

GRAPPLER ARMS - STARSHIP MELEE COMBAT!

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INTRODUCTION

Starship grappler arms (sometimes called combat grappler arms) are inspired by the anime series *Outlaw Star*. In this setting, many ships are equipped with grappler arms, which allow them to perform hand-to-hand and melee combat with starships, as well as using starfighter and capital scale versions of character scale melee and ranged weapons.

Originally developed as the kind of arm manipulators ships would be expected to use for moving cargo, pirate groups realized that with a little work they could be used as weapons in combat itself. Now they can be used as a hand-to-hand fighter, but with starships. Grappler fighters using grappler arms can use their personal fighting skills in grappler combat (melee combat, melee parry, brawling, brawling parry, blasters, firearms, bows, etc (but not dodge, as this must be done by piloting the ship as usual)).

Grappler starships and their crews often become very effective in close range starship melee combat. As starship weapons often have trouble engaging targets at point-blank range, once a ship closes the distance to this point, grappler-equipped ships almost always gain the advantage at this point. For this reason, combat grappler arms are often installed on ships that have the speed and maneuverability to full advantage of this.

Grappler fighters can be separate from ship pilots, but often both are one and the same. Especially with smaller starfighters with single cockpits.

Starfighters with little cargo space can usually equip all the grappler arms' components on the outside of their ship, though this makes them vulnerable to Called Shots.

While the many models and types of grappler arms have varying availability depending on what region of the galaxy one tries to acquire them in, the most well-known users of them are the Keio Pirates. Few know that these pirates are actually commanded by the Keio Wizards, Force users well versed in the power of the Dark Side. The Keio Pirates strike without warning and win most engagements they fight in, but have avoided capture by the forces of the Old Republic, the Empire, and the New Republic, and have existed through these eras of time in the Star Wars galaxy. The few who know anything of the pirates speculate the existence of the Keio Wizards and that they use their power in the Dark Side to obfuscate their presence to evade authorities and organizations that would hunt them down and destroy

them or turn them in for bounties. Many bounty and pirate hunters that have gone looking for them have disappeared, sometimes with the wreckage of their ships being discovered weeks, months, years, and even centuries later, their crews nowhere to be found.

When the Keio Pirates strike, their ships, ranging from starfighters, space transports, and even their capital ships, all have combat-capable grappler arms equipped. The Keio are experts in close range starship melee combat, and few have ever been able to stand against them, let alone win when engaging them in space combat.

The only known people to have faced the Keio Pirates and Wizards and lived to tell the tale is a possibly psychotic nihilist named Lance Trakkel and his crew with their ship the Gunstar Nova II. Trakkel had a YZ-775 Medium Transport, already a powerful ship in its stock form, modified by fellow crewmate Jaken Trask and upgraded into an even more powerful grappler ship. He then taught himself grappler combat and mastered this during him and his crew's many adventures and various conflicts with the Keio Pirates. Having a long rap sheet of numerous crimes ranging from theft, grand theft, fraud, forgery, assault and murder of various officials and businessmen, high cost collateral damage, all the way to actual genocide with the death of large groups of people, worlds, and even an entire star system, Trakkel's various battles against the Keio Pirates seem to have forced them into deeper hiding than usual for the time being.

Years after the initial battles between the Keio Pirates and Gunstar Nova crew, Jaken Trask had reached his breaking point and "liberated" the ship from Trakkel and the worst of the crew, and left them behind on a backwater planet with no means of escape. He then sold Trakkel's location to every person, faction, business, government and organization that they had crossed over the years who were willing to pay for it (and they all did). This also included the Keio Pirates. Jaken then flew off to lay low for some time, taking time for convalescence while he did so to recover from abuse and trauma, but thinking and planning for what to do from this point on.

Some time later, Jaken created his own tech business, J-Tech Ideas (JTI) with a separate business entity for more risky ventures (and to act as a detachable scapegoat if anything ever went wrong), named Tech-Militaire. He then contacted old associates to help get started establishing himself, Fred Lo of Low Enterprises (LoEn), and Frost of Frost Trade & Shipping (FTS), to advertise and market his offerings, but also paid them handsomely to operate as middlemen to keep a safe distance from anyone who might come looking for him (such as a vengeful Lance Trakkel if he survived).

After setting everything up, among the many tech offerings he developed and sold, he examined the Gunstar Nova's grappler arms, reverse-engineered the tech, developed several models and types of grappler arms, and began selling them himself during the New Republic era.

Before the New Republic era, grappler arms are a rare find, and so are the people who know how to make them. Many technicians and engineers can make them, but most would argue not to as their technology seems backwards and archaic compared to the many options available with the modern standard of galactic technology, even compared to centuries ago.

In the New Republic era, grappler arms become much more available as J-Tech begins selling them on the open market, and the concept of starship grappler combat begins to spread and become more common in the Inner, Mid, and Outer Rim regions of the galaxy.

By the New Jedi Order era and the Yuuzhan Vong War, many ship crews install combat grappler arms in order to fight the Vong head-to-head in starship close combat. The Yuuzhan Vong as as shocked at this tactical approach as the citizens of the galaxy were by their biotechnology when the Vong first began their invasion.

Older models of combat grappler arms may have their Model as "Keio Tech Caste". Starfighetr scale arms sold during the New Republic era and beyond are Model listed as "J-Tech Ideas". Capital ship versions sold during this time are Model listed as "Tech-Militaire".

GAME NOTES

Modular Grappler Arms

When installing grappler arms, there are two versions. One is modular grappler arms which can be swapped from ship to ship (Moderate Transports Repair skill roll), but may not always fit the ship they are attached to (This actually fits some of the unbalanced, misshapen and awkward looking ships from Outlaw Star). Modular grappler arms have a set Body Dice which also counts as their strength when dealing Damage or wrestling/"grappling" with other arms, or anything that would require a Strength roll. While some of these may have Body/Strength that equals or surpasses the ship's hull, many more may actually be weaker than the ship they are attached to. They can still use hand held melee and ranged weapons though, and this could make the difference in combat.

Custom Grappler Arms

The other version are custom grappler arms, which are custom built for each ship they are made for. They make a much better fit for each specific ship, but cost more and require more cargo space to alter the ship's hull and install. Where modular arms have a set Body/Strength, custom arms have Body/Strength related to the ship's Hull Dice. This usually makes them stronger, which also makes them more effective in grappler combat. They can use hand held melee and ranged weapons the same way.

Components

When a ship is fitted with grappler arms, the components include the arms themselves, the control system to use them which includes a headset that allows the grappler fighter to see outside the ship, and

an externally attached pod that contains many camera drones. These drones are deployed and spread about the immediate combat area when activating "grappler combat mode" and relay their visual input to the grappler fighter's eyes via the headset, allowing the spacial awareness one would need when fighting in person. When combat is over, the crew must give time (1 round) for the drones to return to the pod. Camera drones can also be used in other creative ways by crafty characters (see Outlaw Star anime series)

Skills

Grappler fighters using grappler arms can use their personal fighting skills in grappler combat (melee combat, melee parry, brawling, brawling parry, blasters, firearms, bows, etc (but not dodge, as this must be done by piloting the ship as usual)).

Fire-Linking

In Outlaw Star, the McDougal brothers' ship El Dorado had two pairs of grappler arms, which were very effective in starship melee combat. Two or more sets could be installed onto a ship, the fire-linking could be purchased for them (100 credits per arm) to have them work together by a single grappler fighter (when attacking, the fire-linked arms strike the same target).

Use the fire-linking rules of choice as presented in either early D6 rules (+1D Damage per weapon), Galaxy Guide 6 Tramp Freighters (+1D per weapon, capped at 3 weapons), Star Wars Rulebook Revised and Expanded (+1 pip per weapon), or the optional rules presented elsewhere on the site (+1D per doubling of weapons: 2 weapons = +1D; 4 weapons = +2D; 8 weapons = +3D; etc).

MODULAR GRAPPLER ARMS

Super-Light Grappler Arms

Model: J-Tech Ideas GA-SL1

Type: Starship Grappler Arms

Scale: Starfighter

Skill: See Game Notes

Crew: 1

Cost: 2,000 credits

Weight: 4 metric tons

Availability: 1

Body/Strength: 1D

Light Grappler Arms

Model: J-Tech Ideas GA-L2

Type: Starship Grappler Arms

Scale: Starfighter

Skill: See Game Notes

Crew: 1

Cost: 4,000 credits

Weight: 6 metric tons

Availability: 1

Body/Strength: 2D

Medium Grappler Arms

Model: J-Tech Ideas GA-M3

Type: Starship Grappler Arms

Scale: Starfighter

Skill: See Game Notes

Crew: 1

Cost: 6,000 credits

Weight: 8 metric tons

Availability: 1

Body/Strength: 3D

Heavy Grappler Arms

Model: J-Tech Ideas GA-H4

Type: Starship Grappler Arms

Scale: Starfighter

Skill: See Game Notes

Crew: 1

Cost: 8,000 credits

Weight: 10 metric tons

Availability: 2

Body/Strength: 4D

Super-Heavy Grappler Arms

Model: J-Tech ideas HA-SH5
Type: Starship Grappler Arms
Scale: Starfighter
Skill: See Game Notes
Crew: 1
Cost: 10,000 credits
Weight: 12 metric tons
Availability: 3
Body/Strength: 5D

CUSTOM GRAPPLER ARMS

Super-Light Grappler Arms

Model: J-Tech Ideas GA-SL1c
Type: Starship Grappler Arms
Scale: Starfighter
Skill: See Game Notes
Crew: 1
Cost: +5% ship's price
Weight: 8 metric tons
Availability: 1
Body/Strength: Ship's Hull Dice -2D

Light Grappler Arms

Model: J-Tech Ideas GA-L2c
Type: Starship Grappler Arms

Scale: Starfighter

Skill: See Game Notes

Crew: 1

Cost: +10% ship's price

Weight: 12 metric tons

Availability: 2

Body/Strength: Ship's Hull Dice -1D

Medium Grappler Arms

Model: J-Tech Ideas GA-M3c

Type: Starship Grappler Arms

Scale: Starfighter

Skill: See Game Notes

Crew: 1

Cost: +15% ship's price

Weight: 16 metric tons

Availability: 3

Body/Strength: Equal to ship's Hull Dice

Heavy Grappler Arms

Model: J-Tech Ideas GA-H4c

Type: Starship Grappler Arms

Scale: Starfighter

Skill: See Game Notes

Crew: 1

Cost: +30% ship's price

Weight: 20 metric tons

Availability: 4

Body/Strength: Ships Hull Dice +1D

Super-Heavy Grappler Arms

Model: J-Tech Ideas GA-SH5c

Type: Starship Grappler Arms

Scale: Starfighter

Skill: See Game Notes

Crew: 1

Cost: +40% ship's price

Weight: 24 metric tons

Availability: 4

Body/Strength: Hull Dice +2D

CAPITAL SHIP GRAPPLER ARMS

If wishing to install grapples to a capital ship, increase the cost and weight x3 (cost for capital scale custom grapples is based on the capital ship's price). They use the grapple arm rules in every way, but have the inherent bonuses and penalties for being capital scale.

Capital ship grapple arms produced by J-Tech ideas are labeled "Tech-Militaire" in their Model, due to the oddness and disreputation capital ships with combat grapple arms tends to receive when galactic public realizes they exist.

GRAPPLER ARM WEAPONS

Ship crews wishing to stow weapons away and not keep them in the hands of the grapple arms can purchase weapon clamps that can be attached to the ship's hull or the grapple arms themselves. Cost: 1,000 credits per clamp.

When installing weapons into a ship, depending on their size, they could instead be installed directly in or on the grapple arms, though depending on the weapon, they could prove to be ungainly and make the grapple arms less useful.

MELEE WEAPONS

If purchasing melee weapons to be used by a grapple ship, upscale the weapon to starfighter scale and multiply the cost to x10 the original price. Availability depends on the complexity of the weapon and

available materials to make the weapon. Simple melee weapons can be made from scrap starship hull plating (Availability same as character scale version). Vibro melee weapons are technologically more complex (Availability +1). Ranged energy weapons can often be modified from existing starship energy weapons (Availability same as character scale version). Ballistic firearms may be easy to make due to technological simplicity, or more difficult due to their lack of use in certain parts of the galaxy (Availability varies). Some melee weapons can actually be improvised by chunks of starship hull plating, such as clubs, knives, swords and axes.

Examples of melee weapons are given below.

Club

Type: Typical club

Scale: Starfighter

Skill: Melee combat

Cost: 150 credits

Availability: 1

Difficulty: Very Easy

Damage: Str+1D

Hatchet

Type: Typical hatchet

Scale: Starfighter

Skill: Melee combat/thrown weapons

Cost: 350 credits

Availability: 1

Difficulty: Easy

Damage: Str+2, 1D+2 (if thrown)

Knife

Type: Standard knife

Scale: Starfighter

Skill: Melee combat

Cost: 250 credits

Availability: 1

Difficulty: Very Easy

Damage: Str+1 to Str+1D (based on type of knife)

Short Sword

Type: Typical sword

Scale: Starfighter

Skill: Melee combat

Cost: 350 credits

Availability: 1

Difficulty: Very Easy

Damage: Str+1D+1

Long Sword

Type: Typical sword

Scale: Starfighter

Skill: Melee combat

Cost: 450 credits

Availability: 1

Difficulty: Very Easy

Damage: Str+1D+2

Axe

Type: Typical axe

Scale: Starfighter

Skill: Melee combat

Cost: 550 credits

Availability: 1

Difficulty: Very Easy

Damage: Str+2D+1

Spear

Type: Typical spear

Scale: Starfighter

Skill: Melee combat
Cost: 600 credits
Availability: 1
Difficulty: Easy
Range (Thrown):
-Space: 3-10/20/30
-Atmosphere: 300-1/2/3km
Damage: Str+1D

Staff

Type: Typical staff
Scale: Starfighter
Skill: Melee combat
Cost: 150 credits
Availability: 1
Difficulty: Very Easy
Damage: Str+1D

Vibroblade

Type: Standard vibroblade
Scale: Starfighter
Skill: Melee combat
Cost: 2,500 credits
Availability: 3, F
Difficulty: Moderate
Damage: Str+1D+2

Vibrosword

Type: Standard vibrosword
Scale: Starfighter
Skill: Melee combat
Cost: 3,500 credits
Availability: 1
Difficulty: Moderate
Damage: Str+2D+1

Vibroaxe

Type: Standard vibroaxe

Scale: Starfighter

Skill: Melee combat

Cost: 5,000 credits

Availability: 3, R

Difficulty: Moderate

Damage: Str+3D

Lightsaber

Type: Energy melee weapon

Scale: Starfighter

Skill: Lightsaber

Cost: Unavailable for sale

Availability: 4, X

Difficulty: Difficult

Damage: 5D

Game Notes: If an attacking ship misses the Difficulty number by more than 10 points (the base Difficulty, not their opponent's parry total), the ship has injured itself with the lightsaber blade. Apply normal damage to the ship wielding the blade. Also, Force users with Force powers that affect lightsabers can apply those powers to starship-sized lightsabers! The cost or method for how to make or acquire starship-sized weapons is left undefined here do to the inherent difficulties in acquiring lightsabers being compounded in making one so much larger. They could be taken from enemies that already have them, or could instead be a plot device for players who wish to go on a quest/adventure/mission to construct them.

RANGED WEAPONS

Upscaled Character Weapons

Hand-held ranged weapons come in two versions. The first are character scale weapons upscaled to starfighter or capital scale (Cost x10, Range x10). They have the same rules and ammo as their

character scale counterparts.

Hand-Held Starship Weapons

The second takes weapons already made for starfighter/capital scale and modifying them to be held in grapples arm hands (Cost is +50% of the weapon's original price). These weapons can be linked to the ship's power source when held in the hands or have a power source added to them.

GRAPPLER ARM TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

Grappler arms often make use of tools and equipment commonly used by starships and their crews. Examples of such tools include, but are not limited to: cutting saw, cutting torch, cutting laser, smaller manipulator arms, rotating grapples arm hands, scanning equipment, smaller scale weapons, light tractor beams, search-and-rescue gear, computer interface links, engineering equipment, demolitions gear, and more! Whatever the price is for installing such tools/equipment can apply to installing these into the grapples arms instead of the ship's body itself.

Melee Shields

Melee shields are upscaled versions of the physical shields used in melee combat by warriors in ancient times or on backwater planets to deflect attacks from melee weapons. In this case, they are upscaled and attached to starship grapples arms. Using them requires the Melee Parry skill to place them in front of incoming attacks, be it hand-to-hand, melee, or ranged. When they take damage, they work like ablative armor as their material is worn away to absorb damage that would have hurt the ship instead. They can also be used to bludgeon or "shield bash" a target in melee combat (see below). When hit, the shields take the damage instead of the ship. Melee shields use the following damage chart.

Shield Damage Chart

Damage Roll>

Hull Code Roll by: Effect:

0-3 Knocked aside; cannot roll again until next round

4-8	Lightly Damaged (-1)
9-12	Heavily Damaged (-2)
13-15	Severely Damaged (-1D)
16+	Destroyed (shield shatters, must be replaced)

Damage rolling high enough to destroy the shield may still be strong enough to hit and damage the ship's hull (GM discretion). If a shield is reduced bit by bit to 0D, it is destroyed as it has been wittled away to practically nothing and must be replace.

Type: Typical shield

Scale: Starfighter

Skill: Melee parry

Cost:

-Light Shield: 500 credits

-Medium Shield: 750 credits

-Heavy Shield: 1,000 credits

Availability: 1

Difficulty: Easy

Damage:

-Light Shield: Str+1D

-Medium Shield: Str+2D

-Heavy Shield: Str+3D

Magnaforce Shields

Effectively an upscaled version of the Magnaforce Security Shield presented in Galladinium's Fantastic Technology, these work very much like an energy projected version of the physical melee shields shown above.

Type: Personal starship defense field generator

Scale: Starfighter

Skill: Melee parry

Cost: 250,000 credits

Availability: 4, F, R or X

Difficulty: Easy

Game Notes: Used much like starship shields. Initial activation requires an Easy Melee Parry roll, which generates a round shield 5 meters in diameter. A grappler fighter may make a melee parry round - if the roll is higher than the firer's attack skill roll (as per normal shield rolls), the user has placed the force shield in the way. If the roll is lower than the attacker's skill roll, the grappler fighter didn't get the shield in place in time and the ship was hit by the attack. If the defender got the shield in place, the attack must roll its damage against the shield's defensive field of 4D to see if it penetrates the field (use the protection rules in the Star Wars Rulebook). Any further damage affects the defender as indicated in

the Protection rules chart for "Cover Modifiers". The Magnaforce Shields are installed in the grappler arms and draw power from the ship's power source.

Availability Chart:

1 - Readily available throughout the galaxy.

2 - Available only in large cities or spaceports.

3 - Specialized item, normally available only on planet of origin.

4 - Rare item, difficult to find anywhere.

F - Fee or permit often required for purchase.

R - Restricted on most planets, and normally may not be bought or sold without appropriate Imperial or other relevant license.

X - Illegal on most planets. Possession or use often violates Imperial or local laws except for specially authorized individuals; penalties may be severe.

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