

THE BATTLE OF FIVE ARMIES

A Beginners Guide

An article for players of the LOTR Strategy Battle Game looking for a new challenge
By Mark Wilcox

The Battle of Five Armies, is based on JRR Tolkien's prequel to the Lord of the Rings trilogy.

It's a completely different game to Games Workshop's Lord of the Rings Strategy Battle Game, and is in 10mm scale - much smaller than the 25mm scale miniatures produced for the Strategy Battle Game.

SIZE COMPARISONS

To show the difference in scale, I have taken a comparison photo between the regular 25mm scale miniatures and the new, 10mm Battle of Five Armies figures. The two scales are not just for aesthetic reasons. The two games play very differently, the Strategy Battle Game focusing more on combat, whilst the Battle of Five Armies concerns itself with the ebb and flow of the entire battle.



PAINTING THE MINIATURES

Don't let the models size put you off the idea of painting these amazingly detailed miniatures, because they are actually fun and simple to paint.

The miniatures are so easy to paint that I can paint a whole unit of goblins in around 45 minutes, but that depends on what methods I'm using.

For my miniatures, I have trialled several techniques. These include:

- Painting Flat Colour
- Highlighting & Dry Brushing
- Washing
- Dry Brush of Skull White Over Undercoat

Flat Colour: This probably seems a bit boring, but it does work quite well, and you can complete a stand of warriors rather quickly. All you need to do is paint on the colour where necessary. These look absolutely fine from arms length and is perfect for gaming. This way you can field many troops and play large battles in a relatively short amount of time.

Highlighting & Dry Brushing: This is a more detailed method that takes a little longer than flat colour however you get far better results.

For most battle of Five Armies figures you only need to have two colours, these being a Basecoat and a Highlight. No need for any middle men in the world of the Battle of Five Armies! The only part of a miniature you might want to use three colours on is a cloak, these are present on the Elves and Bard, so there's not too much to worry about. The reason I use an extra colour on the capes is because they have very high folds, which should be visible.

Washing: This is like the flat colour method, but the result you get is of a much higher standard, and is very simple. All this involves is painting the miniature as you would with flat colour, but with lighter paint, as the Ink will darken the colour of the entire miniature. Once you have finished, get either Black or Brown Ink, water it down and coat the whole stand's miniatures with it.

I would suggest a brown wash for the Goblins, as they live most of their lives underground. For the others models I would suggest the black wash which adds shading to the miniature, and just makes the colour on it look a bit nicer. So if you want to be able to paint your miniatures quite quickly, but want them to look nicer than just plain, flat colour, this would be a definite path to consider.

Dry brush of Skull White: I am yet to try this myself, but I hear that it works quite well. All it is lightly drybrushing Skull White over your Chaos Black undercoat before painting. This means that when you paint the colour onto the model it will have a lighter shade than most of the section.

So, dry brush the white paint before starting, and then paint flat colour onto the miniature.

OTHER TIPS FOR PAINTING

Painting the Battle of Five Armies miniatures on the sprue is far easier than painting each strip individually. You get the paintjob completed faster, it's easier to handle, and you can easily move from one strip to another.

I try to only paint one unit of models at a time, you can also set yourself painting goals, like saying... "Okay, I'm going to paint one unit of goblins every two days for the next sixteen days," and in just over two weeks you'll have painted all of your goblin infantry - simple.

When you are going to paint your first Battle of Five Armies figures I would suggest trying out the riderless Wargs, as these are the easiest models to paint.

Another tip I will give you, is try using the painting guides in the rulebook. They might seem too simple when just looking at the pictures, but once you paint some up for yourself you'll find them fine

Another thing, try not to mix colours unless you really have to. It's really hard work trying to mix paint for all the miniatures in that box!

SCENERY

So this brings me to the scenery in the box. In the box there is two massive hills, well, they seem massive when you compare them to the Battle of Five Armies miniatures, but they aren't that huge when you put an army on 25mm on it, but they still look awesome! These can be slotted together in two different ways, but in the scenario they are separate hills. Also included in the box are some lovely Ruins, which slot together to form the ruins of Dale on the BoFA map. There is also one wall section that you can use as Thorin's Gate.

For creating your own terrain, it's simple to make dedicated boards, because you only need a 2'x2' board, as if you had it bigger you would need an immense number of troops. You could even make Helm's Deep on a 2x2 board!



CONCLUSION

Well I guess that pretty much sums it up, so I hope I've either convinced you to buy the game, or made you reconsider your opinion on the magnificent 'game in a box'.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I'm a 13 year old from Auckland, New Zealand, and collect the Battle of Five Armies game. I love anything Lord Of The Rings, and I spend too much time with gaming and modelling. My room is crowded with all my modelling stuff and I hardly ever get any homework done in there. I also run a website called thewhitecouncil.net.



Copyright © Games Workshop Limited 2005, All Rights Reserved. The Hobbit, The Lord of The Rings and the names of the characters, items, events and places therein are trademarks of The Saul Zaentz Company d/b/a Tolkien Enterprises under license to Games Workshop Ltd. All Rights Reserved. Games Workshop, the Games Workshop logo, Battlefleet Gothic, Blood Bowl, Epic, Mordheim, Necromunda, Inquisitor and Warmaster are either ®, TM and/or © Games Workshop Ltd 2000-2005, variably registered in the UK and other countries around the world. All Rights Reserved.