

*Free Sculpting Tutorial*



Pickelhaube Miniatures

*fine Quality Toy Soldiers for the Collector*

## **How to sculpt Toy Soldiers from scratch**

by Matthias Vogel

## About this Tutorial

Toy Soldiers have always been fascinating for children and grown-ups alike. In the older days we played with them, simulating battles and parades. They were even marketed as 'give-away' promotional Items in butter tubs, coffee bags and other forms. Collecting was more for the ' Big Child ' like dad.

In our days the fascination is still very much alive, but in a more serious manner – COLLECTING - Expensive they are, ranging from a low 50c to several hundred dollars for one piece.

I started manufacturing Toy Soldiers in 2003. It was very difficult, first I looked around for manuals, books and tutorials on how to sculpt toy soldiers. But I must admit that I had no luck. The skill and tools used to make figures by manufactures is not much publicized. So I started without any knowledge or previous experience to sculpt my first figure.

After completing the figure I contacted several magazines in regards of a review of my work. Well, that was probably the best I could have done at the time, because – Military Modeling International, from the UK – contacted me and ask if I would be interested in writing a tutorial on – how to sculpt a figure from scratch -. So I wrote a 2 page tutorial for the magazine AND got paid 50 pounds ! The tutorial got then published in February 2004.

I have now decided to share this short tutorial with you and hope that you will enjoy sculpting your first figure.  
Please do not make copies or re-sell this tutorial. It Is for FREE to everyone

Best regards,  
*Matt*

<http://www.pickelhaubemin.com>

The Toy Soldier I made,

**YOU CAN** too

With a little patience and practice you will be able to re-create my work, or make a different figure. All steps are outlined below.

*Have Fun*



## Step 1:

- choosing your figure
- research the Uniform details
- choosing the scale
- choosing your sculpting medium
- choosing your tools

Once you have everything organized you can start. It is very important to do a thorough research and make sure that you have nothing left out.

Ok, you got everything, *let's start*.

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**The Figure:** Officer, 2nd Cuirassier Regiment in Uberrock and Mutze.

**Era:** Pre-WW1 German Army ca. 1900

**Scale:** 1/32 or 54mm

**Medium:** Milliput

Your references are as important as your tools, keep them clean and make sure they are correct. Cross check! as well use the internet, there is a wealth of information available

### References:

Dress Uniforms of the Imperial German Army 1900-1914 (Almark Publication)

Knotel Uniform Kunde (Uniform Plates)

Uniform history of the Prussian army (by Paul Pitsch)

Schiffer Publications

Books and Uniform plates are easily obtained over the Internet!

## Step 2:

### Your tools:

very basic but efficient, like toothpicks, sandpaper (fine and coarse grade), wire and a ruler, Hobby Knife, Pencil, Brush, and Tweezers.



The first step is to insure that your tools are in mint condition and that the sculpting medium (in my case it is Milliput, which can be obtained from any model hobby shop) is fresh. Tools, you might have already in your house, but can be as well be bought from Hardware Stores. I get about 20 Foot Figures out of one packet. At this point I like to remind you that you should read the instructions on how to use it. Milliput does behave differently after a while, and you will find this beneficial to you.

### Step 3:

#### Making the armature

Now that I have decided on the figure, I use some wire, best is garden wire. Cut a length of 105 mm, fold in half (fig 1). Use a small amount of Milliput and start to cover (fig 2) the wire frame, torso, and then the legs and at last, the arms and head (fig 3). It does not matter if it is a little out of proportion, you will adjust it later.



**(fig 1)**



**(fig 2)**



Wire frame is now covered in Milliput, basic shape.

**(fig 3)**

Now let the Milliput – basic figure - dry for at least 12 hours.

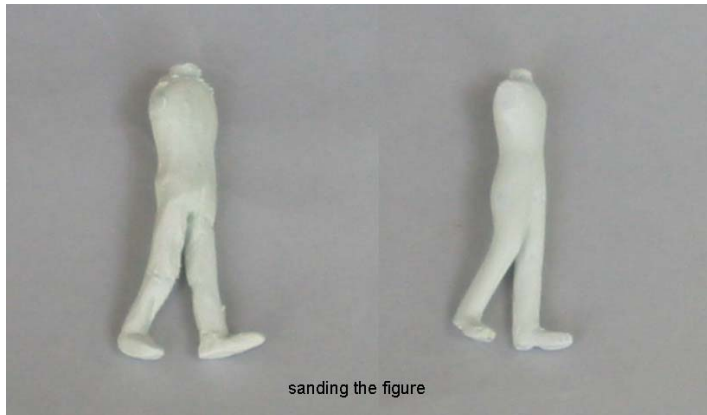
## Step 4

### Cutting & Sanding

Now, after the Milliput has dried, cut off the arms and head (use the Hobby Knife), you don't need them (fig 4). Take a piece of sandpaper and sand down the excess (fig 5), occasionally you can use the Hobby Knife. Indicate where the Arms will be attached by sanding just alongside the shoulder on both sides (fig 6).



(fig 4)



(fig 5)

(fig 6)

## **Step 5**

### Head, Long Great Coat, Arms and Details

This section is will take the longest for you to accomplish, because it flows nearly right into the final stage. Remember that you let the Milliput dry **BEFORE** you can sand it.

The head: Heads (faces) are not easy to make, but with a little practice you can do it. You could use a head from another figure to accomplish your project, but before you do this be aware of copyrights. For my figure I use Milliput, a small ball, half-dried and gently shaped into a ' egg ' shape. By using a toothpick, I indicate the position of the Eyes, Nose and Mouth. Let dry completely, then use sandpaper, Hobby Knife and files to sculpture the details.

If you are making the head use as a helping guide, such as a skull, or a picture of a skull.

Add the Coat (Uberrock). Form a small ball of Milliput, flatten half the amount and wrap it around the figure just to knee height (fig 7). Use the other half to add the trouser and shoes. Let dry for about 1 hour and add folds into the trousers, by pushing very gentle using a toothpick. Then use a medium brush with a little water and 'smoothen' the folds. Now let all dry completely, best for two days.



**(fig 7)**

## Step 6

Hat and fine details

### **The Hat (Mutze):**

Use a small ball of Milliput and press it gently onto the head, use toothpicks and your finger to accomplish the desired shape. You always can add and remove Milliput as needed.

As a helping guide have a picture of the figure present.

Use a fine grade sandpaper (grade 800 +) and sand the figure, you might need to shape here and there a little. Make sure all is smooth.

### **The arms and other details:**

Mix some Milliput, half it. Roll two pieces of 25mm long and 5mm thick, set aside for 20 min. Now use a toothpick and add the coats breast turnover by shaping a small triangle (fig 8,9), add six buttons.

Use Milliput excess to add other detail or to correct flaws.

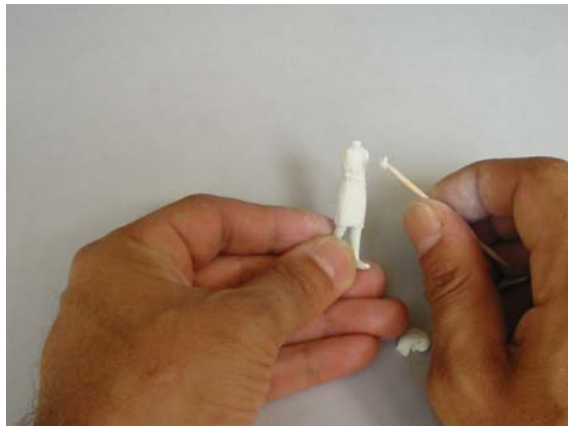
Now use the two rolls you made, and press them gently into. Use a brush or a toothpick to add some folds. Let dry for 12 hours. Then you either can detach them or sand them smooth while they are attached.

### **Adding the final details:**

A small quantity is sufficient to add the hands. For the walking stick I use a bit of wire and extended the handle with Milliput.



**(fig 8)**



**(fig 9)**

## Step 7

Check your figure

Now after the Milliput has dried, sand with a fine grade paper and review your figure from all angles. Correct any flaws, it does not matter if the project takes 5 days or 20 days, the final product is important.

Once everything is satisfactory, you either can make or let make a mould for metal casting, or start to paint. I have made a drop-cast mold from the Milliput figure, now I can cast as many as I like.



**I checked the figure from all angles**



**My first figure**

I hope you enjoyed the tutorial and will be able to have your first figure ready soon.

I might write a short Tutorial on

## **How to make a mold**

Happy sculpting,

*Matt Vogel*