

COLORS IN THE UKRAINIAN CONFLICT

In 2014 the war in the East of Ukraine began, also known as 'Antiterrorist Operation ATO'. Since then, a huge amount of information, photos, and videos have flooded the internet, offering the modeler terrific references for Ukrainian and Russian vehicles. But it has also caused many doubts concerning the colors used by both sides. The variety of observable colors it's a bit intimidating, and the average person might have problems choosing the right color. That is the reason we at AMMO decided to make this comprehensive article, to help you as a guide to model any vehicle from the Ukrainian side or a Novorossiyan vehicle (rebel forces). This study has been written by Miguel Jiménez and military history and Ukrainian Army experts.



Throughout the following pages we will analyze these three sets main applications. Although created to represent different subjects - actually all of them are perfectly complementary with each other, because every color covered in these sets have been seen in use by both sides. Each set is labeled more as a suggested guideline, but you'll soon discover that they can be combined in almost infinite combinations. The examples shown here are a small percentage of the info and photos available from the conflict, so many more choices are surely possible.



The reference A.MIG-083 KHV 518 is one the most commonly used colors by former Soviet countries, and is employed to this day in many vehicles, from trucks to AFVs. The Ukrainian Army also uses this reference as a main color for her vehicles -as a single tone or combined with other colors. In the War in Eastern Ukraine, the Ukrainian troops used the national flag colors to identify their vehicles and distinguish them from those of the rebels. Vertical white stripes were also used.

- A.MIG 083
- A.MIG 086
- A.MIG 048

1



UKRAINIAN COLORS

The new AMMO set A.MIG-7125 UKRAINE ATO COLORS includes a selection of the most common colors in use by the Ukrainian Army, but also some more specific Ukrainian camouflage colors. Owing to the fact that the Novorossiyan rebels captured many Ukrainian Army vehicles, it's quite usual to see these colors on trucks and tanks with rebel markings. This set is perfect for modelers wanting to make a 'classic' Ukrainian vehicle, but it can also be used for other countries, including Russia.



A.MIG **083**

A.MIG **051**

2) The color A.MIG-051 Light Green KHV 553M is a good representative sample of an Ukrainian color, almost always combined with other colors like the green tone A.MIG-083 KHV 518, black or other lighter colors. Keep in mind KHV 553M is a paint which can be used to define many different colors like green, light green, brown, etc. This light green is quite popular, and there are lots of reference photos of this color combined with the KHV 518 green, but also some trucks have been spotted completely painted in this distinctive tone.

3



3) This KRAZ truck -reproduced in model form by TAKOM- shows a camouflage pattern of Light Green KHV 553M (A.MIG-051), Black MS-17 (A.MIG-046) and Yellow Grey PHKV-4 (A.MIG-057). This is a common pattern for the Ukrainian National Guard.

4) A T-64 with both tones of green. Notice the combination of colors on the ERA blocks on the turret. This means they have been taken apart and later mounted again in a different order.

4





5

A.MIG 083

A.MIG 914

A.MIG 046



This color is included in the set A.MIG-7109 MODERN RUSSIAN CAMO COLORS.

5) RED BROWN LIGHT (A.MIG-914) is arguably the most characteristic Ukrainian vehicle color. It almost always has been used in combined with soft or hard-edged black stripes. There are lots of variants within this tone, in most cases combined with the base color A.MIG-083 KHV 518 ZASHCHITNIY ZELENO.



6

6) Another classic example of a standard Ukrainian camouflage on a T-64 tank. Notice how the green and brown colors seem lighter than in the previous photo. It's the consequence of different exposure settings in the camera and natural light variations, but they are actually the same color. Other factors that can alter color appearance is sun discoloration and wear and tear caused by combat and the crew. But also weather effects like mud, rain, rust, dust, or dirt will dramatically change the shade.



ATTENTION! You'll probably find some Ukrainian vehicle painted in a lot more orange, brown color -like the one in the first photo. This orange tone and some others were widely used during peacetime in military exercises and training, and can be easily distinguished when compared to the red brown paint. This tone doesn't imply weathered or washed out colors, just a different color in use. In the War in Eastern Ukraine, most vehicles are painted in the red brown tone, although some exceptions can be found. The T-64 on the left is on a military exercise before the conflict. On the right a T-64 during the war, probably repainted before entering combat. A large number of tanks were salvaged from depots where they stood almost completely neglected





A.MIG 052

A.MIG 914

A.MIG 046

A.MIG 070



This color is included in the set A.MIG-7109 MODERN RUSSIAN CAMO COLORS



This color is included in the set A.MIG-7126 NOVOROSIYA COLORS

7) Another strictly Ukrainian color is this so distinctive and vibrant dark green tone. It's A.MIG-052 DEEP GREEN, and it's in use particularly with recent units, like these National Guard KRAZ trucks. Notice how it has been combined with A.MIG-046 MATT BLACK MS-17 and A.MIG-070 MEDIUM BROWN, to achieve a similar appearance to that of the NATO camouflage scheme.



8

8) Once again, photos can be deceiving, depending on camera settings and ambient light. In this case the colors seem completely different from those in the previous photo, but they're actually the same.



9

A color profile of this Ukrainian camouflage so similar to the NATO scheme. The door symbol denotes a vehicle belonging to the National Guard. A lot of different AFVs and other vehicles have been spotted in combat sporting this marking, not always over a camouflage pattern, but over a single green color. There are lots of possible combinations.





A.MIG 052

A.MIG 083

A.MIG 046



This color is included in the set A.MIG-7109 MODERN RUSSIAN CAMO COLORS.

10) One of the nicest examples of A.MIG-052 DEEP GREEN over A.MIG-083 KHV 518 and black. Here you can better appreciate the difference between the two greens. Notice how the inside hatch is chipped and shows a lighter green underneath.



A.MIG 052

A.MIG 083

A.MIG 046



This color is included in the set A.MIG-7109 MODERN RUSSIAN CAMO COLORS.

11) Another good example of the same camouflage scheme, with the same colors but darkened by ambient lighting and dirt.



A.MIG 052

A.MIG 083

This Ural truck is an interesting example, not only for the improvised armor but also because of the combination of camouflage colors. The front cab is clearly painted A.MIG-052 DEEP GREEN whereas the rest of the cab and cargo area are finished in the more common green A.MIG-083 KHV 518.



A.MIG 083

A.MIG 052

This photo shows a wonderful example of the huge variety of camouflage patterns used during this conflict. This BTR-80 is painted in the classic A.MIG-083 KHV 518 ZASHCHITNIY ZELENO. Most Russian vehicles and those of and her satellites are still painted in this color, although it has been discontinued by the Russian Army. On its right there is another BTR-80 sporting a much more recent pattern.

Here we can see the difference between green A.MIG-052 DEEP GREEN, another non-identified lighter green and A.MIG-070 MEDIUM BROWN. This is not a very common camouflage scheme, and it's actually quite difficult to find photos of it. But it's even more difficult to find a photo showing so clearly the difference between these two green colors.



13

A.MIG 083

A.MIG 051

A.MIG 046

A.MIG 051



This color is included in the set A.MIG-7109 MODERN RUSSIAN CAMO COLORS.



This color is included in the set A.MIG-7109 MODERN RUSSIAN CAMO COLORS.

13) This is a rare example of 4 different colors combined in a BTRM. The orange spots are rust stains.

2



NOVOROSSIYA COLORS

Rebel forces in Eastern Ukraine, also known as pro-Russians or separatists, captured numerous vehicles from the Ukrainian Army bases in the Donbas area early in the conflict. For this reason many rebel vehicles have Ukrainian Army colors and schemes. But, after some time, they started to customize their vehicles with some very distinctive colors to help identify and distinguish them from the enemy on the battlefield. It also seems that Russia has donated vehicles that are still shown with their original colors and markings. This mix makes the subject at hand even more interesting to modelers around the world.



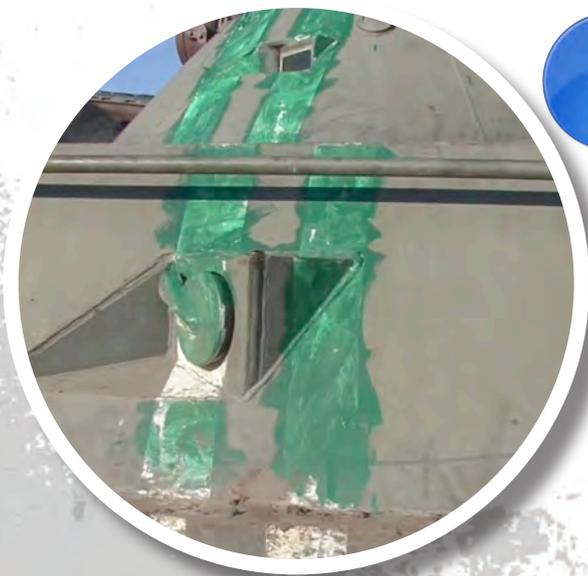
A.MIG 932

A.MIG 054

A.MIG 932

14) One of the most distinctive colors used by rebel forces is this gloss green, initially employed to cover Ukrainian Army markings and numerals.

15) We have selected as the rebel base color a tone as popular as A.MIG-083 KHV 518 ZASHCHITNIY ZELENO: it's A.MIG-932 RUSSIAN BASE ZIS 508, a color widely used until this day by Russia and her neighbors. This green is somewhat similar to the previous one, but it's not the same. Of course it can be used for the Ukrainian side as well as for the rebel forces.



NOTE: the green A.MIG-054 SIGNAL GREEN used to cover Ukrainian Army markings has different origins, most likely from various civilian colors used to paint fences, etc. That would explain such a distinctive tone, so different from usual military colors. As time goes by, Novorossiya troops have used this color as part of their identification system in the battlefield, and have even used it in camouflage patterns. You can find many variants, but we've chosen a quite generic tone which will look good on your models. It can also be applied semitransparent, to allow the markings and numbers lightly showing underneath. Another color widely used early in the war was red, but with time it has become more rare, possibly because it made too obvious a target.



A.MIG 932

A.MIG 054

16) A clear example of an Army vehicle's evolution after being captured by the rebel forces. Markings and numbers in this BMD were covered with some household light green paint probably picked up in a shop nearby. A Donbas slogan has been painted in deep red and shortly after that repainted in white, more conspicuous to improve identification by friendly forces. Many vehicles were repainted several times. In fact, this BMD was repainted again with a camouflage that covered the whole vehicle, even the white slogans.

17) Right page. The color A.MIG-070 MEDIUM BROWN is a less popular color, but still widely used by many armed forces, including the Russian Army. It's a difficult color to identify, but it appears in many photos, particularly in vehicles used by Novorossiya.



**НАРОДНОЕ
ОПОЛЧЕНИЕ
ДОНБАССА**





A.MIG 070

A.MIG 051

A.MIG 046

A.MIG 051



This color is included in the set A.MIG-7109 MODERN RUSSIAN CAMO COLORS.

This color is included in the set A.MIG-7125 UKRAINE ATO COLORS.





18

A.MIG 053

18) One of the most difficult and controversial colors is the current Russian Army color, A.MIG-053 PROTECTIVE NC 1200. This color is ostensibly different from its predecessors, darker and more bluish. Russia -and possibly Ukraine- started to use this color in 2005 to cut costs and simplify the complex schemes in use until then. This T-72B2 stationed on the Russian frontier with Novorossiya clearly shows the color in broad daylight. Many of the vehicles that entered Crimea also featured this color.

19) Depending on the light, the NC 1200 could be perceived as lighter and grayer, misleading us. Notice the commander's shield and searchlight painted in the old ZIS 508 compared to the rest of the tank painted in NC 1200. This T-72 entered into Donbas to support the rebels.



19



A.MIG 053

A.MIG 932



20

20) A very clear example of NC 1200 application over the old ZIS 508. Russian Orthodox slogans were added later. In this vehicle the NC 1200 green appears brighter and darker than the T-72 stationed on the frontier.



21

A.MIG 053

A.MIG 932

A.MIG 046



This color is included in the set A.MIG-7109 MODERN RUSSIAN CAMO COLORS.

21) Here ZIS 508 and NC 1200 colors are separated by thin black lines, a distinctive Ukrainian Army feature. This vehicle was captured by the rebel forces. It should be stressed again that the color selections for these sets are just a suggestion, but you can combine them at will following the reference photos.



22

A.MIG 053

A.MIG 932

A.MIG 911

22) Former Soviet Union militaries have always had a wide range of grey colors in use. Various grey tones were used, like KHV-16 or A.MIG-911 GREY SHINE PKHV 23 included in this Novorossiyya set. A 2S3 shows an attractive scheme with these three colors.

23) Below, a similar example but this time with freshly applied colors. Notice how the tones seem much darker.



23

3



THE RUSSIAN COLORS

In 2013 AMMO released this set with the most common Russian colors. Some of these colors have also been employed by neighboring countries like Ukraine. In the T-72 on the right, these colors can be seen used in the War in Eastern Ukraine. This set is essential to be combined with the two new sets.

24) Below you can see green ZIS 508 combined with two khaki tones from the Russian Colors set. The difference in tone can be more easily seen when they are side by side.

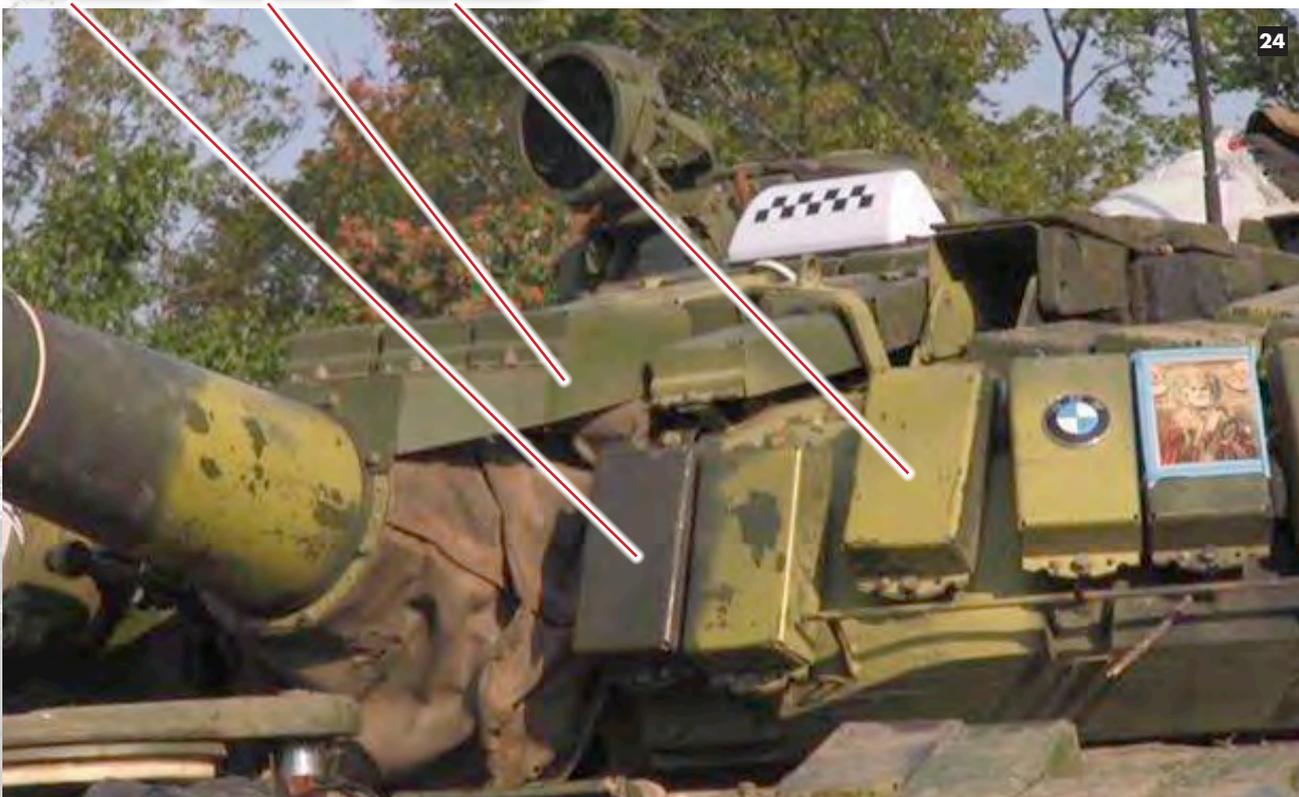
This color is included in the set
A.MIG-7126 NOVOROSSIYA
COLORS



A.MIG 932

A.MIG 056

A.MIG 058



24





A.MIG 056

A.MIG 059

A.MIG 055

Above, a common example of a camouflage of Russian origin with markings covered with civilian green paint. The color A.MIG-055 OIL OCHRE was one of the most commonly used by the Russian and Ukrainian armies until just recently.

In conclusion, we must stress again that almost any possible combination can be achieved with these three sets, especially for the Ukrainian conflict. Although many of these colors have also been used by the armed forces of other Post-Soviet states. With these paints you just need to choose a camouflage you like following your references, and then use this guide to select the appropriate colors for each case. Don't bother too much about the difference between the colors shown on the photos because -besides the variation due to light, weathering, etc.- the sheer amount of different colors in use would make it extremely difficult to include everything in a few sets.

Lastly, this article raises a question: if today, with so many color photos and other references available for just a year of war, it's possible to see so many different colors in a very limited area. What could really have happened during the five years of WWII? I honestly think we should carefully reconsider the history of these colors and their true nature.

