PROJECT KHITOMER

FEBRUARY 23, 2019

SESSION
"Weapons in Star Trek"

LOCATION
Room Two

HOSTED BY
[PF] AlexM (Pegasus Fleet)

TIME
10pm GMT
(all times presented in CST [UTC-6])

[PF] AlexM, 4:00:30 PM

== /\ == /\ == /\ == EVENT: WEAPONS IN STAR TREK == /\ == /\ == /\ ==

Hello again, and welcome to the panel. For this panel I'm not entirely sure how this might go. I have a bit of an outline, but I'd really like for us to get into some discussion. I thought about just doing some research on various weapon systems and sharing it here. But that's just me throwing text at you for a while.

We all know that Star Trek was meant to be a vision of our future, and by the time of The Next Generation, Roddenberry was firm in his stance that it was an optimistic future. I'm not going to dispute that here, and that optimism is one of Star Trek's greatest strengths. But that being said, life in the future was not always full of sunshine. There were times when a ship was forced to defend themselves, or that a show of force was necessary. Today we're not necessarily going to discuss when a defensive or offensive stance must be taken, though if the conversation goes that direction that's not a problem. Instead, my focus was going to be how weapons and the use of weapons are handled in Star Trek and our sims.

So before we really get into that, I wanted to just touch on the types of weapons that we see in Star Trek. Generally speaking, starship weapons are either some sort of energy weapon, such as phasers or disruptors, or a projectile weapon, such as photon torpedos. I know Star Trek Online goes splits energy types into several categories. I'm not really going to get into that, but I am going to borrow some ideas from them. For the sake of this discussion, I'll use phaser, but I'm probably referring to all types of energy weapons. Across the many Star Trek shows, the phasers have taken a few different forms, but the idea is similar. They are a directed particle weapon encapsulated by a form of phased energy. Phasers are effective against shields, but less so against an armored hull.

The other primary weapon type is projectile weapons. These usually take the form of some type of torpedo. The most common torpedoes are photon and quantum torpedoes. The basic idea is the same. The torpedo consists of a casing and an explosive warhead. Photon torpedoes, for example use an antimatter warhead. The casing is designed with a propulsion system that is capable of maintaining a limited warp field. This allows the used of torpedoes at warp speeds. Torpedos are are high yield explosives that do tremendous damage to a ship's hull, but are less effective against shields.

So far I've primarily been talking about ship based weapons. Of course, there are also personal weapons, such as phaser pistols and rifles. The typical hand phaser or phaser pistol is a very useful tool for a landing party. As I mentioned before, they can be used to generate heat, or cut through and object. They can be used for defense to stun an opponent, and they can be used to kill. In most of Star Trek canon, referring of course to the shows and movies, there wasn't much in the way of defenses against personal phasers. At least a few video games, such as in Star Trek Online, have introduced the idea of personal shields. I personally have not used personal shields on my sim, but just out of curiosity, have any of you used them on any of your sims?

I think I might have hit critical mass when it comes to my walls of text.

[PF] Zerin Rolfe, 4:04:05 PM

Yup

[BF] Leah, 4:04:22 PM

I haven't even thought about personal shields, been a long time since I played STO but never really gave it much thought

[PF] AlexM, 4:04:38 PM

I only have an hour. I like to get the information posted up front.

I've not used them in any of my sims either.

[BF][118] Kylindra, 4:04:56 PM

I've seen personal shields in sims.

They're usually experimental things built by engineering characters showing off they can tinker.

Adds a bit of color to the sim.

[PF] AlexM, 4:05:54 PM

No widespread use though?

[OF] Kate, 4:05:56 PM

I never considered using STO's personal shield in a sim.

[PF] Puppy, 4:06:03 PM

Closest to shield I've seen is marines armour

[PF] AlexM, 4:06:56 PM

I think the Elite Force games had them as well. It may be that's just more of a video game construct, and doesn't really fit in with roleplaying.

[BF][118] Kylindra, 4:07:30 PM

In that fleet (118) we don't neccesarily emphasize marines anymore

It's meant that that kind of combat scene has correspondingly not been used as much.

[PF] AlexM, 4:08:07 PM

Marines are actually something that I wanted to bring up. They can be quite the contentious topic at times.

[OF] Markstrom, 4:08:24 PM

Marines themselves should have been a panel really tbh

[PF] AlexM, 4:08:52 PM

I think as this topic evolved in my head, marines became a much bigger subject.

So let's talk about marines. They are "weapons" in a sense.

Lt Cmdr Fynn Daros, 4:09:11 PM

Is it just me, or does a personal shield (if they existed) seems like a very limited-use item? I mean, if they block most everything, would that not include air?

[BF] Leah, 4:09:13 PM

Ya Marines could be a panel in of itself lol

I would think that it would just block phasers and such like that but still able to get air through

Lt Cmdr Fynn Daros, 4:09:58 PM

Also, if you can see through a shield, then it's not blocking visible light. An exploitable weakness?

[OF] Kate, 4:10:03 PM

REminds me of the episode of SG Atlantis. Where a personal shield almost killed someone for lack of food and drink.

[PF] AlexM, 4:10:04 PM

I would think the shields would have to be attuned to let air pass, or to let the user pick something up. I'm not sure the technology has really been examined closely.

[OF] Markstrom, 4:10:13 PM

No a sheild is a particle field essentially

[PF] AlexM, 4:10:21 PM

That's why I was curious to know if they've been used by sims.

[OF] Markstrom, 4:10:25 PM

It wouldn't stop air

[PF] AlexM, 4:10:38 PM

Except that forcefields block air.

[OF] Markstrom, 4:10:51 PM

Touche

[PF] Zerin Rolfe, 4:10:53 PM

But do they have to? Maybe they are tuned to do so

[OF] Kate, 4:11:10 PM

Only if they are programmed to block air, isn't it.

[PF] AlexM, 4:11:17 PM

That would be my argument. They would have to be tuned to certain frequencies.

[OF] Kate, 4:11:58 PM

IF a forcefield can be programmed to let a ship pass through, it should also be able to program it to let air through

Lt Cmdr Fynn Daros, 4:12:10 PM

So a shielded officer might be protected from a phaser strike, but not a gas attack of some sort. Unless they were able to reconfigure the unit on the fly

[PF] AlexM, 4:12:44 PM

I think the way personal shields have been portrayed is that they block high speed projectiles and energy weapons, but don't stop slow moving projectiles. STO, Star Wars KOTOR, and Mass Effect all had similar properties, if I recall.

[OF] Kate, 4:13:31 PM

So they would be protected against a phaser attack, but could still be knocked over from a flying chicken.

[PF] AlexM, 4:13:44 PM

Shuttlebay forcefields might be able to hold air, but might not hold up against a concentrated phaser blast. It's probably all down to what the field is designed to do.

I mean, if someone threw a chicken at me, I'd probably fall down.

Lt Cmdr Fynn Daros, 4:14:34 PM

That's a good point there. Super strong shield could block a powerful phaser. But fire a cannon ball, and the shield may hold, but without being anchired, it would still send the guy flying.

[OF] Kate, 4:14:34 PM

That's what I meant yes. With a flying chicken. Someone using it as a projectile

[OF] Markstrom, 4:16:34 PM

If we go back to marines, that's a topic. Marines in and of themselves are useful tools. The main reason marines these days are seen as negatives are three fold. One is in character the other two are out of character. People see marines as not canon against the purist views people have of trek. The issue becomes though is that we are here to have fun we need to have options open for people to have fun and play what they want to an extent. The second is limited options for marines. Many end up assigning them security Jobs in a ship because their role on a ship is limited they're more ideal for a specialized sim or a starbase. Finally it's in character, most people who want to play a marine play them as a Special forces type. Best of the best, sniper, ultra sneaky can take on anything. But that's not realistic, most marines are grunts with basic training etc. And characters like that tend to edge towards SHS which most aren't fans of

I could add alot more but I'm on my phone lol. But Alex isn't wrong, marines are a weapon in themselves if used properly

[BF] Leah, 4:18:05 PM

I play a marine (usually play marines cause there fun if done right) 😄

[OF] Markstrom, 4:18:23 PM

Oh as have I, several times, thus my views

[BF] Leah, 4:18:26 PM(edited)

shoot on my one my sims I play a Marine that is Chief Diplomatic Officer that's fun

[PF] AlexM, 4:18:40 PM

I agree with you. In roleplaying, marines can fill a very special role, and be a very versatile role. I have seen some people abuse the role and have characters that were a bit off the rails. And I've seen others that have played them very well.

[OF] Markstrom, 4:19:09 PM

The problem is Marines are highly specialized security for simming purposes

They do have specializations such as MP, Intel etc but the number of them are few compared to the basic grunt

[BF][118] Kylindra, 4:19:45 PM

I think the issue with marines is that people somtimes feel it's not trek, but more importantly , that if you have marine charactes, they need to DO something, which means you may have to require combat when you didn't intend to

[OF] Markstrom, 4:20:06 PM

You're correct, which is entirely wrong

[PF] AlexM, 4:20:13 PM

Personally, if I had a ship sim, I would make them MACOs or a type of Hazard Team, and put them as part of security. Assuming that I don't have some giant carrier starship or something like that.

[OF] Markstrom, 4:20:23 PM

Marines spend 90% of their time sitting around and training

They don't NEED to be doing something which is what people think

[PF] AlexM, 4:20:50 PM

On my starbase sim, that's usually what the marines are doing.

[OF] Becca, 4:20:56 PM

And there is so much to do with that type of thing as well

[PF] AlexM, 4:21:52 PM

There absolutely is. It really depends on the player and the CO. You need a marine player that wants to write within the confines of what the CO wants the marines to be doing. Sometimes it tough to find that combination.

[OF] Markstrom, 4:22:00 PM

I mean saying marines don't feel like trek is another thing that leads to a huge debate I don't think we should get into

Aye, marines end up being down to how the player and CO both take it

[OF] Kate, 4:23:15 PM

I have a marine character on a NPC ship on Langley, but I have no idea how to play her.

[BF] Leah, 4:23:17 PM

ya lets not lol I have marines on my sim assigned to a ship that can hold them as well as our Starfighter Unit the ship is usually out patroling or doing other mini missions

[OF] Markstrom, 4:23:51 PM

Anyways weapons. That's another thing that stems from Marines. Projectile and energy etc

[PF] AlexM, 4:23:57 PM

Ah, fighters. I was going to bring them up too. Do people see fighters in a similar light as marines? Do they have a place in Star Trek?

We can talk about marine weapons and come back around to fighters. We have seen a projectile weapon in canon.

[BF] Kai1701E, 4:25:03 PM(edited)

We've seen Fighters in canon a lot more recently than we saw anything Marine

[OF] Markstrom, 4:25:05 PM

God I hate that gun. So crappy lol

[PF] AlexM, 4:26:18 PM

I'm not a big fan either. I've seen some people really interested in using it though, even without the transporter thing.

[OF] Markstrom, 4:26:38 PM

It's a very unrealistic gun by real world standard even without the transporter

[BF][118] Kylindra, 4:26:48 PM

I feel fighters are.. everyone wants them. I would rather never see them again. That's the hard sci-fi nerd in me talking though

[OF] Markstrom, 4:27:15 PM

The problem with fighters is every ship in some fleets have them even if it's just two

[PF] AlexM, 4:27:18 PM

I use them on my sim. I actually use them for traffic control.

Fighters, that is. Not the projectile weapon.

[OF] Markstrom, 4:27:37 PM

Which makes them ineffective for the role. Fighters need to be based on carriers or starbase

Where they have space for more then 2

[OF] Becca, 4:27:59 PM

Oh so true

[OF] Kate, 4:28:04 PM

I'll have them as soon as I find someone to write them. Although I will put them with Flight Control, and not a seperate department.

[PF] AlexM, 4:28:14 PM

Right. I agree that they don't need to be on most starships. Most starships can't really support them.

[BF][118] Kylindra, 4:28:20 PM

Yeah, our ship has like 7 shuttles that I write like a CAP in use.

[PF] AlexM, 4:28:33 PM

I would argue that true fighter craft needs a lot more support than a standard shuttle.

[BF] Leah, 4:29:19 PM

Akira-class can support a Starfighter Unit though

[PF] AlexM, 4:30:17 PM

Like I said, I use them for traffic control, but I have a starbase. We have various "marker" at set radii from the station, and ships are directed to follow certain flight paths on approach. Ships that do not comply may get a gentle behavior correction from the fighter patrols.

[OF] Markstrom, 4:30:37 PM

An Akira can yes but the Akira isn't the type I'm talking about. I've seen intrepids with them

Norway's, etc. Ships not designed for them

[PF] Thompson, 4:31:09 PM

The thing about fighters in the Trek situation though is kind of misleading in my opinion

[BF] Leah, 4:31:11 PM

I have a starbase to but it's not as big as a Stardock-class either so have the Akira-class to house them until needed

[PF] Thompson, 4:31:26 PM

We expect fighters to be small single seated craft when a majority of them int he trek world are not

Take the Dominion war and the Peregrine for example

[OF] Markstrom, 4:31:47 PM

You don't need a stardock for fighters though, most starbases are big enough

[OF] Kate, 4:31:58 PM

I got plenty of room for them.

[PF] Thompson, 4:32:10 PM(edited)

That was in itself its own starship, however there are certainly a lot of reasons not to have them on an exploration ship

Mainly being what actual purpose do they serve that a shuttle couldn't do?

[BF] Leah, 4:32:38 PM

I have a Nor-class 😛

so not really

[PF] Thompson, 4:33:07 PM

A nor still has sizable small craft bays such as used by runabouts

But certainly not a "Traditional" hangar arrangement

[BF] Leah, 4:33:31 PM

well runabouts yes but fighers not so much

[OF] Markstrom, 4:33:41 PM

A nor is horibbly proportioned though you are correct

[BF] Leah, 4:33:55 PM

but the Akira works for what we need 😄

[PF] AlexM, 4:33:59 PM

It looks cool, but it is oddly proportioned.

And with a station the size of a Nor, you might not need fighters. That one starship could probably do a pretty good job of providing gentle behavioral corrections.

[PF] Thompson, 4:34:57 PM

I think one of the issues is everyone likes their toys, and fighters falls into the toybox that everyone seems to want

[BF] Leah, 4:34:58 PM

True

[PF] Thompson, 4:35:22 PM

Heck most starships and this includes my own fleet have in my opinion too many craft in some hangar bays, even if it is just shuttles

[BF] Leah, 4:35:24 PM

though right now the fighter unit is npc'd cause it seems no one wants to play fighters.

[OF] Kate, 4:35:52 PM

That's my problem as well.

[PF] AlexM, 4:35:56 PM

The benefit of having the fighters perform that role is that they are a much smaller resource drain than sending out multiple starships. Stardock class stations probably have more traffic coming in and out each day compared to a Nor-class.

[OF] Markstrom, 4:36:02 PM

Fighters are harder to staff then science lol which is hard to staff

[PF] Thompson, 4:36:23 PM

Thing about a station, and I used to write a CAG on a stardock, is theres a lot to do. You have searching incoming traffic, defence, recon. Theyre quite adaptable. on a starship though theyre almost in the Flight control officer range of sitting twiddling your thumbs all day

[BF] Leah, 4:36:41 PM

and two of my 3 garrison ships are NPC ships my Main ship is the one we use the majority of time for off base missions. but that's a while different story there 😛

[PF] AlexM, 4:37:07 PM

Fighters and Marines are both hard to staff for me. I mostly just end up using a few NPC characters that I created to cover whatever situation needs to happen to move the plot along. The fighters are really more of a plot device than they are a roleplaying tool. At least for me.

Exactly, @[PF] Thompson. That's what I have them do. And actually, when a ship needs to be detained and searched, the fighters detain and the marines board.

Not that I'm against continuing with this thought, is there anything else that any of you want to bring up?

I was going to ask this. There seems to be a lot of combat in a show that's supposed to be about an optimistic look at our future. Is combat used effectively as a way to uphold the ideals of the show, or is it more just an attempt at some action? How do you use weapons in your roleplaying?

[OF] Kate, 4:41:00 PM

So far only for certification of personnel. Haven't had anything combat related happen jet.

[BF][118] Kylindra, 4:41:57 PM

I feel combat is used in show to draw attention.

[PF] AlexM, 4:42:28 PM

Is it ever used effectively to tell a story, or do you think it's only really used to boost ratings?

I will say that during the Dominion War arc on DS9, some of my favorite episodes featured no combat, but instead focused on the aftermath and consequences of the combat.

[BF] Leah, 4:44:39 PM

DS9 is my fav 😄 I got to finish binge watching that but back on topic sorry had to throw that in there

[PF] AlexM, 4:44:42 PM

I think of the scene in early Season 6, when they had their little ceremony in the Defiant mess hall with the phaser component. We never saw the actual combat, but we got a sense of how the crew felt about what was going on.

[BF] Leah, 4:45:02 PM

ya that was a good one

[OF] Kate, 4:45:36 PM

15 minutes remaining!!

[BF] Leah, 4:45:51 PM

haha thanks Kate 😄

I lost track of time myself haha

[PF] AlexM, 4:46:30 PM

Well, this one has kind of slowed a bit. Does anyone have any thoughts or questions that they'd like to share?

[PF] Thompson, 4:48:34 PM

To double back to your question on whether combat is used to uphold ideals

I think the problem lies with the idealsStarfleet likes to imagine everything is warm and cuddly, but the reality of the Universe is very much not that

[BF] Leah, 4:49:31 PM

Indeed Thompson I can agree with that not everyone is friendly as some

[PF] Zerin Rolfe, 4:49:59 PM

What about the creation of "improvised" or McGyvered weapons to get out of situations. Like rewiring the deflector dish to shoot positrons into an array that will make it go boom. Or use of "ancient" weapons like bow/arrow, sword, machine gun. How do all of those fit into an RP and be balance appropriately?

[PF] Thompson, 4:50:29 PM

Now thats not to say we should go in as heavily armed as a Scimitar class, but it does lead massive support for their being proper close quarter weapons on board, along with the need for the Marines and starfighter squadrons on large line vessels

[PF] AlexM, 4:50:45 PM

Say what you want about Discovery (but not here), while I felt the end of the war was a bit rushed, I did like how the crew stood up for their ideals, despite the situation they found themselves in.

Improvised weapons were used in the shows quite a bit. Kirk famously made a canon out of bamboo.

[PF] Thompson, 4:51:39 PM

As for that Zerin, In the past I used a Marine sniper who used what would be a current 2018 rifle with a few thnigs like a 2390 sighting system. I suppose it depends on the how and reasoning behind it.

[PF] AlexM, 4:51:51 PM

I think the balance is not in using improvised weapons, but does it make sense for the character to have that knowledge.

[PF] Thompson, 4:52:23 PM

Anyone with any sort of security backround would have such knowledge. itd logically be part of survival training

Indeed basic starfleet training would likely include making spears and bows

[PF] AlexM, 4:53:35 PM

It probably would. We've never seen it on screen, but that doesn't mean that it doesn't happen. Overreliance on energy weapons can get you killed.

[PF] Thompson, 4:55:02 PM

Energy weapons as a whole have a lot of drawbacks. Reason i used the mechanical bullet based rifle for my marine sniper is that I don't think that you could make a portable weapon that could fire the equivilent distance to a bullet, with energy.

[OF] Kate, 4:55:02 PM

Wrap it up please or move to #overflow-two. Only five minutes left!

[PF] Thompson, 4:55:53 PM

Not to mention the additional issues of projectile velocity and the visiability of an orange ball flying through the air

[PF] AlexM, 4:56:17 PM

Very true.

Since we just have a few minutes left, I'll invite everyone to head over to #overflow-two if you'd like to continue the discussion. Otherwise, We'll let the last panelist get settled in.

[PF] Thompson, 4:57:13 PM

woooo

thats meh

[PF] AlexM, 4:57:28 PM

Thank you all again for joining me for this discussion, and enjoy the last round of panels!

[SB118] Groznin Smith, 4:59:32 PM

Community Panel!