

StarQuestions

Answers and advice on the STAR FRONTIERS® game

by Penny Petticord

If you need some answers to help your gaming campaign, write down your questions and mail them to StarQuestions, Dragon Publishing, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

Q: Is it necessary to have some level of "weapon skills" to use a weapon?

A: No. Characters without weapons skills simply use the basic chance to hit ($\frac{1}{2}$ the DEX score, rounded up) to resolve combat with a ranged weapon; and, $\frac{1}{2}$ STR or $\frac{1}{2}$ DEX is used for combat with melee weapons.

Q: Wouldn't an automatic rifle fire more shots than an automatic pistol would in a burst, since rifles are bigger?

A: No. The basic designs of the two weapons are very similar, giving them nearly identical mechanical characteristics (such as ammo capacity and rate of fire). The main difference is that the rifle has a longer barrel, which gives it the advantage of greater range.

Q: Couldn't a bullet belt be used instead of a clip on an automatic rifle? For example, a bullet belt for a rifle could have 100 rounds, a mass of 3 kg, and a cost of 30 credits. The weapon could then fire 20 shots in a burst, or 6 shots per round.

A: The standard automatic rifles sold throughout the frontier are not designed to accommodate belt ammo. A weapon such as you suggest could be custom-made, but it would be cumbersome enough to require a tripod mount for proper firing, just like a small machine gun.

Q: The rule book states that a Dralasilite may fire two weapons. But later it says that firing two weapons will give the character a -10 modifier to hit. Is this true with Dralasilites? If a Dralasilite can fire two weapons, should he be able to fire a weapon that needs mounting?

A: Dralasilites are able to fire two weapons at once with the -10 modifier, as any other character can. They can also handle two-handed or

mounted weapons normally. (In fact, a Dralasilite with 3 "arms" might conceivably have an easier time handling a mounted, belt-fed weapon than a two-armed character.)

Q: Dralasilites are able to make their body parts one centimeter in diameter. Should they be able to "ooze" under a wall that has a hole under it, or through holes in a fence?

A: The minimum diameter for a Dralasilite's body is that of a limb: 10 cm. A Dralasilite can conceivably flatten its entire body to a cylinder of that thickness, but it could become no thinner lest its internal organs should be crushed. Although it can extrude 1-cm-diameter "fingers," it cannot compress its whole body to that extent.

Q: How could I make an encounter involving pulsars, black holes, a supernova, or a magnetic nebula?

A: So far, those major spacefaring dangers haven't been defined in the game system or its accessories. When you want to build an adventure around a concept outside the scope of the current rules system, you must design it from the ground up, using the rules and known facts as a framework on which to build. Start by doing some research at your local library on the known scientific attributes of such space anomalies. This will give you the realistic basis for your scenario. Then, using your understanding of the STAR FRONTIERS game mechanics, convert the attributes to usable game terms. (It is not necessary for the final design to be 100% realistic to be playable.) Be sure to keep any new design elements in balance with the rest of the game system and your existing campaign.

Q: How many rockets can a rocket battery hold? How many seekers can a seeker rack hold? How many torpedos can a torpedo launcher carry?

A: A standard rocket battery holds 24 rockets. Seeker racks and torpedo launchers are merely devices for

firing, not storage containers. There is no set limit to the number of seeker missiles or torpedos you can carry, except the capacity of your ship.

Q: Can anything else besides a mine layer carry, seekers for mines?

A: Seekers can be carried and deployed by minelayers, heavy cruisers, and battleships, but only minelayers can carry mines.

Q: How often are new star systems charted?

A: Most of the Frontier remains uncharted. Beyond the information on known space given in the set and modules, the referee is responsible for developing additional portions of the universe for campaign use. Future modules and supplements may feature an occasional new charted system, but making up your own planets, systems, and creatures is part of the fun, because your players will never know exactly what to expect.

Q: Will the Sathar ever fight deep-space battles?

A: Sathar ships fight the good guys in space occasionally (see the Advanced Game scenarios in the Knight Hawks Tactical Operations Manual for examples). Face-to-face conflict with the worms is far more rare, though not completely unheard of. Sathar prefer to win their victories through subterfuge, sabotage, and infiltration, rather than direct combat, whenever it's possible.

Q: Is it possible to modify a starship with a hull size of 5 or greater to land in water? If not, why not?

A: Starships cannot land on planets at all; they dock at space stations to take on personnel and supplies. Only small ships and shuttles can land on planetary surfaces. Any airtight spacecraft that can land on the ground can drop into an ocean, but the spacecraft will immediately sink unless it has been made especially buoyant like a submarine.