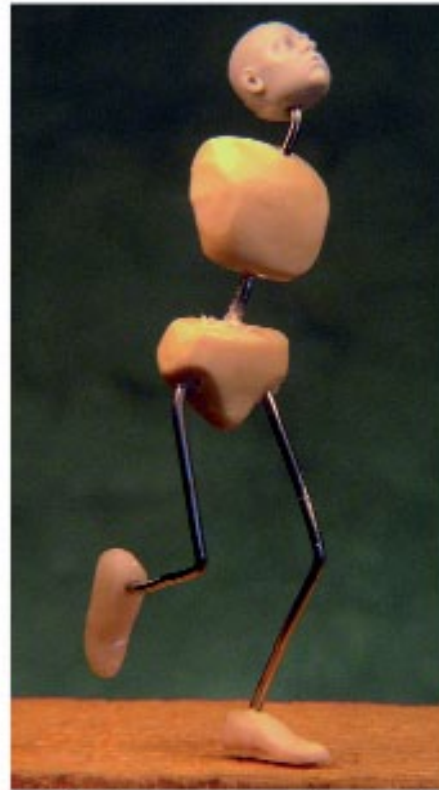


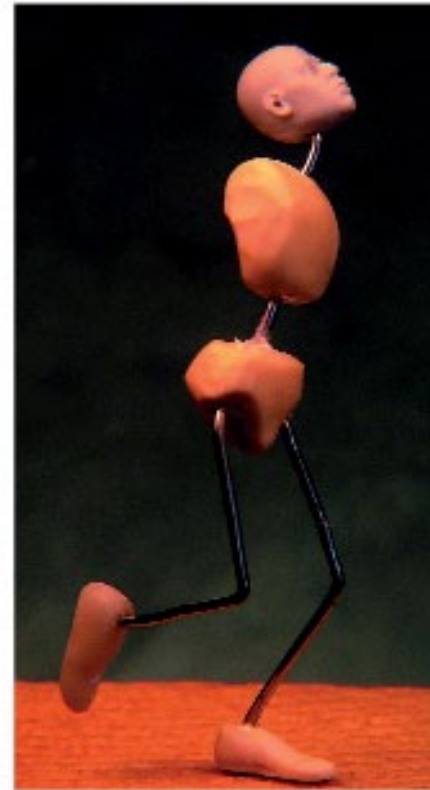
**GETTING STARTED WITH A CONCEPT**

**W**hen I look back on the figures that I have created that were the most satisfying, they all have one thing in common – they were all very clearly conceived in specific detail before I began, and they were all poses and subject matter about which I was enthusiastic. Having a clear ideas of what you are going to do before you start is extremely important.

For the subject of this chapter, I will discuss the creation of an American Baseball player named Yogi Berra. Yogi played for the New York Yankees in the 1940–50's and is considered one of the great catchers of all time, and I was lucky enough to find an excellent photograph of Yogi in the exact pose I wanted to create. What appealed to me most about the subject was the dynamic movement of the figure, as he arises from his crouch behind home plate, throws off his steel catcher's mask, and searches the sky for a fly ball. There are many things happening with this figure, not the least of which is the presence of the very interesting catcher's equipment – something that has always fascinated me, and that I have



*The basic wire pose. Note the angles of the head and feet, and the spacing between the torso and pelvis.*



*The figure armature solidified with A & B putty. Note the counter-balanced angles*



*The musculature is built up, but not carefully defined, as the clothing will soon cover it.*



*The arms and hands are added, and the clothing is underway; stockings and cap body – both from a mixture of Duro and A&B.*



*Left: Note the arm and elbow definition.*

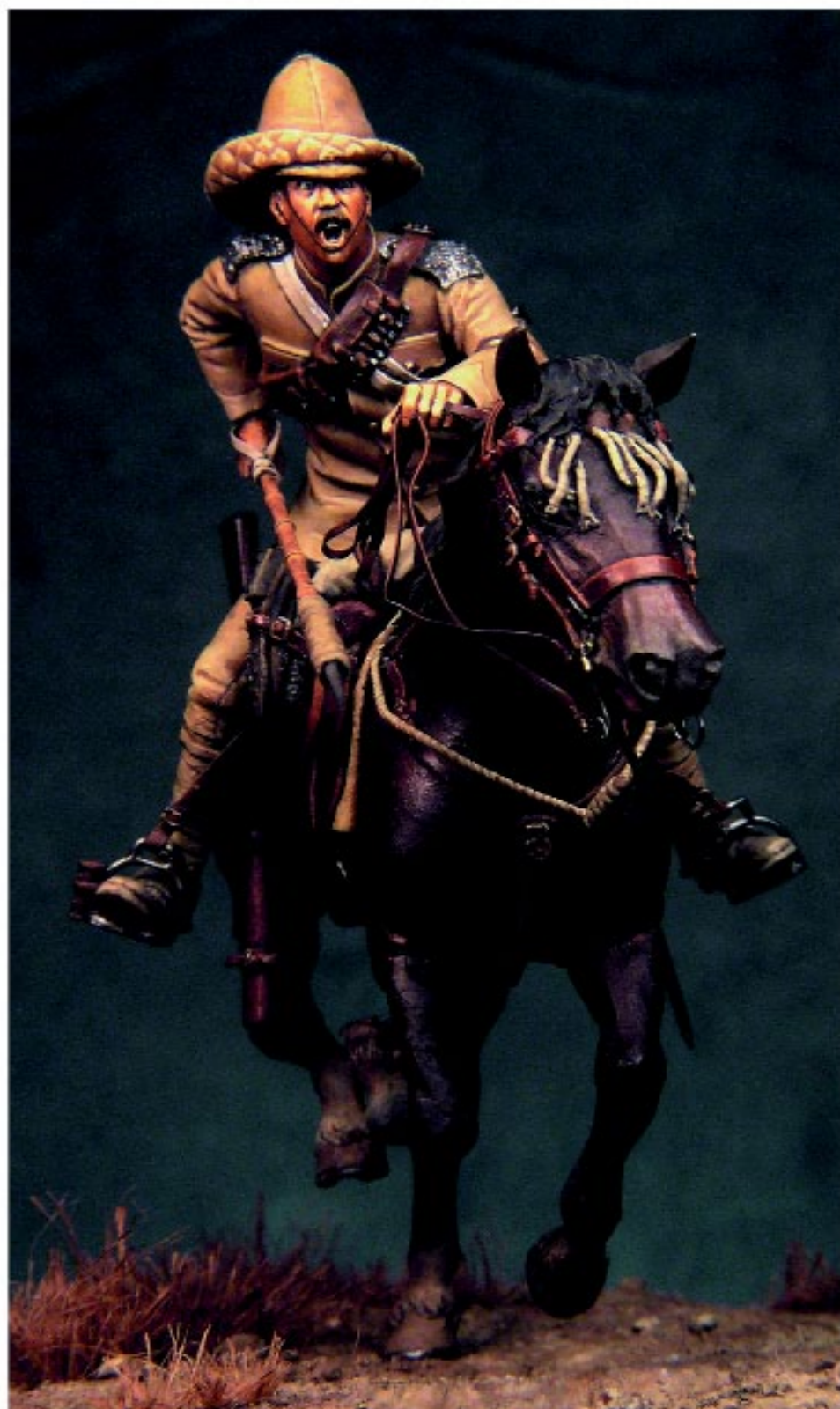


*Right: The cap brim is added and the right trouser leg. The loose drapery and folds were based on a photograph.*

## CREATING A MOUNTED FIGURE

The process of creating a mounted figure is very similar to creating a foot figure, with one very important exception: the horse. This may seem like an obvious point, but it is worth mentioning at the beginning of this chapter, as the single most common error one will see in the animating of mounted figures is a failure to properly consider the horse's movement in the animation of the rider. The horse's shape and movement play a critical role in defining the movement of the rider.

Once again, balance is the key to achieving a dynamic and realistic pose for the rider. As the horse moves, the rider must maintain a position of balance atop the horse, as it moves. A rearing horse will require the rider to shift his body forward to keep from falling off, just as a horse descending a slope will require the rider to lean backward. These are extreme examples,



The horse, a Bill Merklein sculpture, with equipment added - layer by layer. Note the varying use of Vinyl tape, Duro and Duro/A&B.

but it is always vital to understand the effect the horse's movement would have on the animation of the rider.

## GETTING STARTED

Sculpting horses is an art form unto itself, and I can proudly say that I have sculpted one - and that was enough! Modelers are fortunate to have a number of excellent bare horses available for use in conversion work - most of which are far superior to anything I am able to produce. For the figure I am creating here, a Private of the 21st Lancers at Omdurman in 1898, I have chosen an excellent galloping horse from the talented hands of Bill Merklein. Bill has been a successful miniature artist for over 30 years, and his line of horses, all cast in easy-to-work-with polyurethane resin, are not only well designed horse sculptures, but they are also compatible with the 54mm scale with which I like to work.

The first step was to clean up any mold lines and imperfections in the casting, using a hobby knife and emery paper. I then glued the horse parts together using Superglue, and filled any gaps with A & B putty. Once the putty was dry, I carefully



78th Highlanders, 1858  
(1987)



2nd Bn Gordon Highlanders, 1881 (Majuba Hill)  
(1987)

Hottentots Volunteer, 1835  
(1988)



Pole-Axe man at Culloden, 1745  
(1988)

