



Creating a Toy Soldier from Clay Pots

by James Carey and Morris Carey

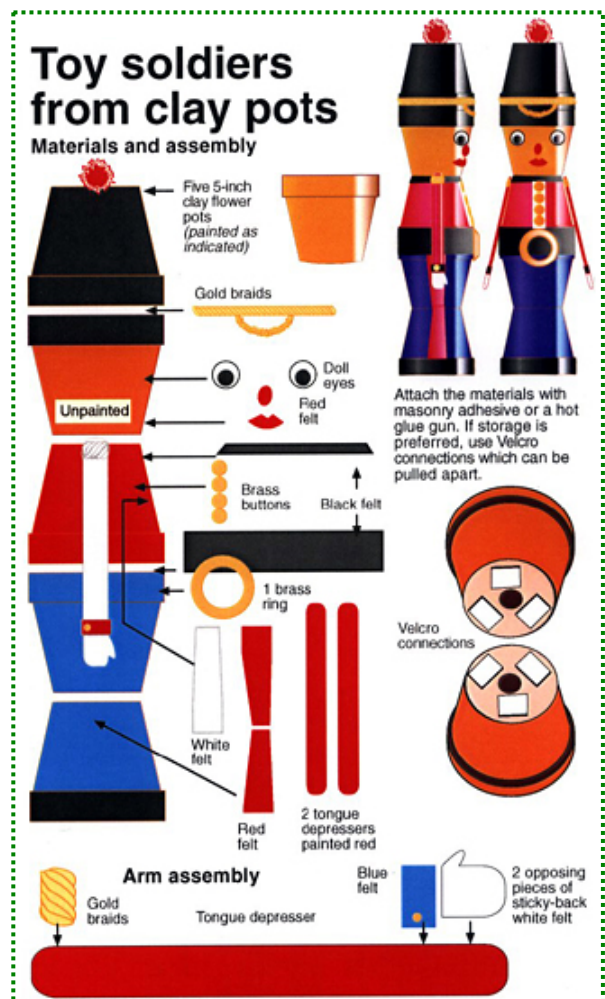
Add to your holiday decor with a handmade 18-inch tall “toy soldier” made from flower pots, spray paint, a few pieces of felt, ribbon and a few odds and ends. This fun decoration is a great family project and adds a festive touch every year, especially if there are youngsters around to share the experience.

You will need **five 5-inch flower pots** and **three cans of spray paint - red, black and blue**. The rest is, in large part, up to you. Our toy soldier can easily be converted to an angel, Santa, an elf or whatever else suits your fancy.

First, the clay pots should be spray painted. Two pots are painted blue, one black, one red and one is left unpainted. Next, add a black stripe to the rim of the unpainted pot and to one of the blue pots. Use **blue painters tape** and **masking paper** to prevent paint from getting onto any surface other than the rim. **Two wood tongue depressors** should be spray painted red and set aside for use later. If tongue depressors aren't available, trimmed **paint stir sticks** will do the trick.

Permanent assembly can be achieved by using a **masonry adhesive** or a **hot glue gun**. However, if storage is a consideration, use **Velcro connections** instead. This will allow partial disassembly and the placing of some of the pots inside one another.

Assembly begins by placing the blue pot with the black rim, rim-side down, on the work surface. Next, connect the bases of the two blue pots, making sure to align them. You've now created black shoes and blue trousers. Next, attach the rim of the red pot to the rim of the blue pot. Then, connect the base of the unpainted pot to the base of the red pot. Finally, add the black pot to the top, rim down.



Continued... see reverse

The next step is to add red stripes to the trousers, a white stripe and a black collar to the shirt, a black belt where the trousers and shirt meet, and a gold hatband to the hat. We used **gold ribbon** for the hat band, **sticky-back felt** for the trouser and shirt stripes and **regular felt** for the collar and belt. A simple **brass ring** was used for a belt buckle and, although regular buttons can be used, we used a package of **gold-colored plastic "cabochons."** The absence of a stitching protrusion on the back made them easy to attach with a hot glue gun.

Twenty or so small, **gold-colored beads** strung together with a **gold sequin** at each end can be used for the hat decoration. **Gold-colored braid or rope** is an alternative.



Your Checklist!

- 5 five-inch flower pots
- 3 cans of spray paint (red, black and blue)
- Blue painters tape
- Masking paper
- 2 wood tongue depressors (Alternative: Paint stir sticks)
- Masonry adhesive, hot glue gun or Velcro connections
- Gold ribbon
- Sticky-back felt
- Regular felt
- Brass ring
- Gold-colored plastic "cabochons" (or regular buttons)
- Gold-colored beads and gold sequin (Alternative: Gold-colored braid or rope)
- Plastic eyes
- Pipe cleaner (black or red)
- Red-colored yarn tassel



The arms are made from the tongue depressors (paint sticks) that were painted red earlier in the project.

Now, it's time to add white gloves. Each consists of a pair of opposing pieces made from sticky-back felt. Red cuffs can be added in the same manner. A sequin is used at each cuff for a button. And a short piece of **gold ribbon** is wrapped around the top of the arm to simulate an epaulet. Now attach the arms to the body. The face can be painted. In our case, because we're not artistic, we used **plastic eyes** and a felt mouth. A short piece of **black or red pipe cleaner** rolled into a ball can be used for the nose.

Finally, a store-bought **red-colored yarn tassel** should be added to the top of the hat. Or you can purchase the yarn and make your own tassel.

Although we used 5-inch flower pots this time, we also have soldiers made with 10-inchers. They stand more than 3 feet tall. The big ones make nice porch decorations.

Have fun with this project and Happy Holidays!

Morris and James Carey are nationally recognized experts on home building and renovation. They share their nearly half-century of experience as award-winning licensed contractors with millions of people nationwide through weekly radio programming and a syndicated newspaper column both titled "On The House."

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