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* Member
* 908 posts
* Location:South Carolina
* Interests:History, Scotland, Batman, Cars, and more<br />Married with 2 kids<br />

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[Posted February 7, 2007](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=findComment&comment=246126) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=reportComment&comment=246126)

OK, I am "converting" two plastic models into pirate ships/boats.

One of them will be the Lindberg "Jolly Roger" into a sloop.

The other will be the 1/96 scale Revell USS Constitution.

BOTH will be made into 1/48 scale.

I am trying to figure out the color schemes I plan to use.

One issue I am unable to decipher:

"Pirates and Patriots of the Revolution" by Keith Wilbur, p. 13:

"Below the waterline, tallow was frequently in service. A formula of the times called for "paying" the bottom with one part tallow, one part brimstone, and three parts resin." He then writes about copper and how unlikely it would be for a privateer.

SO, what color would that formula create:

dark brown?, off white (as I have seen on a number of models)? something else?

Ths most common colors seem to be:

Black-> cheap as made from lamp deposits

Yellow oxide

Red oxide (barn red-> more brown then Coca-cola red)

Sienna

Some blues and greens (which were imported, so more expensive than the homegrown colors)

White was NOT common, as Wilber says, "for it was expensive and dried an off-yellow tint."

Any other ideas for colors?

I plan to make the larger one into the "Thistle" pirate/privateer.

The sloop I have not named yet (though I could just use Revenge, as that is THE MOST common pirate sloop name.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=edit)

[**blackjohn**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1144-blackjohn/)

* Iron Age Hero Lost at Sea
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_pyrate_legend.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1144-blackjohn/&wr=eyJhcHAiOiJmb3J1bXMiLCJtb2R1bGUiOiJmb3J1bXMtY29tbWVudCIsImlkXzEiOjk4ODksImlkXzIiOjI0NjE1M30%3D)
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[Posted February 7, 2007](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=findComment&comment=246153) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=reportComment&comment=246153)

What time period are you trying to recreate? I seem to recall the choices were, depending on time period, "white stuff", "black stuff" and (now checking references) tallowing. Another choice, the "brown stuff" came into use in 1737.

There is also wood sheathing and lead sheathing available during out period.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=editComment&comment=246153)
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* Member
* 432 posts

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[Posted February 7, 2007](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=findComment&comment=246154) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=reportComment&comment=246154)

Wages said:

White was NOT common, as Wilber says, "for it was expensive and dried an off-yellow tint."

That is incorrect. White color was very cheap, as it used either lead white (poinsonous) or chalk as pigment.

Green paint (with verdigris as pigment) does not have to be imported, it can be made easily from copper and vinegar.

Blue was very expensive, hence uncommon, as it was made from either azurite (expensive) or ground lapis lazuli (extremely expensive). If a ship's owner tried to paint but two strakes with that color, he would had been better off with gilding the entire ship from stem to stern.

Which brings us to the last "color": Gilding parts of the ship, especially the stern and the figurehead.

**Edited February 7, 2007 by Capn\_Enigma**

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=editComment&comment=246154)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/#elControls_246154_menu)

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[Posted February 7, 2007](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=findComment&comment=246170) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=reportComment&comment=246170)

I was HOPING to use them as GAoP ships, but the hull shapes are limiting (If used as accurate).

The "Constitution" one can either be done as a 2 masted or 3 (depending on how I rig it).

The bottom is molded as copper plated, which I could sand smooth and (possibly) scribe as planks.

Right now, I am looking for all I can on hull shapes in the 18th Century.

If I recall correctly, the American frigates were basically a "scaled up" version of the hulls used for Rev. war privateers (schooners, if I remember correctly).

I am not trying to make any real ship, just a period-looking one.

This is intended to be more "fun" than "painstakingly perfect," BUT I want to be as accurate as possible (without going into any "extrodinairy efforts").

I questioned BECAUSE I saw the many very accurate planked models WITH the "expensive" white hulls.

I am just trying to see my color pallet for any paint jobs.

(plus, this thread may be helpful for other "virtual" ship creators and model makers here, as well as writers to know period ship colors)

Thanks,

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=editComment&comment=246170)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/#elControls_246170_menu)

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* Member
* 432 posts

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[Posted February 10, 2007](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=findComment&comment=246751) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=reportComment&comment=246751)

Trying to make a frigate look like a schooner makes as much sense as making a WWII battleship or cruiser look like a destroyer. The proportions do not match in either case.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=editComment&comment=246751)
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[Posted February 10, 2007](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=findComment&comment=246762) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=reportComment&comment=246762)

Capn\_Enigma said:

Trying to make a frigate look like a schooner makes as much sense as making a WWII battleship or cruiser look like a destroyer. The proportions do not match in either case.

Been there, done that.

Looked really cool, broken in move.

Became a yacht.

I am NOT kidding.

That is one of the fun elements of models:

Making and remaking them into something else.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/)
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* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/#elControls_246762_menu)

[**Lady Seahawke**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/791-lady-seahawke/)

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* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/791-lady-seahawke/&wr=eyJhcHAiOiJmb3J1bXMiLCJtb2R1bGUiOiJmb3J1bXMtY29tbWVudCIsImlkXzEiOjk4ODksImlkXzIiOjI0Njc3Mn0%3D)
* Member
* 757 posts
* Interests:M'ship is "Siren's Resurrection" along with wit m'mates ships' "Jaguar's Spirit" and "Red Vixen"

([IP: 12.72.32.192](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=12.72.32.192)) · · 

[Posted February 10, 2007](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=findComment&comment=246772) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=reportComment&comment=246772)

well, the descriptions listed above got me to thinking...yeah I know that is a dangerous thing... :blink:

anyway, the combination made me think of it being used differently...tallow not as a color but addition to the sealant.

tallow, solid fat extracted from the tissues and fatty deposits of animals, especially from suet (the fat of cattle and sheep). Pure tallow is white, odorless and tasteless; it consists chiefly of triglycerides of stearic, palmitic, and oleic acids. It is usually obtained commercially by heating suet under pressure in closed vessels. Tallow is used to make soap and candles. It was formerly in common use as a lubricant.

Brimstone...sulfur..Elemental sulfur is used in black gunpowder gunpowder, explosive mixture; its most common formula, called "black powder," of rubber; as a fungicide, insecticide, and fumigant; in the manufacture of phosphate fertilizers; and in the treatment of certain skin diseases

resin....The natural vegetable resins are largely polyterpenes and their acid derivatives, which find application in the manufacture of lacquers, adhesives, varnishes, and inks.

All of them are listed as insoluble in water...so the combination of sealant, fungicide/insecticide and lubricant is interesting to me...with the yellowish color as a result of the ship's treatment rather then the intended one....any thoughts gents??

**Edited February 10, 2007 by Lady Seahawke**

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=editComment&comment=246772)
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* Member
* 432 posts

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[Posted February 10, 2007](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=findComment&comment=246776) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=reportComment&comment=246776)

Lady Seahawke said:

....any thoughts gents??

I don't get it... any thoughts on exactly **what**?

Wages: You can't use a hull of a frigate für a schooner, at least not if you're a serious model builder. I've got 38 years of modelmaking under my belt, but before violating a hull to suit another scale, I'd rather scratch build one.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=editComment&comment=246776)
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[**Captain Jim-sib**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1464-captain-jim-sib/)

* First Mate
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* Member
* 264 posts

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[Posted February 10, 2007](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=findComment&comment=246777) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=reportComment&comment=246777)

During the GAoP, and before, white was common below the waterline, as Capt'n Enigma states. Galleys of the Elizabethean Era, Spanish, English, & Dutch used white on the ship's hull. Above the white was often a band of black (see link below). A Yellow ochre band was normally found on the gunport section on many Colonial period vessels. Basically, a wooden ship had a life span of twenty years, if that, and the builders would tend to economize on the construction costs. Much of the elaborate paint would often come out of a captain's own pocket.

As for converting Old Ironsides into a Baltimore-Clipper schooner that was the basic privateering vessel, a steeper dead rise would be needed.

You may need to cut out part of the bow hull & use some filler. Remember that privateers were service vessels and not very eloborate.

The Jolly Roger kit could easly be converted to a pirate brig similar to what the pirate Charles Vane had, the Ranger.

A good source for ship reference is Howard Chapelle, and recommend

"Search for Speed Under Sail" and The History of the American Sailing Navy" be added to your collection.

Best of luck & watch that Testor's glue vapors :blink:

[http://www.carolinasib.com/images/Frame.ph...lackbeard's](http://www.carolinasib.com/images/Frame.php?picture=adventure2&title=Blackbeards) ADVENTURE&price=CALL

**Edited February 10, 2007 by Captain Jim-sib**

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=editComment&comment=246777)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/#elControls_246777_menu)

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[Posted February 10, 2007](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=findComment&comment=246780) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=reportComment&comment=246780)

Wages said:

Capn\_Enigma said:

Trying to make a frigate look like a schooner makes as much sense as making a WWII battleship or cruiser look like a destroyer. The proportions do not match in either case.

Been there, done that.

Looked really cool, broken in move.

Became a yacht.

I am NOT kidding.

That is one of the fun elements of models:

Making and remaking them into something else.

Dude, that rocks. I admire the ability to kitbash...

I went back and did more research. According to my sources, if you are shooting for a post-war ship, go with the black stuff, because by 1702 black stuff had become more popular than white stuff due to cost. To cover a fourth rate cost 3/12/0 with black, versus 7/4/9 using the white stuff.

Also worth noting, tallowing seems to be popular for small ships and fast ships and is used throughout the period.

**Edited February 10, 2007 by blackjohn**

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/)
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[Posted February 10, 2007](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=findComment&comment=246793) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=reportComment&comment=246793)

I am not exactly sure if I am going to make the Consti into a schooner, Brig, or what the rigging will be.

I might keep it a 3 master or make it into a 2 master (as some prizes actually were converted).

I will COMPLETELY alter the rigging and sail arrangement. If the plastic masts do not convert well, I could make new masts out of dowel rod, if I have to.

The context will be either as a "generic" shelf thing, or sitting as a "museum ship" in harbor on a Lionel/O-Guage train layout.

I started particular project (bought the kit) about 7 years ago. Stored it. 3 years ago, pulled out, test fitted, schemed, and put back up. 2 years ago, pulled out kit, glued hull togther. Stopped, moved, left in storage.

Since beginning, I have learned A LOT about ships of that era.

As a test, I bought a "Jolly Roger" to try techniques of converting that ship into something small. I am rigging it as a sloop (though it is a tad narrow in beam).

The Consti/Thistle hull is 24 inches long on main deck and about 5 1/2 inches wide.

So, that converts to 96 feet long and 22 feet wide.

So, it is actually closer to the scale of the Ranger or Queen Anne's Revenge than a sloop or contemporary schooner (which actually came a bit later than the GAoP).

The model's main problem is that the gap from top deck to gun deck is only about an inch (4 feet)

If I leave off the upper deck, except in the stern portion after the third mast, I can make the "gun deck" into the main deck.

Then again, I might just "fake it" and have the gun deck fully enclosed and less detailed. I doubt ANYONE would think twice about the actual height of the ceiling in the gun deck when all that is visible is ONLY through the gun ports themselves and the deck grates (with "crap" placed on those grates).

I will still have room for a "living in" deck and some for an "under hold" for storage in the bottom of the hull.

The "stock" gun ports are only about 6 scale feet from center-to-center, so I might have to "close off" half of them. The "stock cannons will only be about 36 with all cannon ports used.

The "looser" arrangement makes it to just over 20 cannons (plus rail guns).

The ACTUAL Constitution had over 44 cannons, plus rail guns.

I "play with scale" A LOT when I build models.

I build almost EVERYTHING to approx. 1/48 scale.

I tend to truncate things to fit a smaller space.

I am planning a version of Atlanta's long dead Ponce de Leon Ballpark in 1/144 (1/3 of the size of the people that will be in the stands and players on the field). I also plan to either add "field stands" ala (Bears at Wrigley, Lions at Tiger Stadium, Redskins at Fenway, and Giants at Yankee) to make a football stadium or make the whole convertible or replacible with a Clemson "death valley"-esque stadium.

I am also designing a Aircraft carrier model. The ship itself will be a 1/100 scale Midway-class, as the cancelled CV-44. The planes will be 1/72. The pilots and deck crew will be 1/48.

Another project had a very interesting side effect of accuracy. I used 1/72 WW2 aircraft as the base for 1/48 30s air racers. I mixed them with the testors rerelease of the Hawk kits and compared them with ACTUAL measurements of Brown's, Turner's and other authenic designs and they match almost EXACTLY. I am now able to have Roscoe Turner, a Gee Bee, Red Baron, Dago Red, and Strega side-by-side and no one seems to think twice about it.

Now, the ships are e bit of a challenge of how unmodified can I leave the hulls and make the decently "accurate" as a different ship type of another era.

What I enjoy about models is to take a kit, do A LOT of research and make "my own" version of reality. If I did a real ship (built Consti as Old Ironsides), I am a stickler to the point I don't really enjoy it anymore. Tiny things NO ONE noticed irritate the PISS out of me. I have to be precise and accurate in my work and a"perfect" model doesn't act as stress relief and usually end up unfinished as I am not content with it as it is and want "one more thing."

BUT, if I do a "variation" I mix a bit of "artistic" and "creative" and make something unique and that I REALLY have fun doing.

A "what if" allows be the flexibility to have my creativity let loose and my "rivet counting" to be held in check.

So, a not-quite accurate conversion in exact period details makes a good and interesting challenge that balances the other part of my life.

So, here I am asking about the colors.

BUT, while on it, how early was the bow arrangement of the Constitution actually used. It looks similar to pictures I've seen of sloops, but not exact.

I am actually having difficulty finding good pictures of GAoP bows.

I originally picked the Constitution model, as I had been informed that the hull was THE SAME shape as an early schooner or sloop (forgot which). Now, I know that is not entirely accurate. I still seem to recall that the hull itself is "based" on a schooner below the waterline and a frigate above it, producing a very fast and formidable naval ship that was more a match for a British frigate. One book (forgot which) called it "a frigate and a half."

I still figured it can make a nice "Pirate ship" model, if not exactly accurate.

the model itself is not "Capt Twill," but the paint itself.

I also thought it would be interesting and useful for others making models, real ships, and fiction here on the forum.

**Edited February 10, 2007 by Wages**

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=editComment&comment=246793)
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* Member
* 757 posts
* Interests:M'ship is "Siren's Resurrection" along with wit m'mates ships' "Jaguar's Spirit" and "Red Vixen"

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Quote

....any thoughts gents??

Quote

I don't get it... any thoughts on exactly what?

ok, I was asking a seriously question there...and once again get brushed off.

Whatever.... :lol:

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/)
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* Member
* 908 posts
* Location:South Carolina
* Interests:History, Scotland, Batman, Cars, and more<br />Married with 2 kids<br />

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[Posted February 10, 2007](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=findComment&comment=246802) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=reportComment&comment=246802)

Seahawke,

I found that VERY interesting.

It is AMAZING how much people of old did know and how they used their technology.

Now that I know a lot more about the under waterline technology, I find it REALLY COOL and understand better what that means and what each element of the tallow solution actually does.

I will sand the Thistle's hull and paint it a "dirty black" The planking would probably not be very visible under all that stuff.

Interesting element of scale switching. It is remarkable how many details of models designed as smaller scales are actually 1/48, so they can actually be seen.

Look at the stairs and bricks of most "HO" buildings. I have used a number "out of box" in O guage. In 1/87, the bricks are the size of cinder blocks. In 1/48, just perfect. Also, train sheds and engine houses make GREAT garages and small industrial buildings.

(for rest of my posts in the thread: Thistle=Constitution model)

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[**Captain Jim-sib**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1464-captain-jim-sib/)

* First Mate
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_1st_mate.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1464-captain-jim-sib/&wr=eyJhcHAiOiJmb3J1bXMiLCJtb2R1bGUiOiJmb3J1bXMtY29tbWVudCIsImlkXzEiOjk4ODksImlkXzIiOjI0Njg2OX0%3D)
* Member
* 264 posts

([IP: 69.132.93.183](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=69.132.93.183)) · · 

[Posted February 10, 2007](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=findComment&comment=246869) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=reportComment&comment=246869)

Har be some 28 mm pirate figures...which may be too small for your scale. Model Expo has some larger pirate figures in their "specials/closeouts" section for $2 each.

(oophs, posted on wrong thread)

[http://www.legends-in-time.com/Main.jsp?li...0Foundry%2028mm](http://www.legends-in-time.com/Main.jsp?link=Pirates&secondLink=Wargames%20Foundry%2028mm)

**Edited February 10, 2007 by Captain Jim-sib**

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* Member
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[Posted February 10, 2007](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=findComment&comment=246902) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=reportComment&comment=246902)

Wrong thread, but the 1/54 ones (on Model Expo) will work NICELY!

Thanks!

**Edited February 10, 2007 by Wages**

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* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4587-tartan-jack/&wr=eyJhcHAiOiJmb3J1bXMiLCJtb2R1bGUiOiJmb3J1bXMtY29tbWVudCIsImlkXzEiOjk4ODksImlkXzIiOjM1NjE5M30%3D)
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[Posted May 13, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=findComment&comment=356193) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/9889-paint-color-questions-tallow/&do=reportComment&comment=356193)

Anyone have new opinions on ship/boat colors?