

Rules Variant: Gunpowder, Firearms, and Cannons

HISTORY

Gunpowder is a fairly “new” discovery to The Four Lands, currently enjoying heavy use by the Federation. Its recipe was a long-lost secret guarded by the Druids of Paranor for centuries, and played a powerful role in the First War of the Races. Centuries later, the secret was passed to the dwarves of the East to aid them in their defense of their own homelands in the Second War of the Races, and tales of dwarven cannon fire is still circulated by the bards in legends.

With the destruction of Paranor during the Second War of the Races, the recipe for gunpowder was lost and remained known only among the dwarves of the east, and a handful of surviving druids. The dwarves later sold the recipe to the growing Federation as part of a peace treaty giving the dwarves control of more lands in the east, and has spread rapidly since.

Currently, the use of firearms and gunpowder is carefully controlled by the Federation. The possession or sale of these weapons and their accessories by non-Federation people is a serious offense in Federation-controlled territory.

GUNPOWDER

The gunpowder in Shannara is not the high quality, weapons-grade propellant we have today. It’s quality and power is closer to the propellants used in Renaissance history...loud and smoky, with a tendency to burn rather than explode when ignited outside of a closed container.

Gunpowder can be used in the game as an incendiary device, a propellant for muskets, or a bomb. The table below lists the volume, cost, damage, range, and other weapon stats for the use of gunpowder in the Shannara campaign.

FIREARMS

Using a firearm (musket or rifle) requires the character to have the Firearms Weapon Proficiency feat (see below). A character who is proficient with Simple, Martial, and/or Exotic weapons must still take this feat to be able to effectively use the firearm. Characters without this feat suffer a –4 penalty to attack rolls, and are unable to reload the weapon.

Like crossbows, firearms may be fired from the prone position without penalty. Unlike other missile weapons, firearms may not be fired wet (in the rain, underwater) or in any other condition where the flint would not spark (in a vacuum, for example).

Firearms	Size	Cost	Damage	Critical	Range		Weight	Type
					Increment			
Bayonet	S	5 gp	1d6	x2	--		1 lb.	P
Bomb	S	varies	2d6	x2	10'		1 lb.	Fire
Pistol	S	300 gp	1d10	x3	50'		3 lb.	P
Pistol knife	S	5 gp	1d4	x2	--		1 lb.	P
Rifle	L	600 gp	1d12	x3	150'		10 lb.	P

Ammunition/Gear	Cost	Weight	Capacity	Notes
Flint	5 gp	--	--	Small shards of flint used in rifles and muskets
Fuse, 10-second	10 gp	--	--	
Gunpowder	100 gp	1 lb.	--	One pound is enough powder for 10 shots.
Holster, belt	3 gp	2 lb.	1 lb.	Leather and brass, includes hip pouch for ammo
Keg, powder	10 gp	1 lb.	5 lbs.	Wood keg sealed with wax.
Lead bullets, 10	1 gp	1 lb.	--	Includes pouch, patches, and primer for 10 shots
Powder horn	10 gp	½ lb.	1 lb.	Watertight, made from horn and sealed with wax

Bayonet: A bayonet is a long, thin blade or spike, attached to the end of a rifle and used as a spear after the rifle has been fired. When attached to a rifle, it is considered a Large-sized, two-handed simple weapon.

Bombs: Whenever gunpowder is detonated inside a container, an explosion 40' in diameter will result, inflicting fire damage to all in the area. Bomb damage listed above is for one pound of gunpowder detonated. The damage inflicted by the bomb is increased by +1d6 for each additional pound of powder burned, to a maximum of 10d6 points of damage.

Pistol: Pistols are small, one-handed flintlock muskets made from steel, brass, and wood. Muskets are considered a Small-sized, one-handed weapons, that deal 1d10 points of piercing damage (x3 critical) on a direct hit. Reloading a musket is a full-round action that provokes an attack of opportunity, and requires the use of both hands. Using two pistols at once is identical to fighting with two weapons, incurring any applicable penalties for two-weapon fighting.

Pistol Knife: Similar to the bayonet above, except made for a pistol. When attached to a pistol, it is considered a Small-sized, one-handed simple weapon.

Rifle: Rifles are 5' long muskets made from steel and wood, often referred to as a Hand Cannons or Heavy Muskets. They are considered Large-sized, two-handed weapons, that deal 1d12 points of piercing damage (x3 critical) on a direct hit. Reloading a rifle is a full-round action that provokes an attack of opportunity, and requires the use of both hands.

Flint: Flint supplies the spark that fires a rifle or pistol. Flint requires replacement after about 100 firings.

Fuse: Hemp cord saturated with gunpowder.

Gunpowder: Gunpowder is sold by the pound or half-pound, at a high cost from a limited number of suppliers.

Holster: A type of hip pouch for a musket, the holster keeps the pistol barrel-down and within easy reach. A small pouch is included, for ammunition.

Keg, Powder: A powder keg is a small wooden barrel, about a foot high, sealed inside and out with beeswax. At full capacity, the powder keg will hold five pounds of gunpowder. The keg has a hardness of 3 and 5 hit points. A full keg of powder may be detonated as a bomb, causing an explosion with a 30' radius that inflicts 6d6 points of fire damage.

Lead bullets (10): These small, insignificant bullets are cast in clay molds and shaped into rough balls. They come in two sizes, rifle and pistol.

Powder Horn: This small, watertight container is made from the horn of a bull. A normal powder horn will hold one pound of gunpowder, roughly enough for 10 bullets. Powder horns typically have a hardness of 2 and 3 hit points.

Siege Weapon	Cost	Weight	Damage	Critical	Range Increment	Crew
Cannon, Light	1200 gp	1000 lbs.	3d6	--	300'	3 (1 min, 5 max)
Cannon, Heavy	2000 gp	2000 lbs.	5d6	--	350'	5 (3 min, 7 max)
Cannon Shot	10 gp	1 lb.	--	--	--	--
Grapeshot	15 gp.	1.5 lbs.	special	x2	special	--

Cannon, Light: A light cannon (also called a "field cannon") is about four feet long and two feet high. The cannon makes a straight attack roll (1d20) with no modifications (no character base attack bonuses, ability modifiers, etc.) except for range, similar to a ballista. Deviation and hits, however, are handled in the same manner as catapults (see Page 68).

Loading the light cannon and preparing it to fire takes the full crew 4 full-round actions. Initially aiming (or reaiming) takes 2 minutes in addition to loading and preparation time. One shot from the cannon uses 1 pound of gunpowder. Four crew members can operate the cannon in half this time. One person can crew a light cannon, but it aims and fires at three times the normal rate.

Cannon, Heavy: A heavy cannon (also called a "siege cannon") is about 6 feet long and four feet high. This is a larger, heavier version of the light cannon (see above for more information). Five crew members can load and prepare this device in 10 full rounds and aim (or reaim) in 5 minutes. Three persons can crew the heavy cannon, but it takes three times the time to aim and prepare. Fewer than three crew members cannot operate this weapon effectively.

Cannon Shot: These are round balls of iron that are cast in large clay molds. They are primarily used to attack ships, buildings, and other large fortifications. Cannon shot uses the range increment and damage of the cannon it was fired from.

Grapeshot: Grapeshot is a small cluster of iron pellets or stones, packed tightly into a small cloth sack. It is fired from either a light or heavy cannon, and used to attack ground troops. Grapeshot fired from either a light or heavy cannon creates a cone of debris 300' (light cannon) or 350' (heavy cannon) long and 100' wide at its farthest end.

The grapeshot does minimum damage to objects and structures in the area of effect (one point per die of damage), but does normal damage (and possibly critical damage) to creatures and other living targets on a successful hit. Make one hit roll for each creature in the area of effect.

SIEGE ENGINES (CANNONS)

In addition to pistols and rifles, cannons are available in Shannara. They are almost exclusively manufactured by the dwarves of the Eastland, and are used as both anti-siege and anti-personnel attack weapons. Their use has been growing rapidly among the dwarven clans, but has yet to spread to the other races...except for the few captured by gnomes in recent border disputes.

Cannons are large, heavy tubes of iron or steel, which are packed with an explosive charge and a heavy projectile. A fuse ignites the explosive charge, sending the projectile toward its target with great force and range. They are most often fixed onto war galleys and castle ramparts, but portable versions mounted on great wagons are not unheard of.

MAKING/BUYING GUNPOWDER

Gunpowder is not available to the general public, but may be acquired on the black market or through military installations at the above-listed price. Characters with at least 3 ranks in Knowledge: Chemistry may attempt to create gunpowder, using the following rule.

Characters who wish to create gunpowder must spend 50 gp. per pound on rare ingredients and chemicals, and must pass a Knowledge: Chemistry check DC 15. This base DC increases by 1 point for each additional pound of gunpowder being created in the same attempt. Creating gunpowder takes 1 hour for each pound created. Failure means that the ingredients were ruined, and the character must start over.

MAKING/BUYING FIREARMS

The sale of gunpowder, firearms, and related equipment is strictly regulated by the Federation in all of its occupied territories, requiring the purchase of several licenses and written permission from a superior officer. As a result, firearms are almost impossible to acquire in Federation-occupied territory (such as Varfleet and Tyrsis).

The demand for firearms, especially in this time of political strife, has fueled the black market for such items in unoccupied territories. In towns such as Leah and Culhaven, firearms and ammunition may be purchased at the above listed price. The chances of finding a dealer for firearms in such places requires a successful Gather Information check DC 15.

In occupied territories, the black market for firearms is much more lucrative and harder to find. The base DC for the Gather Information check in Federation lands is 22, and all above listed prices are double. Furthermore, there is a 50% chance that any item purchased on the black market is damaged.

The creation of a firearm is a very difficult procedure, requiring special machinery and expert craftsmen. Characters may not attempt to create such weapons without at least 10 ranks in both Knowledge: Mechanics and Craft: Firearms. The base DC for such a weapon is 20, and the process takes 1d20+10 days. As a result, only elite Federation tradesmen and dwarven machinists are capable of creating such weapons.

NEW FEATS

The following feats are introduced to the Shannara campaign to compliment the addition of firearms. To qualify, characters must have open slots and must receive formal training from an experienced NPC.

Firearms Weapon Proficiency (General)

Prerequisite: Base Attack Bonus +1 or higher

Benefit: Choose one firearm (pistol or rifle). The character may use that particular firearm without penalty.

Special: This feat may be taken multiple times. Each time this feat is taken, it applies to a different firearm. This feat may also be taken as a Fighter Bonus Feat.

Normal: A character who fires this particular firearm without the Firearms Weapon Proficiency feat suffers a -4 penalty to attack rolls, and is unable to reload the weapon.

Stab and Fire (General)

Prerequisite: Base Attack Bonus +3 or higher, Firearms Weapon Proficiency (pistol or rifle)

Benefit: When using the Full Attack action to stab someone with a Bayonet or a Pistol Knife attached to a loaded Pistol or Rifle, you may also discharge the Pistol/Rifle. You must declare this attack before rolling, and if you hit with the stab attack, the firearm attack hits automatically.

Master Cannoneer (General)

Prerequisite: Siege Weapon Proficiency (cannon)

Benefit: When you crew a cannon, it fires at twice its normal rate (2 rounds for a light cannon, 5 rounds for a heavy cannon).

Special: This feat may not be taken multiple times.

Normal: A light cannon may only fire every 4 rounds, and a heavy cannon may only fire every 10 rounds.