

Using Space Marines

by Gav Thorpe

This is one of those 'Does exactly what it says on the tin' articles. Gav's been thinking a lot about Space Marines lately (perhaps too much), and here's what he has to say.

Space Marines are the Imperium's most deadly warriors, and are feared by human and alien alike. Accordingly, they are possibly the toughest, strongest and deadliest characters in games of Inquisitor. There has been much debate in the gaming community concerning the battle brothers of the Adeptus Astartes, and I'm here to contribute to that discussion and hopefully provide some answers.

The following is from a recent poll on the Specialist Games website:

In Inquisitor, do Space Marines unbalance the game?

1. Yes, they are simply too powerful and should be banned.

Count 767

2. No, as long as they are only used as non-player characters by the GM.

Count 591

3. No, as long as they are used in co-operation with the GM as character models that appear occasionally in games.

Count 1,048

4. No, they work perfectly well as character models and are no more unbalancing than Inquisitors or other powerful characters.

Count 1,758

Are they too hard?

The short answer is no! When dealing with characters in the level of detail that Inquisitor demands, many of the gameplay and balance constraints to which Space Marines are subjected in the battles game of Warhammer 40,000 cannot be applied. A Space Marine is a genetically-enhanced, psycho-indoctrinated, highly trained killing machine. Forget the SAS, Spetznatz and Navy SEALs; their equivalent are the Imperial Guard Storm Troopers. Space Marines are something far above and beyond conventional forces as we understand them today.

So it is entirely fitting that a Space Marine can punch a man's head off his shoulders even without his strength-enhancing armour, shrug

off wounds that would incapacitate lesser beings and stare down the throat of the most grotesque alien gribbly whilst calmly reloading his bolter.

Okay, so how do you include them in your warrior band?

There's two ways to use Space Marines in my opinion. Either, he turns up occasionally, as I'll detail later, or he replaces the Inquisitor as the hardest member of the warrior band. I would probably never have a regular warrior band in my group that contained both a powerful Inquisitor **and** a Space Marine. That was part of the reasoning behind Captain Artemis – he leads Xenos kill-teams, he isn't just a member of one. And I don't mean leading Grey Knight or Deathwatch squads!

If this is the case, there should be severe restrictions on who can go in the kill-team. A Space Marine will not fight alongside any kind of alien or heretic except under extreme (or more precisely, virtually non-existent) circumstances. Most would be reluctant to fight alongside any kind of psyker either. GMs should feel free to place these kind of restrictions on which other characters can be included in a kill-team led by a Space Marine, severely limiting the versatility, if not the power level, of the warband.

Also, when playing in campaign games, the modus operandi of a kill-team led by a Space Marine is very different from one led by an Inquisitor. Most Inquisitors do not operate openly, preferring to work unseen from the shadows. This is a lot harder when the leader is a seven feet tall Space Marine! Consequently, the enemies of the kill-team will be much more aware of their activities and whereabouts – causing them all kinds of trouble when a softly-softly approach might be able to operate undetected until the moment to strike arrives. In real terms, this means your kill-team will come in for much more flak during the course of its missions, as well as interference from supposed 'friendlies' who will be uncomfortable with the idea of an Angel of Death rampaging about on their world/ship/moon.

In all cases involving Space Marines, it is of vital importance that the GM ensures that the player using the Space Marine does so in an appropriate manner. Although not mindless automatons, Space Marines are subject to 10,000 year codes of tradition, customs honour and trust, backed up by an unswerving belief in the Emperor and the goal of protecting Humanity and expanding the Emperor's domains. To a Space Marine these beliefs are inviolable except in the most extreme situations.

1. No Surrender, No Retreat! Space Marines do not run away. They might decide on a fighting withdrawal if they deem the situation is untenable, but only to preserve the lives of others and if there is a chance that they can achieve their mission objectives in either a different way, or try again in the future. Space Marines have a highly specialised sense of self-preservation – they will sacrifice themselves if it is the only means of achieving their mission, but similarly they do not needlessly throw themselves into insurmountable danger unless it is a matter of honour.

2. Suffer Not The Unclean To Live! Space Marines are shock troops who are there to destroy the enemies of the Emperor, and particularly those chosen for kill-teams rigidly adhere to their doctrines. They are the champions of Humanity and not only believe implicitly in the right for Mankind to dominate the stars, they know that they must absolutely embody the enshrined Imperial codes of intolerance towards heretics, aliens and warp creatures. Space Marines will, as a matter of course, react to any such threat with extreme measures. They must ensure that there is no room for doubt about the dangers these beings represent to Humanity.

3. We Shall Know No Fear! Space Marines forsake their humanity to preserve the humanity of others. This means that they only vaguely remember what it was like to feel the cold, or be upset, or tired, or feel pain, or be scared. They are aware that humans suffer from these frailties, but will often forget that humans are simply not capable of performing deeds that are second nature to their battle-brothers.

4. To Serve The Emperor Is Its Own Reward! Space Marines do not have days off. They don't go shopping, or mingle with others outside of their own organisation. This means they don't get mysterious tip-offs in the bar, or talk to shady gun runners for that neat piece of wargear. Members of a kill-team will be under similar restrictions whilst it is commanded by a Space Marine (see no. 3...).

Put them together, and this means that a kill-team led by a Space Marine works ruthlessly and methodically to scour the environment for their enemies, brings them to battle and eliminates them. I guess that's why it's called a kill-team. It also means that when actually in battle, a Space Marine doesn't sneak about, slink around in the shadows or namby-pamby around at the back. No, he gets stuck in! And since the enemy is likely to know a Space Marine is coming after them, this means they can be prepared, laying ambushes and traps to waylay the charging behemoth.

Also, remember that Space Marines are the



guardians of Humanity, and they run into all kinds of trouble when faced with threats to civilians, hostage situations and innocent bystanders. What if a Space Marine is faced by enemy cultists who he knows are drugged, under psychic control or otherwise not acting of their own volition? Are they legitimate targets because their weakness has allowed them to fall under enemy dominance? Or are they merely pawns of the true evil the Space Marine must eliminate?

Space Marines as NPCs

This is where the GM and the other players can have all kinds of fun; putting the Space Marine into numerous moral dilemmas, when the objectives of a mission change halfway through. At the end of the day, Space Marines are supreme warriors, but lack the versatility and ability to react that another character might have. Use this to keep the influence of the Space Marine on par with other characters in the game.

A much better way to use Space Marines is as NPCs, rather than a regular part of a warrior band. This does two important things:

1. Ensures that the Space Marine only gets involved in situations he's supposed to.
2. Keeps Space Marine involvement rare, and therefore enforces the idea that Space Marines are not at everyone's beck and call.

Although I say NPCs, it doesn't actually have to be the GM controlling the Space Marine, it could be an additional player. The important point is that the warrior band is fighting alongside the Space Marine, rather than him being an integral and regular part of it.

Having the Space Marine/s not under the direct control of the other players gives the GM all kinds of interesting options to control the game. For a start, the players will have to ask themselves on whose side is the Space Marine, and what are his objectives?

As with any character or NPC, it is important that the Space Marine has a fleshed out



biography and personality, with their own agendas and motivations. Don't just use them as hired muscle, they are far more important than this. Go back and read the previous section again if you've forgotten! Only with this background work will you be able to generate the conflicts of interest that are the lifeblood of any good Inquisitor scenario or campaign.

Pay particular attention to why the Space Marine is present. Have they been despatched by the Inquisition itself (as is often the case with Grey Knights) or are they fulfilling an ancient blood oath (like members of the Deathwatch). Is there a wider military situation that would justify the presence of Space Marines in the vicinity – remember that, at the end of the day, the Space Marine

Chapters exist to fight wars, act as shock troops and space-borne warriors, not as Inquisition bully-boys.

How does the Space Marine tie in to the scenario or campaign? How do the activities of the Inquisition come to his attention? Is there a scenario one of the characters must play out in order to call for aid? What will he do after the scenario, particularly if his mission is incomplete? Do either of the sides involved in the scenario actually welcome the Space Marine, or is his presence a hindrance to everyone involved (they're big guys, a lot of enemies won't upset them!)? Are there Radical elements involved in the scenario, in which case what are the chances that the Space Marine may end up turning on his allies once he becomes aware of their true nature?

Space Marine sub-missions

All of this is in an ideal situation, but what if you don't have a specially prepared Space Marine scenario? Perhaps you're running a 'pick-up-and-play' game at an event, or someone new has joined their club and proudly plonks down their lovingly converted Blood Angels Assault Marine on the table... Well, in the great tradition of Inquisitor, I've devised a rough-and-ready system for randomly generating a sub-mission for this superhuman warrior. By necessity, these are broad strokes, and a bit of invention on the part of the GM and players might be needed to fit them in with the rest of the scenario, but at least they provide a starting point. Of course, the other players probably won't know what the Space Marine is up to.

CLEANSE

The Space Marine has been despatched to clear the area of all interlopers. The player is on nobody's side and is there to either drive off or take out all the other characters, this securing possession of the battlefield.

DEFEND

The Space Marine is present to protect an area of the battlefield. The Space Marine is deployed on a vital battlefield feature and has orders not to allow any other character access – either crossing a bridge, entering a building, using a piece of equipment, etc.

KIDNAP

The Space Marine has orders to capture one of the characters involved in the fighting. For whatever reason/s, the Space Marine has to hunt down a character determined by the GM, and get them off the battlefield alive. Picking

SUB-MISSION CHART

D100	Sub-mission
01-25	Cleanse
26-35	Defend
36-40	Kidnap
41-55	Protect
56-70	Recon
71-75	Report
76-90	Seek and Destroy
91-00	Take and Hold

the most radical character works well for this (a Xanthite Inquisitor, Daemonhost, etc). For the purposes of this mission, you might like to give the Space Marine the Subdue skill (see below).

Subdue. *This is a special action that can be used by the character when in close combat (not at arm's length, even if armed with a reach 4 or greater weapon). The character attacks as normal. If he hits his foe, the blow automatically lands on the head location (no need to roll). Regardless of the weapon used, the attack only does D6 damage. As he has been bit on the head, the enemy character will have to pass a Toughness test or be stunned. If a character with this skill manages to subdue an enemy who is already stunned, the target is knocked unconscious. However, the subdued character counts as having the True Grit skill, and so may attempt to recover consciousness (it's a good idea to have someone keep an eye on subdued enemies to avoid nasty surprises!).*

PROTECT

The Space Marine has arrived to protect one of the characters from harm. The Space Marine must locate the character and then do everything they can to prevent them being injured, even if this means interfering with their mission. The most puritan character on the table is a good candidate for this (a Thorian Inquisitor, Preacher, etc).

RECON

The Space Marine has been sent to do a reconnaissance of the area for a future mission. The character has an auspex, even if not normally equipped with one. They must do a thorough sweep of the table, scanning any lifeforms, investigating any buildings and tunnels, to prepare a thorough report for their superiors.

REPORT

The Space Marine has vital information for one of the characters. The GM must determine who the message is for (not likely to be a

radical character), and how it must be passed on – the Space Marine may need to locate them and give it verbally, present them with a data-scroll or storage crystal, or take the character to a certain location to receive the message.

ASSASSINATE

The Space Marine's mission is to kill one of the characters in the battle. This will most likely be the highest ranking and least orthodox character. The Space Marine's objective is brutally simple – kill this character at any cost, regardless of who they are or who gets in the way, and then exit the battlefield.

SECURE

The Space Marine must take and hold an area currently being fought over by the characters. This is the same as the Defend sub-mission except that the Space Marine starts from a point distant from their objective and must first fight their way to the area they are to protect.

New Space Marine skills

The following are skills that are appropriate for Space Marines, and in particular allow them to participate in a battle in an entertaining fashion without necessarily being lethal to everything they touch... Of course, feel free to use these skills as a basis for other big, strong and tough characters.

HURL OPPONENT

The Space Marine uses his height and strength to toss his opponent through the air. This is a special type of unarmed close combat attack. If the Space Marine hits, make a Strength test (against half Strength if throwing the enemy character one-handed). The character is thrown in a direction nominated by the Space Marine player, up to a distance equal to one yard for every full 20% the Strength test was passed by. If they are thrown into another character or solid object, use the Falling rules to determine any damage they might suffer.

SHOULDER CHARGE

The Space Marine uses his bulk to plough through the enemy, knocking them aside. A Space Marine who charges an enemy may choose to shoulder charge them instead of attacking normally. If the enemy character can pass an Initiative test they may dodge aside up to 3 yards, and the Space Marine can continue their remaining actions. If they fail the test, they are knocked back to the left or right (Space Marine player's choice) – see the rules for Knockback on page 180 of the rulebook and use the Space Marine's Strength value

divided by 10 as the amount of 'damage' inflicted. The Space Marine is free to continue with their remaining actions.

SHIELD

The Space Marine can use his bulk and armour to protect others from harm. The Space Marine can attempt to block any line of fire that passes within 2 yards of him. The Space Marine foregoes his following actions (either that turn or next turn if they have acted already) and any successful hits are worked out against the Space Marine instead.

COVERING FIRE

The Space Marine lets down a burst of fire intended to suppress the enemy rather than injure them. This can be performed as a combined action. Choose a target as normal (or group of targets if firing a full auto weapon) and roll to hit as normal. For every hit the target must take a Pinning test, but no damage is done. Any 'placed shots' mean the test is taken at half Nv. No more Pinning tests are required as soon as the target moves behind cover. For example, if a character is 7 yards from cover and fails three Pinning tests, they will dive D6" towards cover, and then crawl 2D6" again to reach safety.

TERRIFYING CHARGE

The Space Marine is a sight from the enemy's worst nightmare as he pounds towards them. When charging (not when being charged) the Space Marine counts as being *Terrifying*.

Grey Knights

When we were first discussing ideas to include in the sample characters for Inquisitor, the Grey Knight was the most obvious choice for a Space Marine character. It was partly for this reason that we decided to introduce something new instead, in the form of the Xenos Deathwatch. However, along with the Deathwatch, the Grey Knight Space Marine is probably the most appropriate Space Marine type for Inquisitor games, and I have seen some lovely conversions. So, here's some notes on Grey Knight characters.

Combining the raw physical power of a Space Marine with the abilities of a psyker would obviously create a deadly and, very likely, unbeatable character. However, Grey Knights are not powerful psykers as individuals, it is the group psychic ability of a squad that gives them power, focussed through the squad leader (known as a Justicar). What Grey Knights do have is ample protection against daemonic and psychic attack.

SPECIAL RULES

Grey Knights may use force weapons as if they were a psyker. Grey Knights can attempt to nullify psychic attacks in the same manner as a psyker (see the modified nullification rules in the Inquisitor Annual).

SKILLS

All Grey Knights have the Word of the Emperor skill, in addition to their normal Space Marine skills. However, this has no effect on normal characters, only the effects described for daemonic characters are used. Grey Knights also have the Force of Will skill.

EQUIPMENT

As well as standard Space Marine wargear, Grey Knights are usually equipped with a force weapon of some type, and their power armour incorporates an Aegis matrix. They also carry a storm bolter mounted into the armour itself. Alternatively, a Grey Knight might be equipped with a psycannon, or an incinerator – a special anti-daemon weapon that gouts blessed oils and sanctified promethium. An incinerator is treated as a heavy flamer and in addition does D6 extra damage against daemonic characters, both when it hits and in subsequent turns.



New Space Marine wargear

Actually, most of these can be used by non-Space Marines as well, but it seemed appropriate to introduce them here. Unless otherwise stated, all Space Marine wargear is regarded as Exotic.

SUSPENSORS

Used frequently by the Deathwatch to provide mobile firepower, suspensors are anti-gravitic plates and studs that help offset the cumbersome nature of heavy weapons. Each suspensor reduces the weight of the object they are attached to by -10.

Weight: 0 (would be silly if they weighed anything, wouldn't it?).

JUMP PACK

These allow long, unguided leaps through the air. They do not give the ability of full flight, but are very handy for closing the distance quickly, particularly across open terrain. When a character makes a jumping action, they may activate the jump pack. This is a risky action, roll a D6 on the table opposite if things go wrong. If the action is successful, the distance they jump is equal to one tenth of their Strength rather than one twentieth, and will be modified by a sprint start as normal. For example, a character with Strength 80 can normally jump 4 yards. With a jump pack they can jump 8 yards (increased to 12 yards if they sprinted before hand). Characters may leap into combat with an enemy, but do not count the bonus for charging as they will be unbalanced on landing.

Jump Pack Malfunction Table

D6

Effect

1. The jump pack fuel explodes, inflicting D3 hits on the character like a hand flamer and throwing them D10 yards in a random direction. The jump pack is destroyed in the process.
2. The jump pack misfires during the leap. The leap does not go as far as intended – use the normal rules for a failed jump action on page 29 of Inquisitor.
3. The jump pack overcharges mid-jump. The leap goes further than intended. The extra distance is equal to a percentage roll of the original distance jumped. For example, if the character was attempting a 10 yard leap and rolls 38%, this is an extra four yards, making the total leap 14 yards.
4. The jump pack spirals the character away from their original landing point. The character lands D6 yards away, in a random direction.
5. The jump pack does not ignite properly. The character is flung D10 yards in a random direction and must pass a Strength test or fall prone.
6. The character lands heavily and must pass a Strength test with a -20 modifier or be stunned.

A character using a jump pack that lands on any kind of difficult ground must pass an unmodified Strength test or fall prone.

Weight: 60



SPACE MARINE HELMETS

People have asked for the rules concerning Space Marine helmets – are they power armour or a closed helm, what auto-senses do they have, and so on. So, here's some definitive Space Marine helmet rules.

Space Marine helmets are treated like a closed helm with an armour value of 8. They frequently have one or more auto-senses, and can also include targeters. They also incorporate a re-breather but with a resistance bonus of +30%.

AEGIS SUIT

Grey Knight armour is equipped with ritually blessed crystal matrices to ward away enemy psychic attacks. This combines the effects of hexagrammic and pentagrammic wards.

Weight: 0

NATHECIUM

A special kind of medi-pack, containing the nathegium contains treatments and devices specifically for use with space Marine physiology. For a Space Marine, it is treated exactly like a medi-pack. On non-Space Marine characters, using a narthecium is a risky action, and failing the action adds D6 points to the treated character's injury total as their body reacts badly to the drugs and stimulants contained within.

SIGNUM

This is an advanced form of comm-link and auspex, feeding an array of information to the Space Marine about battlefield conditions. A signum is a combined bio-scanner and motion tracker that can only be used on passive mode. It takes years of training to master the information feed from a signum. A character that tries to use a signum if not properly trained must pass a Sagacity test at the start of every turn. If this is failed, their perception is temporarily scrambled and they act as if affected by a hallucinogen grenade for that turn – test again at the start of the next turn.

LIGHTNING CLAW

A lightning claw is a specialized type of power weapon, most commonly used in Space Marine Assault and Terminator squads. It consists of a powered gauntlet fitted with three or four blades, which can carve through armour and flesh with ease. Lightning claws are almost invariably worn as pairs.

	Reach	Damage	Parry	Penalty
Lightning Claw	2	2D10+5		-15%

