

A short primer on collecting a US Airborne army

US Airborne are a good choice to get started with WW2 skirmish gaming. The US Para M1942 Uniform was issued to the troops early in the war and was officially in use until and including the D-Day landings. After the Normandy campaign the US introduced the olive green M1943 uniform but the old M1942 was still in use by some units until the end of the war.

So an army of US Paras can be used in many theatres (North Africa, Sicily, Italy, France) throughout the war which makes them one the most versatile WW2 forces available.

I use 28mm miniatures from [Artizansigns](#) for my games.

The M1942 Uniform



The M1942 was issued to Paratroopers only, Glidertroops used the standard US infantry uniform. The main difference (from the wargamers point of view) between these uniforms are the typical leg pockets on the Paratrooper's trousers so US Infantry can be converted into US Paratroopers without too much difficulties. See below for an Artizan radiomen with pockets on the blouse and trousers added, as well as a medipack and some camo on the helmet, painted as an US Para



[US Para paintingguide](#)



I'll make a list of the colours used for my models, unless otherwise noted I used black or dark browns for shadows and white, light sand, ivory etc for the highlights. Mixtures can be varied which adds some flavour to the army and avoids a uniformed look. I paint on a black undercoat with the 3 Layer technique from dark to light. You might like to vary the mixtures to your tastes.

M1942: The colour of the M1942 is sand. It varies from tan sand to yellow sand and it is not greenish as some guides suggest. I have used Vallejo US Field Drap (873), Green Ocre (914) with white/sand for the highlight.

The material used for the uniform was pretty weak and the men reinforced it at elbows and knees using material from the jump equipment. This should be dark green, brown or grey. Dark green is seen in most cases. Not everybody did this so you can vary this feature to add some colour to the army. To add some variety to my troops I have used different colours for some of the trousers, this can be any light brown you have available.

Webbing and equipment: I've used Khaki or Khaki Grey for the webbing. It should be somewhat lighter than the uniform and the colours varied a lot. Light browns can also be used and I've seen this with drinking bottles especially. Bags and backpacks are often dark olive green, I've used Olive Green/Grey or US Dark Green in most cases.

Helmet: The helmet is dark green or olive green. I've used US Dark Green with some black in most cases. Use the same colours for the netting. Medpacks are khaki, chinstraps are leather.

Rifle: Foundry Spearshaft with some black added for the wooden parts.

Jump Boots: Jump boots are made of brown leather and I've used Foundry Tan.

Playing the game

I use my US Paras with Disposable Heroes. The game plays very well with about a platoon a side so you need somewhere around 50 models for an army. I like the rules a lot because they are easy to learn and make for an exciting game in 2-3 hours which is perfect for an evening and they still transport a good feeling of WW2 combat. If you want to learn more about the game check the [Ironivangames website](#) or the [Yahogroup](#) which offers plenty of support for the game.



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