

DARK MAGENTA

Huge Chunk Of Man

Space Marine Player Characters In Inquisitor

By Gav Fry

So, welcome to my first article for Dark Magenta. This is going to be an unusual article; while Eoin Whelan covered many exceedingly good rules for Space Marines in Inquisitor back in Dark Magenta 2, the act of using the Imperium's finest is still an often debated topic.

Space Marines, we are told, are a surgical strike force; living demigods prowling the war-torn 41st millennium, each a genetically superior superhuman able to take on armies on their own

To this end, they are ill-suited to the subterfuge and the intricacies of Inquisitor campaigns. However, they strike a nerve in the "cool" centre of many people's imaginations and the thought of playing out games akin to blockbuster Hollywood action films appeals to many.

Section 1: The Space Marine and Inquisitor

While some GMs ban the Astartes from the outset, I have often been an advocate of allowing them under strict control; the player must have an appropriately modelled miniature (more later) and a solid reason for the Space Marine to be involved in the plot, and "he's an outcast on a personal quest to regain his honour" does not cut it! I expect many will argue that last sentence; many chapters of the Space Marines operate like knightly orders and personal and Chapter honour is a big part of Chapter life (after all, Lion el' Johnson and Leman Russ' personal vendetta still rages on!) and there are examples in canon of these personal quests (*Bloodquest* is a prime example).

While fine in general, *Inquisitor* is all about details and often features finely crafted plotlines. To have the marine arrive on an isolated planet as the Inquisition/whoever arrives is somewhat suspect.



Ignoring how overly cliché the "He's onna quest!" story is, let's examine how this looks. Anyone who has written campaigns for a role-play game will confirm a lot of work and research often goes into it and similarly intricate backgrounds go into the player characters. To simply make up a single battle where this standard marine "lost his honour" (i.e. was beaten by *insert race here*) generally lacks a lot of engaging back-story. *Inquisitor* puts a lot of focus on the characters in play; the very generic

image of space marines can make it difficult to write an engaging background players can relate to.

Now for an example of how a single "questing marine" (or any "active" marine in that case) can mess things up for a GM and the other players. Imagine that the players are called to a planet with unusual work strikes going on. After badgering the workforce, investigating the laxness of the management and finding the instigators, the players uncover a cult using the strikes as cover for smuggling weapons into the city, planning on arming up before turning the mass workforce to the revolt.

For your average Inquisitor, even rather unsubtle ones, they'd have several games including chases, RPing interrogations, putting the clues together. Throw a Space Marine on a personal quest to stamp out heresy into the mix and the scenario changes; a Marine is able, in background and profile, to take on this mass of generic NPCs (even if most are in fact simple workers and may not be guilty of anything, let alone act against a Space Marine!) without any difficulty and kill everyone - ignoring the implications of depriving a world of its workforce, the other player characters need not do anything other than bring a packed lunch during the carnage.

Knowing the presence of a Marine in advance, the GM would be forced to adjust the mob to suit; either heavier weaponry (this removing the whole hidden cult plot) or specific anti-marine kit (Wyrd: Machine Empathy is my favourite!) which again, alters the personality of the campaign.

While in a normal circumstance, if a player is power-playing and not following the plotlines, the GM has a plethora of options for dealing with them (or even sending them off on a red herring mission, fighting masses of grunts) the sheer power behind a Space Marine limits what can be done to counter them. This is where, as a player, you need to talk with your GM, and find out if the style of the campaign is suitable for a Marine protagonist.

Section 2: Playing With the Beast

There are, however, a multitude of reasons for employing a Space Marine in *Inquisitor*. If your GM has a very combat-focused campaign written, an example would be entering a Hive during a Civil War and protect the loyal side, a Marine

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may well be appropriate as a player character; local authorities putting out a system-wide call for help, the Space Marine doing his duty to mankind and arriving as backup to the Inquisitors/other players.



An excellent method of utilising a Marine in *Inquisitor* would be for specific one-off games. Let's assume you've got a finely modelled Marine in your collection, but are playing the campaign with an Inquisitor. The GM has told you that in this scenario, your characters are attempting entry to some important bunker, or even are about to face the End-Of-Campaign-Big-Bad-Boss or any situation that it would seem feasible that the characters would call for help (after all, some Inquisitors wouldn't necessarily call for aid!). An Inquisitor has the ability (but not the right to... the GM can always veto!) to call for aid from any Imperial forces. If a certain chapter is nearby and has reason (this is up to you to write background for!) or even if a solo Marine (for whatever reason) is nearby, they may very well lend a hand.

I raised some concern when I announced that I would be using a Space Marine at the recent Spring Conclave. With the focus of the day on diplomacy (deciding an Inquisitorial Successor), an Ultramarine would appear out of place amongst the

plotting.

However, in the GM's sector background, mention was made of the aid of the Ultramarines in securing the sector originally and combined with a piece of artwork in the original Tau Codex of an Imperial Fist, gave me a plot hook; he was simply a retired (read; injured beyond active service) warrior, serving his chapter as a diplomat.

This is just one example; but GMs are more likely to allow you to utilise these behemoths with appropriate background and play style beyond simply killing. This can apply to Traitor Legions as well and, ironically, they are more likely to feature in *Inquisitor* campaigns; from an Alpha Legionnaire stirring up cults to a Nurgle-affiliated Marine looking to spread Nurgle's Touch, or even a rogue Chaos Marine, experimenting with explosives to develop a super-weapon.

Another possibility for including a Marine in *Inquisitor* is to not actively utilise them. When I wrote the background for a Fallen Dark Angel in *Inquisitor*, I followed GW canon by having his will swayed by Luthor's words; he hated the Imperium for turning its back on him and thus he was out for revenge by destabilising it, world by world. To do this, he tended to skulk in the background, instead issuing orders to a solid core of civilians, awed by his presence (after all, would a civilian, having only heard of Space Marines in stories, be able to distinguish older armour?), and thus following this angelic warrior without question. Rarely did I play with the Marine on the table and when I did, he tended to be skulking around cover, waiting for the perfect opportunity to strike unseen.

Along a similar theme would be to include a crew of Chapter Serfs; loyal characters following their "Master" around. Maybe he's a Techmarine or Chaplain, or even a lone Marine recovering Astartes artefacts - items lost to the Chapter but held in reverence by locals. The point being, while you have a Space Marine modelled and ready to play, he doesn't necessarily have to feature heavily in games. Thinking creatively about how you employ such characters is part and parcel of playing *Inquisitor* well, and in the spirit with which it was intended.

Section 3: Modelling the Giants

Now, the more astute may have noticed a lot of talk about modelling Marines so far. What follows are some thoughts and then some techniques and some examples of *Inquisitor* Space Marines. While this is not the time or the place to discuss 54mm vs. 28mm, a lot of the following points apply to 54mm. We only have one Space Marine and he's in a rather unusual pose so it's easier to spot when someone has spent a lot of time and effort on their Space Marine.



This can be used to your advantage; people will spend a lot more time admiring your miniature and generally be more accepting. My Ultramarine Herald further proves this point - I'd sculpted a custom shoulder pad of a Marine fighting a Genestealer, hinting to his background (and why he was no longer able to perform active duty), his armour was festooned with small honour badges, he had a

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magnificent cloak and held his helmet proudly under one arm. His general noble appearance and the absolute mass of sculpting work I'd put in (it is difficult to spot that he used to be a stock Artemis!) meant people were happy to see him on the board before even questioning his background.

Section 4: Hacking Them Apart

The stock Space Marine miniature in *Inquisitor* is slightly over-scale, but this aids in enforcing their sheer power. To a modeller, they are a fantastic project; the large areas allowing for some intricate detailing and every chapter's distinct look allowing for some great conversions.

Before I start discussing techniques, a word of warning; Artemis, even in pieces, is a huge chunk of metal. I recommend sharp, heavy duty tools, and patience when working. By rushing or not being patient you are going to break tools and are more likely to injure yourself.

One of the major recurring conversions is a simple one... in theory! When sculpting Artemis, Jes Goodwin wanted to create a more fluid pose, full of momentum and very action-orientated. While looking as impressive as a Space Marine should, this also hampers a lot of Marine modellers; without major work all the Marines will be sprinting!



Luckily there are several methods around this; to convert my Lamenters Deathwatch Marine, I used the sponson upright from a Land Raider attached to a Sentinel foot to create a bionic shin, which replaced Artemis' bent leg. The hard part was sawing Artemis' leg off at the knee. Once I'd managed that it was straightforward to pin everything back together.

I always recommend pinning when working on Space Marines. Unlike many other conversions, you are likely to be cutting limbs apart and pinning helps to keep conversions straight and aligned, otherwise you end up with some odd proportions! Not to mention that the strength of a pin helps offset the weight of the components. For those wanting a more traditional leg to your Space Marine, a good method is to cut away the tubing around the back of the knee; this will weaken the leg enough that it can be cut into pieces and pinned into shape before modelling putty is used to fill the gap.

When re-sculpting this tubing there is a simple technique to get a good effect. Once the components (knee, elbow or even other joints!) are pinned into the right place and the glue is set, fill the gap with greenstuff (or your putty of choice!). Smooth the area off and ensure it is the right shape. Then, with a wet sculpting tool, lay the blade edge at the furthest point on the joint and roll the blade

backwards; this should leave a nice, uninterrupted cut along the putty. Repeat at regular intervals to recreate the banding effect! This is covered in more detail at my site; <http://buildyourimagination.co.uk/>.

It is often thought that Marine players are left out, scale-wise, in 54mm. This is not the case - several of the other 54mm miniatures' weapons fit well; Malicant's chainsword, Tyrus' bolt pistol, and even 40k heavy weapons make great pistols;

Conclave regular Adam Cunis made a plasma pistol from a metal 28mm Marine Devastator plasma cannon, which is something that has since cropped up in other notable conversions. Components from a variety of the larger Daemons work well, along with Marine Dreadnought melee weaponry. A slew of vehicle bits can be used as armour plate or bionic replacements!

With the scale and importance of a Space Marine, either as a modelling project, a Big Bad Evil Guy or a player character, many people have put a lot of time and effort into their Marines. For inspiration, [The Conclave Community Showcase](#) has images of traitors and loyalists, gaming pieces and several one-off display miniatures, whilst Dark Magenta 3 contains a showcase article examining a battle-brother of the Imperial Fists.

Hopefully, this whirlwind tour of my ideas has given you some inspiration to look at Marines as more than walking tanks, and has helped you visualise how you might go about putting your improved characters on the *Inquisitor* table-top.

About the Author

Greenstuff" Gav Fry is an old school GW Veteran; having cut his gaming teeth on Necromunda-era games and even working for The Man during Inquisitors' heyday.

He lurks around several forums surfacing occasionally with articles and guides to converting, many of which are present on his own neglected website.

Between website work and hacking up little metal men he spends his working life making custard!