

WARHAMMER

CONVERT TO CHAOS

by CJ Cummings

The Summer of Chaos is upon us, and with it comes a renewed interest in the Chaos armies. Whether it's 40K or Fantasy, the hordes will pour forth from their respective domains, dominating tabletops everywhere. But what can be done to make an army stand out from all the other armies?

Mutations of course, bestowed upon the Chaos Warriors by the Chaos gods! Here I give a explanation of the basic techniques I use to convert my Chaos hordes.

I recently picked up the new Chaos Space Marine box set to add onto my Emperor's Children army. After seeing the Chaos Mutations sprue, I was hit on the idea of using them for my new Chaos Fantasy army. The claws and distorted limbs are perfect for adding onto your plastic troops, and the heads are easy to attach with the ball-joint socket and some polystyrene cement. These mutations would show a unit that was chosen by the patrons of Chaos.

I gathered the materials I needed to create my new Warriors, all of which are available through Games Workshop Mail Order or your local hobby shop:

- Pin Vice Drill**
- Drill Bits**
- Brass Wire**
- Wire Nippers/Side Cutters**
- Modeling Files** (small files of different shapes and sizes)
- Green Stuff**
- Vaseline** (lubricant for Green Stuff)
- Sculpting tool** (for the Green Stuff)
- Modelling Knife**
- A Cutting Mat** (to avoid someone yelling at you for carving up a tabletop)
- SuperGlue**
- Plastic Cement**
- A box set of Chaos Warriors**
- Bitz for the mutations** (a variety of arms, heads and torsos)

Now, I know I don't have to say this but I'm going to anyway. Safety first! Always cut away from you and use a sharp knife. I've had to SuperGlue my own bitz back on to make sure I didn't lose them on the way to the hospital after cutting towards myself. Dull knives make the cutting harder, creating more strain and a greater chance of injury. Let's be careful out there!



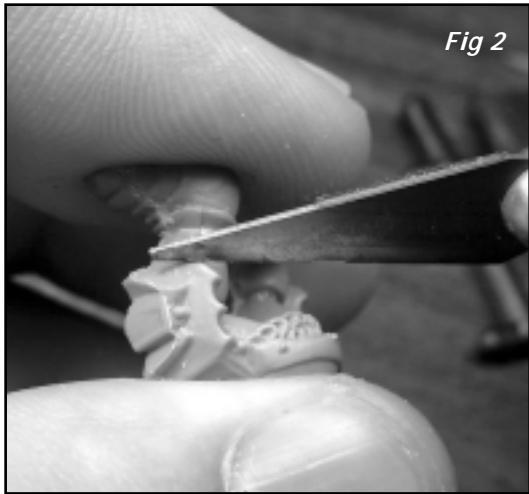


Fig 2



Fig 4

The problem was that after purchasing a box set of the Chaos Warriors and creating a few mutated warriors, the reality of the situation hit! There was only so much I could do with one sprue! But what was the answer? Rummaging through my bitz box I found a solution. By using various arms and heads from different ranges I could create my own mutations. With Green Stuff and modelling supplies I could also scratch-build simple mutations of my own.

Once I'd gathered my supplies at my workspace I figured out what I wanted to do. With the bitz I'd scrounged up I could make arm swaps and head swaps relatively easily. So I'll start there.

I worked with six Chaos Warriors at a time, so I could create a unit quickly and not get bored (I have the attention span of a hummingbird!). I cut the Chaos Warriors off their plastic sprues and scraped off the flash line with the edge of a modelling knife and a modelling file (Fig 2).

Then I glued the legs to the slotta-base using plastic cement (Fig 3). The cement causes a chemical reaction that bonds the two surfaces, like they were melting together. I pressed the two pieces down for 5-10 seconds to ensure a good bond.

If I wanted to use parts from the plastic Chaos Mutations sprue on the legs, for example the tentacle, I'd do that now (Fig 4). Since plastics are soft I cut down and through with my modelling knife onto my cutting board and then used plastic cement to glue the leg and mutation together.

When I finished with the sixth base and leg combo I went back to the first and added a torso. I choose different plastics from different armies for the torsos, like an Ork torso to show the strength of Khorne or an emaciated Zombie torso to show the disease of Nurgle (Fig 5).



Fig 3



Fig 5



Fig 6

Some cutting to ensure a fit was required, and the clippers or a knife helped give shape. If using the clippers, try to make the cut so the flat of the clippers is towards the piece you will use. This prevents the beveled cut being on the working piece and in need of shaving down with a knife blade or modeling file.

This was a good time to put the figures into formation to see if any adjustment needed to be made on positioning. Nothing sucks more than having to tear off a conversion because it doesn't rank up appropriately. When I had a rough idea how I could add the arms, I began. I took the plastics first, as this was the easiest way.



Fig 7

The Chaos Mutation sprue has a variety of arms to use, and they were added first. I used the full range of plastics available. If I use something bestial like Orcs, I either cut off the clawed hands or left them on (Fig 6). The Orc weapons were cut off and replaced with Chaos weapons from the plastic sprue; a simple weapon swap. I also cut one of the weapon arms off from the shoulder pad and attached it under an upraised arm for a multi-arm mutation. If an emaciated arm from the Zombie sprues is then added it is a good contrast between the strength of the Chaos Warrior arms (Fig 7). With all the plastics I used the plastic cement to combine the pieces. If there was any gaps I took a sliver of plastic from the sprue or an off-cut and inserted it into the spot with a dab of cement. This created a stronger bond and won't require Green Stuff.

Once I had the plastics glued I look at my metal bitz and organized how to fit them so they still ranked up. I used the pin vice drill and brass wire to pin them on for greater support. I use brass wire for all my pinning and scratch building. Many people use paper clips, but they have a high zinc content making it easier to bend or break and they do not provide such good support.

Daemon claws/limbs and Chaos Spawn bits are perfect to add for arm mutations. I cut the bit for the mutation off with clippers, ensuring the flat end is toward the piece I was using (Fig 8). I filed the end flat to ensure a matching fit (Fig 9). I drilled a hole in the arm the mutation was to be added onto (Fig 10). I then glued a wire in with SuperGlue and cut it about 2-3 mm from the drill hole. I drilled a hole in the bit I wanted to add onto the arm and then checked for placement on the arm to ensure proper positioning. I always



Fig 8

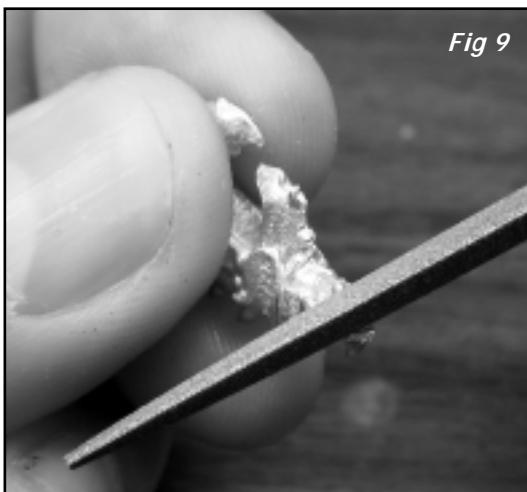


Fig 9

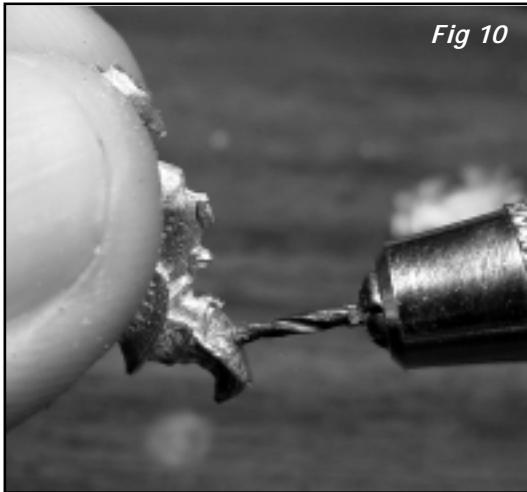


Fig 10

and held it for a second or two. I then attached the entire arm to the torso with plastic cement.

Tails can be added on like limbs, as a way of showing a poisonous attack, an extra weapon, or as a defensive limb (Fig 11). The Skaven Gutter Runner tails are an excellent way to show this without needing to be pinned (Fig 12).



Fig 11

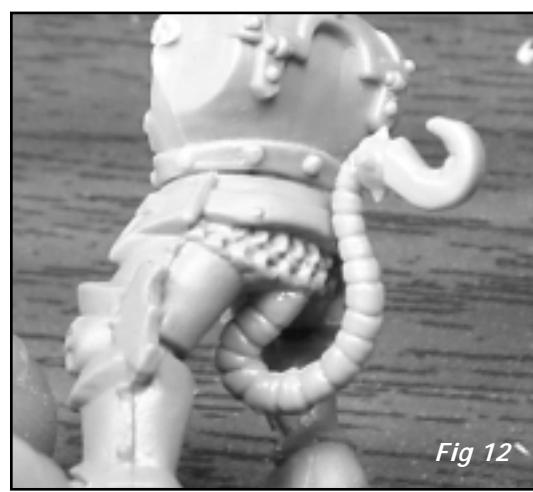


Fig 12

check placement before I glue the bit on! This ensures I don't mess up the drill placement and that I have drilled far enough in for the pin to fit. When I was happy I glued it in with SuperGlue

The heads were converted in a similar manner. I used heads that are either Patron specific, like Daemonic Beast heads or Daemon heads (Fig 1 and 14), or Chaos Spawn bitz. I pinned them on with brass wire in the same manner that I pinned the arms on. The different heads from a variety of ranges are easily converted and glued on, especially if they are plastic. I used Kroot heads for a Tzeentch look (Fig 13) and Zombie heads for the rotten Nurgle feel (Fig 5). The Chaos Mutations have a plethora of heads to choose from too, making anyone who converts spoilt for choice!



Fig 13



Fig 14

Once I'd finished with the basics I started to convert with more advanced techniques. My unit has a variety of arms but there is a definite lack of tentacles. For this I turned to my trusty Green Stuff and thin brass wire.

I began by drilling a hole in the limb that a tentacle would be added. I used a thinner brass pin so I could bend it later. I glued the brass pin in and estimated how long I want the tentacle to be (Fig 15). I cut it with the clippers at the desired length, but a little shorter than the full distance – about 2 mm less. When I got all the limbs I wanted to add tentacles drilled and pinned, I started to work with the Green Stuff.

For anyone unfamiliar with Green Stuff a sliver is cut off of the end and the two parts are kneaded together until it looks green. It then gets tacky and is workable for about two hours. Until it hardens it can be sculpted and smoothed into the shape you want. This stuff isn't good for you; don't ingest it in any way. Green Stuff gets really tacky when it is first mixed, so to ensure it doesn't stick to the sculpting tool or me I used a lubricant compound on my tool or my fingers. I recommend Vaseline, others recommend water. I do not recommend licking your fingers or sculpting tool. When sculpting is totally completed, the piece should be washed with soap and water so the primer paint spray will stick when applied.

Once the Green Stuff is kneaded together I laid it on the wire. Using my greased fingers and/or the sculpting tool I wrapped it around the wire, creating a sausage/tentacle. When I had it along the whole length I worked it around so it is smooth and extended past the wire about 2-3 mm (Fig 16). Once I had it where I wanted it, I put it under a lamp to harden for an hour. (Heat will speed up the hardening process.) When it was hard and I'm sure I won't leave a fingerprint or mash what I've created, I took another sliver of Green Stuff and kneaded it together. I then took small bits of the Green Stuff and rolled it to create small balls which I added all around the tentacle. I took the tip of a lubed pencil or pin and push it into the middle of the ball, creating small donuts or 'suckers' on the tentacle (Fig 17). When I'd added as many as I wanted, I put the tentacle under the lamp again to harden. I usually wait the full two hours at this point to ensure everything is hard and I won't mess up what I've sculpted.

When the tentacle is ready you can bend the wire to the curvature you wish (Fig 18). In my case, I took off the hand from the Chaos Chariot driver that carries the whip, and added a tentacle for his lash. You can also twist it around a weapon, or create a bunch of small tentacles in a Lovecraft-esque manner. If a more natural look is desired, the initial sausage can be flattened around the wire, and the suckers added to the bottom of the limb, like an octopus.

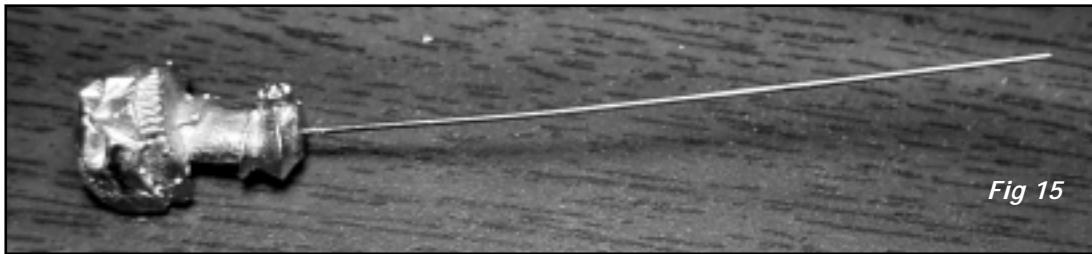


Fig 15



Fig 16



Fig 17



Fig 18

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Fig 19

Using these methods I was able to convert a unit of twelve Chaos Warriors in the course of an afternoon. This unit is unique and will be part of my Chosen retinue. Since there are a variety of mutations, I don't have to require them to be under the banner of one particular Patron. Plus the unit, when painted, will form a centerpiece that will set the standard for the rest of the army. With this guide you too can create a unit to be proud of. These conversion tips can be used for 40K as well as Fantasy (Fig 20). So good luck on your own converting endeavours and may your Patron's eye always look upon you with favour!

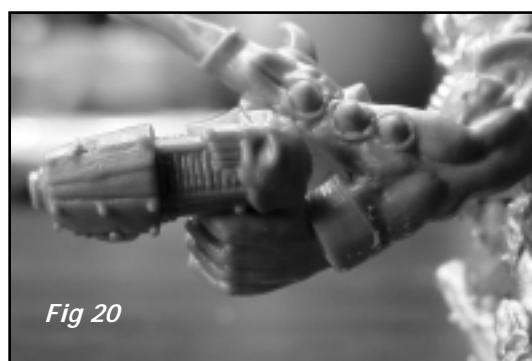


Fig 20