barricade and found that it was pretty much anything the troops could haul into the streets such as overturned automobiles, bricks rubble, timber, bed frames, furniture, etc..

Barricades are Barrier fortifications which makes them 8"/20cm long and 2"/5cm deep. For this project, I've split the barricade into two 4"/10cm x 2"/5cm sections so that they can fit between buildings on narrow streets or put them side-by-side in larger areas.

The barricades need to be big enough to stop vehicles so I made sure that the barricade topped about 1 7/8cm. I used a few model railroading bits for the cast-iron pieces and some extra pieces in my spare parts drawers for rest.

Ages ago I dropped an old soviet truck and the resin broke, so I weathered it and stuck it on the base as well, concealing the base with rubble. I used some Schürzen pieces and some match sticks for lumber. Some barricades were manned, so you can put some troops on them as well for aesthetic value.



MODELLING VEHICLES

The AK captured several armoured vehicles during the Uprising including two Panthers, a Tiger, a Panzer IV, a Hetzer and some armoured cars. These were left in the original colours that they were captured in. The AK painted large Polish symbols all over the tank, including Polish flags, eagles and other such nationalistic markings. They were painted oversized so that they could not be mistaken for German tanks.

A common marking was 'WP' which stood for *Wojsko Polskie* (Polish Army). This originated from the Polish underground flag which itself was also commonly found painted on Polish vehicles during the uprising.

The AK also constructed a few examples of their own armoured transports, including Kubus, a converted 3-ton Chevrolet truck. These were often just painted in whatever colour was handy.

The exception to this was 'Kubus' which was specifically painted in camouflage because it was too valuable to risk getting knocking it out. The camouflage scheme was a series of dark grey streaks over an overall medium-grey basecoat, which helped the vehicle blend into the urban terrain.



Left: Barkmann's Panther model (GBX21) provided me with an open turret hatch so I could model the scene photographed above.



Some half-tracks and tanks also received the Polish 'checkerboard' insignia. This was first used as a personal insignia of the Polish fighter pilot Stefan Stec during World War I and was eventually adopted as the Polish national symbol in 1918. There are several examples of this symbol being used in Warsaw.



Above: A Kedyw Panther tank crew pause to plan their next move.

MODELLING AK VEHICLES

Painting AK vehicles is quite simple. Basically, paint them as though they are German and then paint Polish markings all over it.

There are numerous pictures of an AK Panther tank which appears to have no discolouration that one would expect from a camouflaged vehicle, indicating that it was painted in standard dark yellow (Middlestone 882).

As you can see from the photo above the German Balkenkreuz was not painted over and was still visible.

The crews painted several Polish flags and insignia all around the turret and hull to help identify the vehicle. Inspirational and patriotic slogans and other such graffiti were also applied to vehicles



Above: A captured Sd Kfz 251 half-track with the Polish checkerboard insignia.