



An avid collector of The Lord of The Rings miniatures, Adi Wood recently started a High Elf army based on the Battle of the Last Alliance and featuring High Elf Lord Elrond.

**A**di: A large percentage of my collection of The Lord of The Rings miniatures is made up of the Forces of Mordor: plenty of Orcs, Trolls, and a few Nazgûl. I really liked the individual appearance of the models and was able to use my imagination when painting them.

I created a palette of a dozen or so natural, earthy colors. From these colors, I could then pick two or three to paint each warrior and thereby give each an individual appearance. Rather than collecting a coherent army of some kind, I built one warband after another.

However, most armies in The Lord of The Rings wear a uniform, liveries made up of common colors. Even Evil forces like the Easterlings and the Morannon Orcs have a strong coherent appearance. Painting a uniform color scheme on a complete army – particularly one that could oppose my Mordor forces – seemed like fun. I set some time aside to think about which one to collect. There's a movie still that I really like from *The Fellowship of The Ring*, with Elrond leading the High Elves at the Battle of

# ARMY OF ELROND

## *Painting Elrond and His High Elf Warriors*

The Last Alliance. I could use this image as the basis for an army.

I decided to use The Warriors of the Last Alliance boxed set, which contains plenty of High Elves, to start my collection. When fighting scenarios in The Lord of The Rings, you can use alternative forces – the only requirement is that no more than a third of the warriors can be bowmen. Two boxed sets gave me 24 troops (16 swordsmen and 8 bowmen), a formidable force with Elrond at its head.

I then turned my thoughts to how I was going to paint the army. In addition to applying a uniform color scheme to a large number of models, the trick to painting this army would be to find a way to apply a consistent green-tinge to the gold armor of 25 models. The appearance of a slightly green patina is very characteristic of the High Elves' armor at that time.

### TECHNIQUE

When painting character models, I like to focus all my energy on the details and, for instance, emphasize the character of the model's face and use controlled brushwork to

get the best finish possible. However, painting armies with a uniform appearance is a different discipline. It's all about finishing a large number of models to an appropriate standard. It's not the details but the overall impression that counts.

There are a few specific painting techniques I use. The first is a combination of layering and overbrushing – the majority of the colors on my armies are painted this way. I like to apply a layer of solid color to an area before applying the second layer, which is as much overbrushed as layered on. I rely on the natural contours of the sculpture to get the right finish.

The second technique is noticeably faster to apply. I used it for the metal areas of the models. After painting a solid layer of metallic color, usually Chainmail, all over the metal, a liberal wash of Brown Ink not only shades but also stains the metal color, giving a natural battle-worn look, particularly to Orc warriors.

High Elves have a very uniform appearance, which makes them ideal for a standard army





*High Elves are ideally suited to the batch-painting technique due to their uniform appearance.*



painting technique – batch painting. Starting with the color that covers the largest area, I apply it to each and every model. Once all the models are painted with this color, I choose the next color and apply that to all the models. As you can imagine, this process gives all the models an even-handed appearance, and no model is treated any differently from the rest.

High Elves have only two main areas to paint, long flowing robes and hoops of gold armor. When thinking about painting my new army, I reasoned that I could wash the armor with ink and then paint the robes in layers as I would any other model in my collection. However, High Elf armor is a toned-down gold color, muted by a tinge of green in the recesses. If I were to apply Dark Green Ink over gold or silver, the armor might look too bright, too green, or too shiny. If I were going to paint 24 models to make a complete war host, it would be worthwhile taking some time out to experiment with the right combination of colors before launching into the unknown.

## WASHES

A wash of either ink or paint is a great way to apply a shaded effect to a light base color. The wash will create deep shading in the creases and recesses of the model and leave the raised edges of the detail with a natural highlight. Ink is particularly suited for this technique, although paint thinned with water can also be used to apply a wash to a model. Thinned paint will yield a slightly more matte appearance than an ink, which can give models a slightly shiny finish (which is why I use inks to shade metal).

Although this sounds fine in theory, in practice, the effects of ink washes can be a little unpredictable. What appears to be a dark shading effect when wet can often dry much lighter and become less well defined. However, it is possible to add materials to the wash to accentuate certain effects.

**Water.** Water lightens the color of the wash, but too much can produce a glaze rather than a wash, which has the effect of staining the model, not shading it.

**White Glue.** White glue enhances the gathering qualities of the color to create darker shading and a better contrast.

**Dishwashing Liquid.** Dish soap does the opposite of white glue and spreads out the color to get a more even coverage.

**'Ardcoat.** Varnish can be added to ink to lighten the color. Unlike water, however, varnish will not affect ink's gathering qualities. Varnish can also be added to paint to make it behave more like ink. Thus, if you have a specific paint color you want to apply as a wash, 'Ardcoat can be a useful addition.



I experimented with different undercoats and sprayed eight models with Chaos Black and another eight with Skull White. I had previously used a white undercoat to paint Galadriel and really liked the results. Here are some of the best results from my experiments.



## COLOR TEST 1

White undercoat

**Base color:**  
Shining Gold

**Wash:**  
Dark Green Ink

*The white undercoat brightens up the model.*



## COLOR TEST 2

White undercoat

**Base color:**  
Shining Gold

**Wash:**  
Watered-down  
Snot Green

*The green shade is still not subtle enough.*

## COLOR TEST 3

Black undercoat

**Base color:**  
Shining Gold

**Wash:**  
Dark Green Ink

*This scheme is bright with a yellow tinge to the armor plates, but overall, it is too green.*



## COLOR TEST 4

White undercoat

**Base color:**  
Shining Gold

**Wash:**  
Dark Angels Green/  
'Ardcoat

*'Ardcoat makes the model appear less green, as the pigment gathers in the recesses.*



## COLOR TEST 5

White undercoat

**Base color:**  
Shining Gold

**Wash:**  
Mix of Dark Green  
Ink/ 'Ardcoat.

*The shading is more subtle than Dark Green Ink, particularly with 'Ardcoat added to the mix.*

## COLOR TEST 6

Black undercoat

**Base color:**  
Shining Gold

**Wash:**  
Dark Green Ink

*The black undercoat gives the armor a dark appearance, made darker by the wash.*



## COLOR TEST 7

White undercoat

**Base color:**  
Shining Gold

**Wash:**  
Two parts Catachan  
Green, one part  
'Ardcoat and three  
parts water.



## COLOR TEST 8

White undercoat

**Base color:**  
Shining Gold

**Wash:**  
Watered-down  
Scorched Brown.

*This version is simply too brown.*

Test 7 became my favorite, and so I applied a thin layer of Shining Gold over white to create natural looking shading and highlights to the armor, which is enhanced by applying the wash of paint and 'Ardcoat. The armor had just the right tinge of muted green, which fitted the images from the movie. The next stage was to apply the extra colors.

While I was highlighting the blue cloth, an

idea struck me. Why not apply light colors to the whole model, then wash the mix of Catachan Green and 'Ardcoat all over the model, including the base? If the colors were applied in thin layers in the same way as the gold, the wash could shade and unify all the colors on the model in one go – it was worth a try.

Surprisingly, the final result was very effective. In fact, it looked like the result of a

far more time-consuming painting process than it actually was. The wash even helped to shade the sand, which I drybrushed with Bleached Bone once the wash was dry. To finish the base, I painted the rim of the base Bestial Brown to match the other models in my collection. Now I could paint all the models in my army, confident that the finished effect would not only be fast to apply but look good too.



Bay of



## PAINTING A HIGH ELF WARRIOR

**A**lthough the models are all painted with the batch-painting approach to give the whole unit a uniform look, there is one additional benefit from using the wash of paint and 'Ardcoat.

As the mix dries slightly differently on every model, the subtle variations between each warrior in the unit make the final appearance of the army look more natural.



**1** Paint a layer of Shining Gold onto all the metal areas of the model.



**2** Next apply a layer of Elf Flesh to the model's face.



**3** Leave the feathers on the arrows unpainted, but paint the bow, arrow shafts, quiver, and gauntlets Bestial Brown.



**4** Use Fortress Grey on both the sash and the cloak. Then paint the inside of the cloak and the skirt Ultramarines Blue.



**5** Apply a mix of Catachan Green, 'Ardcoat, and water over the whole model, including the feathers and sand.



**6** Finally, base the model by lightly drybrushing Bleached Bone on to the sand and painting the rim of the base Bestial Brown.

## PAINTING ELROND

**I** painted Elrond at the same time as the rest of the troops, and in much the same way, with a couple of key exceptions. I basecoated the cloth in a couple of different colors: Snot Green for the skirt and Ultramarines Blue for the entire cloak. Elrond doesn't wear a helmet so I gave his hair a basecoat of Dark Flesh

and applied the paint wash before finishing the model to the same standard as the rest of the army. As a final polish to Elrond's paint job, I applied extra layers of highlights to his cloak, skirt, hair, and most notably, his skin.

### FACE

Paint the skin Elf Flesh. Leave the shading visible in the recesses. Mix a little Bleached Bone into this color and apply to the nose, brow, lips, and cheeks. Highlight the end of the nose, cheeks, and brow with Bleached Bone and pick out the teeth with thinned-down Skull White.

### CLOAK

To highlight the cloak, apply a layer of Ultramarines Blue. Leave the recesses in shadow. Add an equal amount of Fortress Grey to the base color and apply it to the edges of the folds in the same way as the skirt. Finish off the edges with fine highlights of Fortress Grey.

### HAIR

Mix a small amount of Bleached Bone into Dark Flesh and carefully overbrush onto the hair to pick out its texture.

### BLADE

Apply a coat of Chainmail followed by a thin highlight of Mithril Silver along the edge of the blade.

### SKIRT

Highlight with a layer of Snot Green. Apply an equal mix of Snot Green and Goblin Green to the edges of the folds. Finish off with highlights of Goblin Green.

