Chris: When the news started circulating amongst the Adepticon Hobby Seminar instructors that Avatars of War miniatures would be allowed in the 2009 Rogue Demon Painting Contest there was quite a buzz and most of us committed to painting at least one of these miniatures for the contest. When Hank Edley of the Adepticon Council found out so many of us were planning to work on these models, he suggested we put together a Road to Adepticon article documenting our progress. Dave Pauwels and I were furthest along in our work and agreed to start the ball rolling with the conversion phase of our miniatures.

For me it was never a question if I would paint an Avatars of War model for Adepticon; the question was which miniature I’d paint. It took me a matter of minutes to settle on Felix Paniagua’s Dwarf Berserker - this is the first model of the line and one of my favorites; I liked it the moment I saw the green putty original online years ago, I think I even pre-ordered it from Spain.

The model bears a striking (and I’m assuming intentional) resemblance to a dwarf slayer from Warhammer (by far my favorite concept from that game) and I fully intended to play up that similarity. The quality of sculpting is such that I didn’t actually need to convert the model at all, however Avatars of War generously provided this model to every single Adepticon ticket-holder last year, so he’ll be an easy choice for a lot of painters and I thought I’d better put a little thought into making my version of this model stand out.

I really like the model’s axes, especially the dragon-head details, but they seem a bit thick for my taste (a necessity of casting as I understand it). I’d originally planned to just replace the blade with ABS plastic card, but I found myself hacking and filing and sawing away at it until I had effectively built a whole new axe; though I did manage to keep the dragon on the back of the axe-head. The new axe blade is patterned off the art of Gotrek’s axe blade, the title character from GW’s ‘Slayer novels started by Bill King and the axe handle ended up square because I’d recently re-watched the Lord of the Rings movies and Gimli’s axe handles are square…

I frequently recommend developing a clear idea of what and how you want to change a model before starting a conversion and most times I abide by my own advice; but occasionally the concept changes significantly during the conversion process. This turned out to be one of those times. I’d always intended to swap the right-hand axe for another weapon, I actually had another weapon ready to go when I decided/realized the way he was holding his right arm looked like he was about to take a drink and that was that – I needed to give him a pint of beer. I sculpted a tankard brimming with frothy ale and after cutting his arm in two places to accommodate a
little change in his pose, the model was taking on a very different feel.

I added two elements to the base that I think fit the model well and add interest - a dragon skull (since “dragon-slayer” is one of the slayer honorifics as they improve/fail to get themselves killed) and a bit of dwarven stonework shamelessly lifted from a Warhammer Online concept art piece (I call it an homage rather than plagiarism). The base dragon skull is from the GW plastic giant kit and replaces the severed goblin head on the stock model. The rune (of striking) hammered into the forehead of the dragon skull was mostly to break up the big cranial dome I’d had to add to make the skull touch the bottom of his boot; but it was conveniently lying around left over from another project.

With the conversion stage complete, I now have a slayer model about to set out to find his doom (again?); lifting a pint amid the trophies and memorials of the slayers who have gone before. You can decide for yourself how well I conveyed that, but stay tuned for phase two: painting…

Dave:  When Adepticon czar, Hank Edley, told me that this year’s painting competition would see the inclusion of Felix Paniagua’s miniature line, I was more than enthusiastic. Anyone familiar with the Avatars of War models knows how characterful and detailed these figures are and there was absolutely no question that I’d paint at least one for Adepticon. Choosing which one to paint first was the tough choice as, unlike my colleague from the great state of Ohio, I had a couple favorites (cough, Dark Elf Sorceress). But, in the end, it was Chris’ model that inspired my choice and in the interest of creating a miniature-painting blood feud, I chose the Goblin Hero.

I’m a goblin fan from way back and my Night Goblin army inspired terror, or at least mild suspicion, in my college opponents. One of my first real conversions was modeling a Crown of Command on my warlord. Good times. Felix’s excellent Goblin Hero brought out my sentimental side. He’s a “classic” goblin, diminutive yet obviously bloodthirsty and rabid. Like his Dwarf Berserker nemesis, he’s an avid trophy collector and sports a fine collection of skulls. So while I may never paint another entire goblin army, I would take this opportunity to paint one member of my favorite Warhammer race.

From the start I knew that I wasn’t going to do too much to the actual model itself. I made a few additions to convey some movement, like blowing strands of hair and leather
straps. Generally speaking, sculptors tend to avoid “fragile” details like this as they’d probably never survive the casting process. But beyond these minor additions, I decided my main effort would be in creating a characterful base.

I knew I wanted a specific “setting” for my Goblin Hero. He would be a veteran Dwarf-fighter and his kingdom would be a subterranean one. Instead of placing him in an obviously dwarven realm, I saw him attacking the hated enemy from below their halls, from the darkest places in the world. To that end, I wanted a more naturalistic setting, complete with stalagmites (or stalactites- I forget which is which) and roughly-hewn stairs. After sculpting the main base with greenstuff, I added some broken plaster. I finished it off with some fine sand flock and added a few pieces off the Dwarven warrior sprue to bring dishonor to the fallen bearded-ones. I think bases provide a real opportunity to give your model a sense of place and a base’s impact should never be underestimated.

I’m looking forward to priming this little blighter. I’m planning on trying out some new weathering techniques on the armor and I’m going to give him relatively pale skin tones to reflect his subterranean lifestyle. So stay tuned….

Would you like to know more?
The Adepticon Hobby Seminar series; especially Joe Orteza’s Losing the Fear: Working with Green Stuff and James and Cathy Wappel’s Here We Stand: Advanced Basing Techniques, cover a lot of the techniques Chris and Dave mention in this article.


Visit the Adepticon website for more information: www.adepticon.org

Check out Felix Paniagua’s fantastic Avatars of War miniatures here: http://wwwavatars-of-war.com/