

# StarFleet Marines and how to Roleplay them

## DISCLAIMER:

Starfleet Marines are not considered canon and are therefore controversial. Not every ship has them, or should; but for those who want to play a Marine, this presentation will give you a few ideas.

The Marines. The Few. The Proud. The Brave. Devil Dogs. Jarheads.

Marines have a special pride in being Marines. They have a pride in being Marines because Marines are synonymous with toughness. You say someone's a Marine and that instantly means something. Loyalty. Honor. Sacrifice. Best of the best. First to Fight. Discipline.

A true Marine exemplifies these qualities, forged in the furnace of hardship and combat.

First off, let me introduce myself.

I'm Steve Harmon. I am a United States Marine, and a veteran of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. I spent 4 years as an Active Duty Marine. My term of Service expired in 1991. There is no such thing as a "Former Marine" The skills I learned, the experiences I had, and the oath I took to support and defend the Constitution do not expire.

I am also an old school Star Trek fan. One of my earliest childhood memories is sitting on the living room floor with my older brother watching the Classic Trek episode, "Arena", where Captain Kirk is forced to square off with a Gorn in single combat where the lives of his crew hang in the balance.

When I play a Marine in StarFleet, I rely heavily on my real world experience as a Marine. Granted, there are lots of different experiences out there, and members of other branches are also playing within the fleets online. I try to temper my characters to conform to Star Trek lore and vision, while still remaining true to the spirit of the United States Marine.

I rely on some fictional portrayals of Marines as well, and there are some really good movies out there which portray Marines in a realistic and positive light.

Also, there will be a little time after for Q and A.

First off, Why play a Marine?

There are several reasons. The first one I can think of is variety. StarFleet is patterned primarily after a naval military structure, even down to its ranking system of officers and enlisted personnel. Many of the StarFleet regulations mentioned in canon and non-canon alike are close approximations of real military regulations. Almost every fan is familiar with Starfleet personnel as exemplified by the characters we know and love in the various Star Trek series. All of them exemplify in one way or another, the utopia future envisioned by Roddenberry.

Gene Roddenberry himself was a Serviceman, serving in the Army Air Corps until the end of World War II, so he knew a thing or two about the military. While the SFMC isn't Canon, it makes logical sense within the framework of the type of organization that StarFleet has become. Because of there being little to no Canonical reference to StarFleet Marines, however, There are some assumptions made by fans as to the purpose and structure of the SFMC. Most of what I use when creating a Marine character for simming comes from Memory Gamma, as it seems to be the most complete information source on StarFleet Marines. I have the link here: [https://memory-gamma.fandom.com/wiki/Starfleet\\_Marine\\_Corps](https://memory-gamma.fandom.com/wiki/Starfleet_Marine_Corps).

The Second Reason you might want to play a Marine is because Marines are Badass. Her is a link to Some of my favorite Marine movies:

<https://www.ultimatemovierankings.com/aliens-1986/>

<https://www.ultimatemovierankings.com/sands-of-iwo-jima-1949/>

<https://www.ultimatemovierankings.com/full-metal-jacket-1987/>

<https://www.ultimatemovierankings.com/flags-of-our-fathers-2006/>

<https://www.ultimatemovierankings.com/heartbreak-ridge-1986/>

I bring these up not just for their entertainment value, but as an example of some pretty memorable Marine characters. I'll mention two in particular:

Stanley Kubrick's "Full Metal Jacket" is one of the most accurate portrayals of Marine Corps Boot Camp ever portrayed on film, thanks to real-life Marine R. Lee Emy, who was brought onboard as a consultant, but ended up filming the scenes because the other actors couldn't do it right. He was the quintessential Drill Instructor. This is the first person a recruit meets in Basic Training.

"Heartbreak Ridge" (1986) Starring Clint Eastwood. Another tough-as-nails Marine. He exemplifies some of the proudest traditions in the Marine Corps, although he is more of a combat Marine rather than a "Parade Marine". When he's off duty, he's unruly, and doesn't suffer fools lightly. When he's on duty and fulfilling his responsibilities, he's the example his troops should follow. His maxim, "Improvise, Adapt, Overcome" became a core principle for me.

Now, I don't want you to get the idea that Marines are undisciplined louts who just get in bar fights and pick on other branches of the service. While there are some like that, they quickly learn that their actions have consequences. I knew one marine in my unit whose 4 year contract was almost up, and he had never made it past Private. Why? Because he couldn't follow orders, he was a loudmouth, and he had no discipline. The one time he was promoted to PFC, he was busted a week later for assaulting an Officer, and spent two years of his tour in Leavenworth.

By contrast, here is a short documentary on the making of real Marines at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ywMOVae6FWI>

Now: with Real Marines out of the way, Let's talk about StarFleet Marines. As a simmer and former captain in two Fleets, I have played both StarFleet and Marine personnel, mostly officers. The thing that makes a Marine believable to me is when he or she follows the chain of command, works hard, plays hard, and is totally committed to his/her unit.

Marines have a sense of unity unlike that of any other branch of StarFleet or the Federation. They call it, “Esprit de Corps” (Spirit of the Body) Your fellow Marines are your brothers and sisters, completely dependable, willing to sacrifice their lives for yours, as you are willing to sacrifice yours for them. The Marine next to you in that foxhole may be the only thing between life and death. You have been forged into a cohesive unit by the fire of combat where your lives depended on each other. One thing I can’t stand in simming a Marine character is one who has no respect for their fellow Marines, or the chain of command. I lose interest in reading that character right from the get-go, because that not a Marine. I’m not saying that it’s not realistic, because even in RL, there are Marines like that. The difference is that in RL, those Marines suffer CONSEQUENCES for their bad behavior.

Here’s a scenario for you ship commanders out there: New Marine fighter jock reporting for duty aboard your ship. Hails the ship for landing clearance, and is told to stand by. They decide that they have priority to land for whatever reason, and head into the flight deck, doing a barrel roll just before touchdown with their Perigrine fighter. Squadron Leader is furious with such a reckless stunt, and grounds the pilot, Pilot gets into a fight with the Squadron leader. You have been called in to mediate, as the ship’s commanding officer. If that pilot doesn’t serve time in the brig and lose rank, you’re doing it wrong.

Now from the pilot’s perspective: You’re reporting for your first ship assignment out of Top Gun. Stupid Fleetie tells you to wait when the flight deck is clear and ready to receive your fighter. Who do they think they are, making you, an officer, wait for some plebe enlisted dolt who obviously doesn’t know their butt from a hole in the deck? You execute a perfect landing, showing your piloting skill with a barrel roll before touchdown. Before you’re even out of your flight gear, the Squadron leader is in your face, reaming you up one side and down the other for being “reckless”. You weren’t reckless! The deck was clear. He’s really pissing you off, and you deck him. Ship Security is called in and you’re thrown in the brig until the Captain (not even a Marine) decides what to do with you. Is this fair? After all, you’re better than any “Fleetie.”

The trick, when writing situations like this is for you, the writer, to check your ego at the door. It hinders your craft. If you think that this pilot’s behavior is in any way justifiable, you are dead wrong, and should write a different character. If you think that your character shouldn’t be disciplined, you’re dead wrong. Even in fantasy, nobody should get away with murder.

A seasoned author (And face it, that's what you ARE in a sim) Thinks not only about the character he or she is writing, but how that character interacts with the others aboard ship, and COOPERATES with them in planning their interactions. When I was joining a new sim, I would read the character profiles of my shipmates, get familiar with their backstories, and DM them before writing a JP with them.

Based on my character's personality, how will their character react at a first meeting?

This is where the theory of "yes and" comes in handy.

If you don't know, "Yes and" is a warm-up game for improvisational actors which teaches them to build on whatever the other actor in the scene says. For Example:

Actor 1: Wow! Look up in the sky! Somethings flying really fast!

Actor 2: Yes! And it looks metallic!

Actor 1: Yeah! Can you see the lights?

Actor 2: Yes! And they look like little frisbees circling a daisy!

Actor 1: Look at that! They DO look like that! And now they're all turning blue!

You get the idea. Each participant is adding onto the other's narrative in a cooperative way, making the story more interesting. Something you never want to do without consulting with your writing partner first, is blocking. Like this:

Actor 1: Wow! Look up n the sky! Something's flying really fast!

Actor 2: No, that's just a cloud.

Actor 1 just got blocked and now has to cede control of the scene to the other actor.

Simming is cooperative storytelling. Cooperative. Conflict should be planned and agreed upon beforehand in order to further the plot. Marines (or any other character for that matter) can't be douchebags and then excuse his/her character's bad behavior by saying, "I'm just playing my character". The object of playing a Marine is to provide variety and spice to a sim, not contention. Two egos butting heads in a Billy Badass contest (without agreeing to do so first) brings down the morale of other players, is counterproductive, and I have actually seen good writers leave a sim, because such unnecessary conflict sucked the fun out of writing.

When writing a Marine, remember that a Marine is highly disciplined. A Marine will NEVER NEVER disobey a direct order or disrespect a senior officer, no matter how big of a jerk that officer is,

unless the Marine is not in his/her right mind. Watch the documentary I linked to earlier to get a better sense of Marine Corps Discipline and how it's instilled in recruits.

Marines can be a lot of fun to play in StarFleet, and they are great characters to read, if they are done right. Marines are the most rigorously trained, skilled, and vicious fighters in the Federation. They have hundreds of years of Marine Corps tradition and pride. Even a Marine Flight Controller is an expert with hand phasers and phaser rifles, because all Marines are marksmen first, before they ever go to specialty training. (Again, refer to the Parris Island documentary.)

Captains, Marines are to be used in combat situations. That's what they excel at. That's what they're trained for. They do not participate in sentry duty aboard ship, they are not supplemental to ship's security forces, and they are not "redshirts". The Marines are an amphibious force in readiness, and should be used whenever armed combat occurs aboard a ship (repelling boarders, etc.), or planetside (Securing perimeters, beam-down sites in hostile territories, or Shuttlecraft Landing Zones taking fire). If you need that Landing Zone secured from enemy fire, or if you need those Romulan boarders kicked off your ship, Send in the Marines. If you need that escaped prisoner from the Brig recaptured, or sentries posted at the Engine Room Doors, send in Security. MarDet can be deployed planetside with Security and generally work outside the secure perimeter, as a FOB. Security stays inside the perimeter and is a last line of defense if the Marines are overrun. The MarDet Commander report sdirectly to the Captain, or the First Officer, if the Captain is unavailable. The only other officer with the authority to countermand the MarDet Commander's orders to Marines is the Ship's Surgeon or CMO, who will have to justify such actions before a board of inquiry, if the MarDet Commander pushes the issue.

With that out of the way, Let's look at a few examples of Marines aboard a StarFleet Vessel. Here are excerpts from the bio of one of the first Marines I ever played. His Bio is important, because this is typically how other players will get an idea of how to interact with him. It will also help you as a player to keep your character consistent within the framework you build for him/her in your bio.

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Gender Male

Species Magna Roman

Age 28

Physical Description Physically fit, exercises daily to maintain peak ability. Symmetrical facial features. pronounced cheekbones. neatly trimmed mustache. Aquiline nose. Chiseled features. Not a lot of body hair. Multiple body scars in various locations.

General Overview A battle-hardened former gladiator from Magna Roma, Harnos Aurelius is tough, but fair. He subscribes to the principle that Mercy cannot rob Justice. His loyalty to the Starfleet Marine Corps is fierce and unrelenting. He credits the Federation and Starfleet with saving his life. His harsh upbringing has made him stoic, and cautiously aloof. When you meet him, you get the impression that he's sizing you up for combat, but his social skills are improving. Once his trust and respect have been earned, you will never find a more loyal friend or defender.

Strength Harnos Aurelius' strengths come from years in the Gladiatorial Arena.

Strengths & Weaknesses His hand-to-hand combat skills are akin to those of most Klingon Warriors. His mentors and trainers instilled in him loyalty and perseverance as survival tools. Due to his later training with the Marines, he also excels at ranged weapon combat, and has the coveted Phaser Rifle Expert, Sixth Year, award. He is tough, but fair.

His weaknesses include: A tendency to see things as either black or white, with little or no Grey area. He does not suffer fools lightly, and has no tolerance for diplomacy. He is a little too quick to embrace a military solution.

Ambitions To command a front line combat battalion.

Hobbies & Interests Enjoys strategy games, Holo Combat sims, and Tri-Dimensional chess. Also likes contest of strength and endurance. Has won the Olympus Mons Marathon on Mars twice. He is also interested in genealogy, and hopes one day to locate his family tree, even though he has no knowledge of his birth-parents who were also most likely slaves.

Languages Fed. Standard, Latin, Romulan

Personal History Born and raised on Magna Roma, Harnos Aurelius was a gladiator/slave of the Roman Empire there. He was known as the Proconsul's Favorite for his last 17 matches. His skill in the arena were becoming quite newsworthy, having won him the last 18 matches in a row, but he was still a slave. Even though he was treated well by his master, He became disenfranchised with the two-dimensional nature of his life. "Fight and win, or Die" as a philosophy were getting old. There was a coup, and the new Roman Proconsul reorganized the Senate, and abolished slavery. Magna Roma was admitted to the Federation, and Harnos, now a Free Man, Joined the Starfleet Marine Corps in gratitude for his new found freedom.

He was at the Battle of Wolf 359, and led a squad of Force Recon Marines aboard a Borg Cube, sabotaging the propulsion systems, allowing the Fleet to destroy it.



Unfortunately, several members of his team were assimilated in the attack, and they had to be abandoned. He still regrets not being able to save them, and has occasional bouts with depression due to Survivor's Guilt. Despite the loss of these team members, he was awarded the Silver Star for Conspicuous Bravery. He most recently served aboard Starbase 47, where he helped secure the station against an attempted takeover by a group of time-travelling genetic supermen.

Players, you're doing yourselves and your fellow writers a disservice by ignoring their bios. You're doing them a disservice by not filling out yours. Filling out the minimum required to get into a sim is really short-changing your fellow writers. In the computer industry, there is a well-known acronym: GIGO. It means, "Garbage in, Garbage out". If you write your Marine as a throw-away, cookie-cutter, two-dimensional character, it will make it harder for that character to interact with others, and they won't have a good idea what to expect when writing with you.

I also play Dungeons and Dragons as both a player and a DM. In D&D, there is a larger element of chance than in simming, due to the random effects of the dice. However, in simming, we get to tell stories just as fun and entertaining as any D&D Campaign. Marine characters can add nuance and adventure into a sim. They can be antagonists and foils for other characters, or they can play any role the Captain sees fit to put them in. "Improvise, Adapt, Overcome".

Now a note for you Video Gamers: Most video games like STO or other open-world MMORPGs are designed with the goal of progressing the character, winning, and "beating" the game, in a sense. A character gets better weapons, skills, stats, XP, etc. Based on how they overcome obstacles and "score" higher than their opponents. Even in cooperative play, there is a BBEG (Big Bad Evil Guy) against whom you and your team-mates can pit their skills and experience. This is a completely different mindset than simming a Marine (or any other character). I see a lot of Marines (and fleeties) who are too OP when they first introduce a new character because of this mentality. Metagaming a Marine leaves no room for character growth or development. These characters always "Win" or have the upper hand due to something from the character's past that gives them an unfair advantage. Look at "Pay to Win" games. General truism # 32: Nobody wants to write with a

metagamer.

The secret to simming a Marine lies in the “Hero’s Journey”. In the case of Harmos Aurelius, he rose through the ranks to command the MarDet. But even then, he made mistakes. He lost part of his squad at the Battle of Wolf 359, and that changed his character. As Marines, you writers can use things like this to grow and season your character. Nobody likes a Mary Sue who always wins, and has to be right, or they complain about not being able to write their character the way they want. It’s COOPERATIVE, not adversarial storytelling. Let’s go back to the Hot-shot pilot scenario.

New pilot starts off on the wrong foot and gets thrown in the brig. He/she has to cool their heels instead of flying with the squadron. They miss out on training, they now have a reputation as a troublemaker. These are obstacles the character has to overcome. Perhaps they can write a JP with another Marine aboard, or the Ship’s counselor, the M.O., or even the Marine C.O. in which they realize their shortcomings and that they need to change if they want their situation to change. They eventually get out of the brig and return to duty. There are possibilities for some great posts, here. How does the Marine handle being forced to realize that they’re not all that and a bag of chips? Do they learn from their mistakes, or become more self-destructive? Do they become friends with the Squadron Leader, or does the friction between the two lead to an “I’ll show them” attitude which causes the pilot to become even better? Is the Captain of the ship forced to take a more active role with the Marine C.O. to “tame” this pilot? See the possibilities?

In closing, Let me say that everything I’m telling you is subject to interpretation. YOU, as a writer, have to look for ways to make your Marine character gel with your fellow writers’ styles and idiosyncrasies. You can find new and creative ways to grow your character within the framework of the mission scenarios you are presented with by the Captain.

Captains, commanding a ship with a MarDet opens all kinds of new story possibilities. You are the ultimate arbiter of what your Marines are allowed or not allowed to do. Do not shun your responsibilities in order to avoid conflict between players or characters. Make sure that character conflict does not bleed over into player conflict. Your JOB is to resolve conflict, be a TRUE REFEREE, and once you have weighed all the ramifications, make a decision and stick with it. Remember we are all doing this for fun. Like all other characters, Marines are played for fun. If you’re

not sure you want a MarDet aboard your ship, don't allow one. If you feel you can handle it but you run into trouble or have questions, hit up someone with experience in that area, and heed their counsel.

Let me leave you with one of my favorite pieces of Marine Corps History, The Battle of Belleau Wood, where the Marines earned the name, "Devil Dog". As is true with any other nickname, there was a point in American history that even military members would ask, "What is a Devil Dog?" That time, apparently, was prior to World War I — when the term first emerged as a mainstream nickname.

The term, "Devil Dog" was actually an English translation of the way that Germans in World War I would call American Marines who fought against them. Germans called them, "Teufel Hunde," "Teufelhunde," or "Höllenhunde."

According to certain legends, the Germans likened their vicious fighting to "the dogs from Hell," especially during a particularly bloody battle at Belleau Wood in 1918.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbvfj4etqi0>

Q&A

Links from the Marine Presentation:

[https://memory-gamma.fandom.com/wiki/Starfleet\\_Marine\\_Corps](https://memory-gamma.fandom.com/wiki/Starfleet_Marine_Corps)

Memory Gamma **Starfleet Marine Corps** The Starfleet Marine Corps (abbreviated SFMC) was a descendant of naval infantry, based upon marines and army infantry of many Federation member planets.

As with the Starfighter Corps and Starfleet Intelligence, the SFMC was an autonomous branch of the Starfleet Operating Forces, falling under the jurisdiction of the Starfleet Com-



mander-in-Chief...

<https://www.ultimatemovierankings.com/aliens-1986/>

[https://www.ultimatemovierankings.com/sands-of-iwo-jima-](https://www.ultimatemovierankings.com/sands-of-iwo-jima-1949/)

[1949/](https://www.ultimatemovierankings.com/sands-of-iwo-jima-1949/)

[https://www.ultimatemovierankings.com/full-metal-jacket-](https://www.ultimatemovierankings.com/full-metal-jacket-1987/)

[1987/](https://www.ultimatemovierankings.com/full-metal-jacket-1987/)

[https://www.ultimatemovierankings.com/flags-of-our-fa-](https://www.ultimatemovierankings.com/flags-of-our-fathers-2006/)

[thers-2006/](https://www.ultimatemovierankings.com/flags-of-our-fathers-2006/)

[https://www.ultimatemovierankings.com/heartbreak-ridge-](https://www.ultimatemovierankings.com/heartbreak-ridge-1986/)

[1986/](https://www.ultimatemovierankings.com/heartbreak-ridge-1986/)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ywMOVae6FWI>

YouTube **Military Videos** **What Marine Recruits Go Through In Boot Camp - Earning The**

Title - ...



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbv fj4etqi0> YouTube

**NRApubs "Over There! Part 3: Retreat, Hell! We Just Got Here!" U.S. Marines...**

