

In this Newsletter, we are trying something new for the **Tech Section**. So far, we've covered various technical systems and weapons used in the *Dreamscape Warriors Universe*. We are going to Break the Fourth Wall and talk directly to the people who use these systems. This is the first part of the **Fourth Wall** series. We are starting with an interview with two characters in the series who know a thing or two about the firearms used.

Author: Today, I want to welcome two very prominent characters in the *Dreamscape Warriors Series*, both of whom know their way around the various firearms found in the series: Liam O'Connor and Ambassador Jarek, son of Martek.

Jarek: Are you sure this is okay? Isn't breaking the "fourth wall" against some literary rule?

Author: Don't worry. It's fine. I can make an exception to this rule under certain circumstances.

Liam: I think it's a good idea. The audience can hear directly from us.

Jarek: (Uncertain look)

Author: In the last two issues of my Newsletter, I discussed coil- and plasma-based weapons. I make it clear in my novels that humans prefer Coil Guns, while most other species prefer plasma-based weapons. Can you explain why?

(Liam and Jarek look at each other. Liam motions for Jarek to take the lead on this question.)

Jarek: First, your audience needs to understand that all weapons are compromises. It's all about what you need to accomplish versus what you're willing to put up with. Both weapons have pros and cons.

Liam: For a Coil Gun, a standard assault rifle round remains lethal after 1000 meters. The standard plasma round begins to dissipate at 700 meters. In addition, plasma increases the drag on the round, slowing it down. Hitting anything beyond 900 meters becomes a matter of luck.

Jarek: (Nodding) The advantage of a plasma round is its lethality. Something hot enough to melt six inches of steel will vaporize tissue. Being hit by plasma, even at the extreme range Colonel O'Connor is talking about, is still not a good day for the target.

Author: So, a Coil Gun round punches a hole through a target, while a plasma round burns through it.

Liam: There's more to it than that, though that statement is true. Against a target wearing armor, the plasma dissipates such that, at extreme range, the plasma round is more likely to glance off the armor.

Author: But doesn't the plasma round have a solid core propelled by an electromagnetic field? I would think that even if the plasma has dissipated, the impact would still cause damage.

Liam: That statement is true as far as it goes. However, the plasma's heat is destroying the core as the round progresses. The further the round goes, the more factors accumulate to limit its range.

Author: But both plasma and electromagnetic coil rounds can achieve excellent ranges from sniper rifles.

Jarek: True. Plasma rifles optimized for sniper operations are lethal up to two kilometers. I've seen expert snipers squeeze out a few tens of meters beyond that range.

Liam: (Nodding) In the hands of a marksman, any weapon can be lethal. I've handled both kinds of weapons. As Jarek said, it's a matter of weighing the advantages and disadvantages. I prefer a Coil gun in most circumstances, but I understand why the other species may opt for a Plasma Gun. With my rifle, I can shoot much farther. However, it takes concentration. You need to know your weapon, know the environmental conditions, and so on. Snipers must know how to adjust their weapons intimately.

Author: (Nodding) I know there are many technical details. Let's move on. Both sides use plasma and electromagnetic weapons on a larger scale. Does either side use the other's weapons under certain circumstances?

Jarek: Yes. Since the one place where Coil Guns excel, besides range, is that they do not give away the shooter. Plasma leaves a visible trail. Most species keep Coil Guns on hand for special operations missions where this advantage is an asset. Spec Op groups are well-versed in both types of weapons.

Liam: Conversely, humans will use plasma guns in limited situations. It would be special operations troops going into places where they don't want the enemy to discover their presence by finding bodies riddled with electromagnetic rounds. Plasma rounds can be attributed to insurgencies.

Jarek: For other advantages of plasma-based weapons. There is also a "splash effect" with plasma weapons. When a plasma round of any size hits, the plasma spreads out, creating a wider area of damage.

Liam: That can also be a drawback if you are trying to avoid collateral damage.

Jarek: If you are targeting multiple enemies, this is an advantage.

Liam: It is situational, as most things are.

Author: Well, thank you both. This should be quite interesting for my "Super Fans."