

The Proton Beam

*A new Star Frontiers® game
technological item*

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New developments in the field of proton emission devices by WarTech, Inc. (see the ARES section in issue #90 of DRAGON® Magazine) have opened up a whole new area of weapons and defenses. These weapons, armor, new power sources, and their costs are the subject of this article.

If your campaign's player characters are all Star Law agents, then a good way to introduce these new devices is to provide them on a lend/lease program for testing purposes between WarTech and Star Law. Other ideas for introducing the devices include: captured Sathar information reveals the existence of new technology; pirates are encountered who are equipped with proton weapons; a newly discovered ancient ruins has data which lead to these new items.

New Ammunition

SEU-micro-disc. This variable SEU disc is a smaller version of the standard powerclip. It is roughly the size of a nickel and is usually used in micro-circuited items. The normal SEU use differs with each item.

Mini-powerclip. A smaller version of the powerclip, this 10 SEU unit is about the size of a pack of gum. It is not normally used in items which take standard 20 SEU powerclips. The most common usage for the mini-powerclip is in rafflur weapons.

Weapons

Proton weapons. Proton weapons are usually referred to as "rafflurs" because of their development designation, Rapid Fluctuating Ray. All proton beams are opaque green and appear to send powerful energy waves streaking back and forth to the target. Rafflurs are unusual in that most use only mini-powerclips and cannot be attached to powerpacks (they have a nasty habit of "backcharging" into any power source heavier than a mini-clip, thus blowing them up). Proton beams are attracted to and attack the molecular cohesion of atoms, which sometimes results in a "bending beam", as with the M-4.

Rafflur M-1. This personal defense device is the size of a cigar and contains a SEU micro-disc. Its damage is $4d10+5$, and it only fires once. Its range is extremely limited. After it is fired, the micro-disc is disposed of and a fresh one inserted.

Rafflur M-2. The proton pistol is a handgun roughly the size of a laser pistol. Its damage is $2d10$ per SEU, and it has a dial that can fire from 1 to 5 SEUs per shot.

Rafflur M-3. This extremely limited production model's damage and SEU usage are identical to the M-2 pistol, but it has esign modifications, such as a folding stock and energy modulator, which increases its range and accuracy (+5 to hit modifier).

Rafflur M-4. The official weapon of the Yazirian Elite Forces, the main advantage of these 75-cm-long weapons is their ability to unleash all 10 SEUs at once in an area effect (like ancient scatterguns). Their beam is cone-shaped, with the point at the gun's muzzle. Since proton beams are attracted to cohesive atomic structure, the first targets in their blast-path usually absorb the damage (if they're lined up perpendicular to the attacker.) To figure out the blast area for targets, take half of the beams distance between muzzle and the closest target. For instance, a blast striking a target at 16 meters would have a diameter of 8 meters, and anyone within approximately 3.5 meters would also receive the blast, but all individuals behind the first target would be safe. Because of this powerful energy surge, the weapon's circuits superheat, requiring the weapon to cool three turns before reloading with a new mini-powerclip. If the target is wearing a synthvelope, only the first 6 SEUs will be halved, with the remaining 4 SEUs blasting through at normal damage (for easier calculating, just consider 7 SEUs worth of full damage).

Rafflur M-6. The proton rifle is a larger version of the pistol, with a selection of up to 10 SEUs per shot and a longer range.

Rafflur M-8. Designated the LONG RANGE SHARP SHOOTER version of the rafflur rifle, this long-barreled beauty comes equipped with a built-in telescopic sight. It cannot be accurately aimed at anything closer than 15 meters, but it has a truly impressive 500 meter range. An expensive breakdown version is often used by big game hunters.

Rafflur M-10. The M-10 is the medium ordnance piece of the rafflur series and the counterpart of the heavy laser. It comes standard equipped with a folding quadpod mount which will safely hold the parabattery used in its operation. The parabattery needs to be held safely because of its unusual feedback prevention circuits and filters. This is the *only* rafflur type which does not use a 10 SEU mini-powerclip. Two humans or one large bio-form are used to transport it. Optional mounting equipment for vehicles, fortifications, etc., can also be purchased.

Helmetic rafflurs. These double projections (one on each side) from the helmet are actually two rafflur M-1s activated by a jaw-tension mechanism. The range is 12 meters maximum, but normal modifiers are used. Two SEU micro-discs are used, one in each unit; damage is identical to two rafflur M-1s. It takes four turns to replace both micro-discs in the helmetic rafflurs. These rafflurs can only be fired where the wearer is looking, and there is a -10 to hit modifier. This action is so simple that it can be completed in addition to other normal actions that turn.

The rafflur series. Please note that the development model numbers are not in the series - M-7, M-9, etc. are missing so you can create your own rafflur models.

Power screens

The following power screen adheres to all of the basic conditions (shape, size, etc.), as laid down in the DEFENSES, power screens section of the STAR FRONTIERS® Alpha Dawn role-playing game.

Simp-Screen. A simp screen performs in similar fashion to an albedo screen and even has a similar silvery aura about it, but it is energized to protect against proton beam fire. For every 6 points (or fraction of 6 points) absorbed, 1 SEU is drained from the power source. For example, absorbing 21 points of damage drains 4 SEU. Any weapon can be fired out of the simp screen. As long as the power holds out, the wearer will take no damage from a rafflur weapon.

Defensive suits

Synthvelope. A synthvelope suit is like a synthetic one-piece envelope that absorbs the damage from proton beam weapons (rafflurs). Like an albedo suit for lasers, each point of damage reflected wears away 1 point of the suit's reflective properties. When it has accumulated 100 points of damage or more, the suit becomes useless. The suit must be stepped into from the back and zipped up, completely encasing the wearer's body except for the head. It is flexible enough for a Dralasite to use.