

PAINTING ELVES



Above. The painted Elves.

In this follow-up article I will go through the approach I have to painting the plastic elf soldiers, the techniques would also apply to any of the vast numbers plastics now available.

An undercoated elf

INSPIRATION

I had in my minds eye the sort of colours I would go for, and after seeing Andrew Taylor's wonderful painting of them I realised I would do, keeping to a similar palette but more grey, and using less blue. Also I decided to use the very nice shield decals made for the plastic elves by LBM studios, as I had not really used the before, preferring to paint shield designs.

UNDERCOATING

With the elves carefully assembled as detailed last time, when they are fully cured, you can go straight to the undercoating. Undercoating is essential as it provides a consistent surface on which to apply the next coats of paint. For the undercoat I used Humbrol enamel matt black. I usually undercoat in oil based paint as I find they give better coverage on the plastic.

I brushed the paint on with a Warpaints Small Drybrush brush making sure I covered the entire model. Don't let the paint pool anywhere as this will dry very thick and could obscure details. Also watch out for any stray hairs detaching from your brush and sticking to the model during undercoating. Pull them off with tweezers before



they become permanently attached! Take particular care not to clog up the face and similar fine detail areas, don't be afraid to go back and clear runs or blobs of undercoat off with your brush. I then let the undercoat dry completely before going on to paint the models.

THE PAINT

I used Army Painter War Paints to paint the elves, mixing up colours to suit my style and preferences. The names here reference The Mega Paint Set provides an adequate range of colours for almost all needs, but you will always need to mix colours to get the desired results, however I have tried to work out colour combinations to reduce mixing if possible.

PAINTING

The figure painting follows my well known method of working from dark to light shaded up from a black undercoat. This three, four or more colour painting method uses successive tones of colour (shade, middle and light) which are added to the model in layers, working up from dark to light. This creates a bold three-dimensional effect of shadows and highlights, the layers of colour giving greater depth and subtlety to the model. It may seem counterintuitive if you haven't painted this way before, but bear with me.

THE SAME COLOURS

Although I painted up the five elves on the sprue they are painted up as unit, so I will concentrate on describing the painting of just one elf as the colours on the rest of the elves are similar. I will show (lots and lots of) relevant pictures of the rest of the elves from time to time.

1. Gun Metal is applied most thickly, going over all of the area to be steel type finish.



THE METALWORK

Now, normally I would do the flesh first on most models, but there is a significant amount of armour and chainmail to do on these models and one of the techniques I use for metalwork can be a bit messy, I find when using this method it's easier to get it all done at once first off. Then you can tidy up and carry on with the rest of the painting knowing one big job is done.

DRY BRUSHING

The armour is painted using a technique called dry brushing. Essentially this is done by using a stiffish, short, brush with a lot of the paint removed and touching raised sections. Dip the end of your brush in the paint and make sure all the bristles are well soaked at the end then remove much of the paint onto a tissue. Draw the brush back and forth over the high spots of the model. You will need to brush back and forth several times as the best effect is achieved with slow gradual build up of paint. Be wary of the paint drying on the brush. (Dry brushing is a bit of a misnomer actually, as you will find the brush needs to be quite wet with paint; however the paint itself needs to be dryer and thicker than if you were painting normally).

Like normal painting I do three or more layers of dry brushing as follows. Also slightly confusingly I use a layer of ink between first two layers.

1. Gun Metal is applied most thickly, going over all of the area to be steel type finish.





Above. 2. Dark Tone Ink is then sloshed all over that first coat to deepen any shadows that might have inadvertently got filled in by the first coat and to give the metal that, a bit worn, slightly rusting feel.

2. Dark Tone Ink is then sloshed all over that first coat to deepen any shadows that might have inadvertently got filled in by the first coat and to give the metal that, a bit worn, slightly rusting feel.

3. Gun Metal again, lightly brushed over again.

4. Plate Mail Metal is then dry brushed on

5. Shining Silver is the top coat, well almost, dry brushed on vary sparingly.

Below. 3. Gun Metal again, lightly brushed over again.

Below. 4. Plate Mail Metal is then dry brushed on.





Above. 5. Shining Silver is the top coat, well almost, dry brushed on vary sparingly.



Above. 6. Matt Black is then used to tidy up around where the paint has gone over where it shouldn't have.

6. Matt Black is then used to tidy up around where the paint has gone over where it shouldn't have, see how neat it looks now.

7. Matt Black again, but this time in very small and fine amounts to add distress and damage marks on the helmets and swords, each of the marks is highlighted with Shining Silver.

Below. 7. Matt Black again, but this time in very small and fine amounts to add distress and damage marks on the helmets and swords, each of the marks is highlighted with Shining Silver.





Above. 1. The whites of the eyes are Matt White.

EYES

I normally paint the eyes first so I can get them right before doing the rest of the model, (but here I did it after the armour as detailed above), if the eyes are not great it will spoil the rest of the paint job! I also took the opportunity to

Below. 2. The irises are Deep Blue with a tiny amount of Oak Brown.



paint in some teeth on a couple of the elves. I painted the eyes in with a Warpaints Insane Detail brush.

1. The whites are Matt White.
2. The irises are Deep Blue with a tiny amount of Oak Brown





Above. 1. Fur Brown.

FLESH

I did the flesh next. I wanted the elves face to be mostly smooth and with few wrinkles or blemishes, no baggy eyelids, also I wanted a light skin tone so I used the colour combinations below.

1. Fur Brown
2. Tanned Flesh, this follows very much the layer before.

Below. 2. Tanned Flesh, this follows very much the layer before.





Above. 3. Barbarian Flesh, you can see starting to really pull out the details.

3. Barbarian Flesh, you can see starting to really pull out the details.

4. Barbarian Flesh plus Matt White, now the face really starts to zing.

Below. 4. Barbarian Flesh plus Matt White, now the face really starts to zing.





Above. 5. plus more Matt White.



Above. 6. plus a tiny bit more Matt White.

5. plus more Matt White
6. plus a tiny bit more Matt White
7. and finally a tiny touch of Pure Red to the flesh mix for the bottom lip and that is the faces all done.

Below. 7. and finally a tiny touch of Pure Red to the flesh mix for the bottom lip and that is the faces all done.





Above. 1. Desert Yellow plus Oak Brown.



Above. 2. Desert Yellow.

HAIR

Had to be blonde elves for me! The hair repays careful painting delineating the hairs as much as your brush will allow. Colours are as follows. Be aware you don't need much brown to darken this yellow.

1. Desert Yellow plus a small amount of Oak Brown
2. Desert Yellow.
3. Desert Yellow plus Matt White.
4. plus more Matt White.

Below. 3. Desert Yellow plus Matt White.



Below. 4. plus more Matt White.



Above. 1. Wolf Grey and Matt Black.

THE BLUE BITS

These are the trim to the chainmail, details on the gloves and boots and the shoulder pauldron. Colours as follows:

Below. 4. plus Matt White.



Above. 1. Wolf Grey and Matt Black.

1. Wolf Grey and Matt Black.
2. plus Wolf Grey and Matt White.
3. plus Matt White.
4. plus Matt White.

Below. 4. plus Matt White.





Above. 1. Desert Yellow plus Oak Brown.



Above. 2. plus Matt White

THE BUFF BITS

Boots and gloves. Take care to delineate the fingers carefully if you can, even if you have to go back and neaten up between them with a tiny bit of Matt Black. Colours as follows:

1. Desert Yellow plus Oak Brown
2. plus Matt White.
3. plus Matt White.
4. plus Matt White.

Below. 4. plus Matt White.





Above. 1. Ash grey plus Matt White.



Above. 4. pure Matt White

THE WHITE BITS

Just a tiny bit of tunic, it is a bit of a pain to do neatly but worth it as it provides a nice bit of delineation. There is more tunic on show on the archers.

1. Ash grey plus Matt White.
2. plus Matt White.

Below. 4. pure Matt White

3. plus more Matt White.
4. pure Matt White.

Below. 4. pure Matt White





Above. 1. Uniform Grey plus Matt Black.

THE DARK GREY BITS

Trousers, colours as follows:

1. Uniform Grey plus Matt Black.
2. plus Matt White.
3. plus more Matt White.
4. plus more Matt White.

Below. 2. plus Matt White .



Above. 1. Uniform Grey.

THE GREY BITS

Helmet plumes and arrow flights, colours as follows:

1. Uniform Grey.
2. plus Matt White .
3. plus more Matt White.
4. plus more Matt White.

Below. 4. plus Matt White.



THE BLACK BITS

Belts, scabbards and other bits and pieces, colours as follows:

1. Matt Black plus Skeleton Bone
2. plus Skeleton Bone
3. plus more Skeleton Bone
4. plus more Skeleton Bone

THE SHIELDS & TRANSFERS

This is where things are a bit different. The LBMS shield Transfers are superb designs and fit the elf shields perfectly well, but need a bit of careful preparation to get right (there are also transfers for quivers and banners). However if you follow the correct procedure they will reward you with stunning shields with consistent and beautiful designs that are ideal for the models.

The first thing to say is they are not waterside transfers in the traditional sense, in that you don't throw them in some warm water and watch them float away from the backing paper. Think of them more as a kind of sticker and you won't go very far wrong.

What you see when you look at the designs on the sheet of LMB transfers is the surface that actually sticks down to the shield or whatever, so it is in fact, a reverse of the final image (this become more obvious if there is any writing on the design). And so that final image is able to be seen through the transfer as they are translucent, and this means you must to apply them on a white or light surface otherwise you won't see the design at all clearly, (the printed transfers has no white in it as it is printed on a RGB printer). All clear so far?

Below. 1. Paint the shield Matt White.



Above. 1. Paint the shield Uniform Grey.

Well it's not as complicated as I made it sound, as follows.

1. Paint the shield Uniform Grey then Matt White as a ground to the transfer.
2. Then while that is drying thoroughly, cut out the design you want to match the shield. Remembering the design you see on the sheet is in reverse. I used my best pair of scissors to cut out the main shape and a very sharp

Below. 2. Best pair of scissors to cut out the main shape.



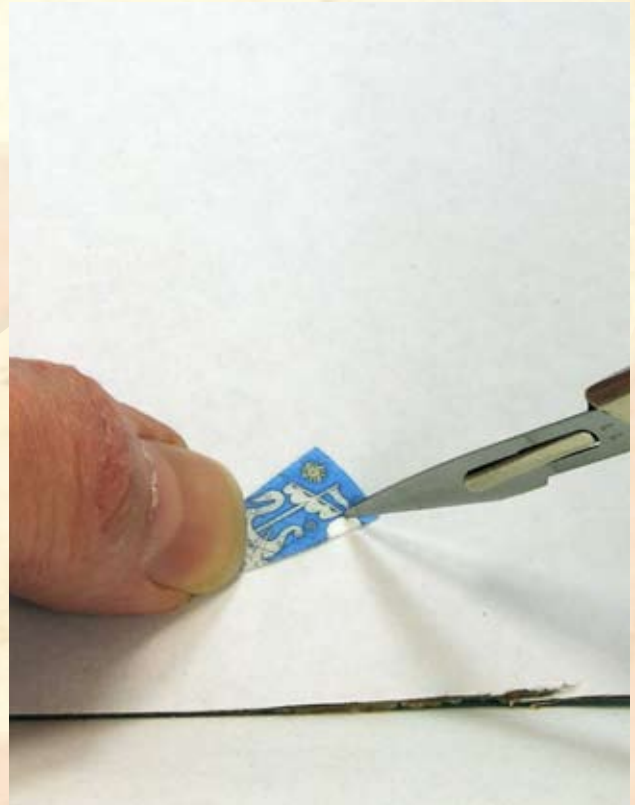


Above. 2. Best pair of scissors to cut out the main shape.

new bladed scalpel to trim out the small cut-outs in the design.

3. Peel off the shiny plastic film from the transfer as you look at the design, now you have a sticky transfer waiting to be applied to the prepared surface of the shield. Now the bit I found most tricky, align your transfer and pop him in place on the shield. Ouch. Now, all is not lost, if you don't quite get it right as you can peel him off and

Below. 3. Align your transfer and pop him in place.



Above. 2. Trim out the small cut-outs in the design.

have another go but not too many times. Best to have a few practice runs, not on the models, to get the feel of it.

4. Once you are happy with the positioning of the transfer you moisten the white backing paper, which is now all you can see, and it comes away with ease and quite a bit of satisfaction.

Below. 4. The moistened backing paper comes away.





Above. 5. Burnish over the transfer to get it down firmly.

5. To make sure the transfer is firmly down I burnished over it with the round shiny end of one of my old sculpting tools, if you see any trapped air pockets you can pop them with a pin and rub it down.

6. The last stage is to disguise the fact that you have used transfers by painting the bits that show round the edges of the shield.

Sometimes, as I did, you may not get an exact fit of the



Above and Below. 6. Disguising the edges.

transfer and it leaves a bit of the white ground showing without any design on it. Not only does this untidy but it completely gives away the fact you have used transfers! I disguised this as follows.

For the top blue bit I used Crystal Blue mixed with Matt White to match the blue of the transfer, and then carried this over to the edge of the shield too. I highlighted this mix by adding Matt White.





Above. 6. Quiver with a transfer too!

For the bottom half of the design I used Drake Tooth mixed with Filthy Cape, again carried this over the edge of the shield as well, and then highlighted that mix by adding Matt White.

Now that looks okay, but now to really sell the illusion, I carried the sword cut-marks across the edges and sides of the shields. Again highlighting these cut-marks with the appropriate colours highlight really finishes it off.

Below. The woodwork.



Above. 6. Disguising the edges.

THE WOODWORK

The backs of the shields, bows and arrows, and the spear, I have tried to paint a wood grain effect, sometimes you regret putting the shield in a certain place and making it awkward for yourself to paint the back of the damn thing! Colours as follows:

Below. The woodwork.





Above. The woodwork.

1. Dirt Splatter
2. plus Desert Yellow
3. plus more Desert Yellow
4. plus Matt White

Below. 1. Rough Iron.



Above. The woodwork.

THE BRONZE

I wanted a nice deep bronze to set off the light steel armour so I used the colours as follows.

1. Rough Iron
2. Rough Iron plus True Copper

Below. 2. Rough Iron plus True Copper.





Above. 4. Weapon Bronze.

- 3. True Copper
- 4. Weapon Bronze

VARNISH

Make sure all the paint on the model is thoroughly dry before commencing varnishing.

Below. 4. Weapon Bronze.



Above. 4. Weapon Bronze.

GLOSS

The models were then given a coat of Humbrol polyurethane gloss varnish and set aside for 24 hours to dry completely. Be careful not to let the varnish pool, especially under the horse and on the feet. You don't need a very thick coat of varnish.

Below. Gloss varnish.





Above. Matt varnish.

MATT

Then they were given two coats of Anti-Shine Matt Varnish. Be even more careful when painting on the matt varnish. When applying the matt, brush it out well from any nooks and crannies where it is likely to collect and pool.

Below. Matt varnish.



Above. Matt varnish.

BASING

The bases are 25mm square plastic. I used superglue to stick the models in place, blowing over them to prevent the glue whitening off on the models. When positioning the models I made sure they ranked up okay with each other.

I then filled in between the models bases and square base

Below. Matt varnish.





Above. 3. Ready for battle!

with household filler and then left that overnight to go hard. I then glued on some sharp sand with PVA glue.

When the sand was dried hard I painted the whole base with

1. Leather Brown
2. I then dry-brushed on Desert Yellow

Below. 3. Ready for battle!



Above. 3. Ready for battle!

3. then I dry-brushed on lightly, Skeleton Bone

I then added some flora. Lots of different Gamers Grass flock tufts and then Gale force nine: Meadow Blend Flock, and they are ready for battle!

Below. 3. Ready for battle!





THE ELVES





THE ELVES





ANOTHER ELF

Elf Champion, Shield transfer by Little Big Men Studios. His shield design it is actually the banner decal cut down to fit and amended with painted on sword cuts. The proper shield decals don't fit his larger, slightly different shape

shield and I wanted him to match the plastic elves from the box set. The scratches are very much inspired (copied from) the LBMS decals. The figure will never be available to buy, but he came free during the elf offers, which is nice.







AND ANOTHER ELF

This elf is made using a body from the Frostgrave soldiers set; I was thinking he could be of a woodland elf or a elf adventurer...

