

The Mississippi Marine Brigade

On December 21, 1862, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton gave the approval to recruit for one of the oddest outfits of the American Civil War: The Mississippi Marine Brigade. Formed by Alfred Ellet, brother of maverick engineer Charles Ellet of Mississippi Ram Fleet fame, the Marine Brigade promised "Soldiering Made Easy!" to its recruits. Intended for counter-guerilla operations, the Marine Brigade was to operate from steamboats and swiftly strike objectives all along the Mississippi. It was composed of infantry, cavalry and artillery. The boats were fitted with special gangways to be able to deploy horse soldiers directly from the boats' decks.

However, the Marine Brigade quickly got a rather dubious reputation. First of all, Stanton kept his creation directly under his command. Ellet accepted neither the authority of the army nor of the navy and tended to operate on his own. Unfortunately, he was not a very able commander and the Marine Brigade often got led onto wild goose hunts and into ambushes by the veteran Confederate partisans (and regulars) they were supposed to hunt down. Furthermore, Ellet and his men were definitely in it for the money and didn't seem to have made much difference between Confederate army property and private property - they confiscated what they could carry, and the proceeds seldom found their way to Washington. Because of numerous complaints, the Marine Brigade was dissolved in August 1864.

The Mississippi Marine Brigade wore traditional army uniforms. Only the headgear was different: They wore caps with full round tops, broad straight visors and a wide green band trimmed with gold lace. They were armed with new rifled muskets. As they usually operated near the boats, they would have been only lightly equipped. The first recruits were convalescents from St. Louis Hospitals. Later, men from the 18th, 59th and 63rd Illinois were transferred to the Brigade.

There are two lists for the Mississippi Marine Brigade. The first list is for the Marine Brigade

operating on its own. The horse marines formed an integral part of the Brigade, but I omitted skirmishers as Ellet often neglected to deploy scouting parties and walked straight into ambushes.

Marine Brigade
Leader Status III Three Groups of 8 Infantry, Rifled Muskets
Leader, Status II Two Groups of 8 Infantry, Rifled Muskets
Leader, Status II Two Groups of 8 Horse Marines, Rifled Carbine
Point Value: 69

The second list represents a detachment with USCT support. Most of the time the Marine Brigade operated on its own, but during their sorties in 1864 they were often supported by African-American regiments from the United States Colored Troops. This should give an otherwise rather unreliable force some backbone.

Marine Brigade with USCT
Leader Status III Three Groups of 8 Infantry, Rifled Muskets
Leader, Status II Two Groups of 8 USCT Infantry, Rifled Muskets
Leader, Status I Two Groups of 8 Horse Marines, Rifled Carbine
Point Value: 75

Force Specific Characteristics

- *Special Gangway:* Marine Brigade forces deploying from a boat may during the first turn use one Command Card to deploy a Group or Formation and two Command Cards to deploy a leader (instead of the usual two/three).
- *Soldiering Made Easy:* Marine Brigade units always get a -1 on the looting test.

Mississippi Marine Brigade Infantry					Type	Conscripts & Volunteers
Points Value	6	Weapon	Rifled Muskets		Size	8
Formation	First Fire	Controlled V.	Crashing V.	Step Out	Drill	Characteristics
No Shock	Yes	First Only	3	2	3	Surly, Weedy Coves
Horse Marines					Type	Dragoons
Points Value	8	Weapon	Rifled Muskets		Size	8
Formation	First Fire	Controlled V.	Crashing V.	Step Out	Drill	Characteristics
No Shock	Yes	No	-	2	-	Surly
United States Colored Troops					Type	Regulars
Points Value	9	Weapon	Rifled Musket		Size	8
Formation	First Fire	Controlled V.	Crashing V.	Step Out	Drill	Characteristics
Always	Yes	First Only	2	2	3	Stubborn
Marine Brigade Skirmishers					Type	Skirmishers
Points Value	14	Weapon	BL Rifle		Size	6
Formation	First Fire	Controlled V.	Crashing V.	Step Out	Drill	Characteristics
No Shock	Yes	No	-	2	-	Sharp Practice (1)
(1) During the siege of Vicksburg, one Company of the Marine Brigade obtained Spencer repeating rifles, with which they sniped at the Confederates. They fire like Breech Loading Rifles, but one Command Card will be sufficient to use Sharp Practice. Also, each time they roll more 1s than 6s when shooting, they will be low on ammunition (if this happens a second time, they are out of ammunition).						

Support Options

Due to the limited resources the Marine Brigade enjoyed, the following Support List is used rather than the generic one in the main rules.

List One
Physic
Spirits and Tinder Box
List Two
Additional Canister
Water Cart
Fixed Secondary Deployment Point
List Three
Status I Leader
Ammunition Cart
List Six/Seven/Nine
Artillery, Light, Medium, Heavy