

The Swifts

Overview

Swifts have a function similar to [Junkers](#), but are more organized in their construction and live up to their name by being quick, relatively small in size, and precise in their movements. All are easily constructed, sleek in shape, and modular in design, but quite rough in their general appearance and manufacture as they are intended for easy replacement with as little loss of Free State resources as necessary. They are also under the complete control of a single SI and cannot act autonomously. In the event a Swift is out of communication with its SI, the communications relay processor continues performing the last task for one minute, at which point it self-destructs interior components and the exterior components disassemble via a triggered quick-release mechanism that fragments the remains. The reason is not as much to prevent capture and study (there is nothing that any other faction doesn't have better of) as it is to prevent a Freespace unit from being captured and repurposed against the Free State.

There are many Swift classes and three general uses: Ship-scale and Automata-scale are the main ones, with Swarm-scale being the rare third use.

Stone Swifts

- Volume: between 8 and 15 meters
- Role: Ship (Mining, Manufacture, Resources)
- Production Requirements: Requires a Grinder unit, minimum, to create a Stone Swift. Stone Swifts are unable to construct others like themselves.

The largest type of Swift are called "Stone Swifts". These are ten-plus meters in volume and mostly serve as mobile, miniature processing/construction/assembly/cargo modules. They are initially separate for ease of travel and maneuvering, but when presented with resources they join up and assign tasks. Any one Stone Swift can perform any of the required tasks – ore processing, parts manufacturing, and assembly – but there must be a minimum of three available. Each also can store a large amount of processed materials if needed, and usually do in pellet or rod form for Sky Swifts to utilize in combat.

Sky Swifts

- Volume: commonly between 1 and 3 meters, can be up to 6 meters
- Role: Ship, Personal, Swarm (Mining, Recon, Defense, General Support)
- Production Requirements: Constructed en masse by Stone Swifts.

"Sky Swifts" are the next type; usually as little as a single meter in volume (though some are up to six meters in volume), they can be created and reclaimed by the larger Swifts as needed, taking an hour to construct anywhere from one to a dozen units (meaning that one unit takes an hour to construct, but up to a dozen Sky Swift units can be assembled simultaneously by one Stone Swift ¹⁾).

These swifts are the most common, classified as both Ship and Automata-type, serving as all-purpose “limbs”. They are built with adaptable manipulators and are small enough to go where most Junkers are unable to. They can serve as a line of defense, extensions of the SI used for tasks or repairs, or as scouts along with Star Swifts, but their primary functions are in the areas of engineering and mining for ship-sized SI or as extra, unattached limbs for large automata. Most automata are able to support a maximum of six Sky Swifts, but usually more than two become cumbersome to keep around, especially since the link distance is proportional to the size of the automata.

Star Swifts

- Volume: between 70cm and 1 meter
- Role: Personal, Swarm (Communications, Recon, ECM)
- Production Requirements: Produced en masse by Stone Swifts.

The third type are “Star Swifts” and are usually classified as Swarm- or Personal-scale Swift. These are approximately the same volume as the Sky Swifts (tending toward the smaller sizes, one-meter volume is common rather than being the lower end size) but are solely devoted to communications and sensors. The Star Swifts can also extend the range of a vessel or automata's sensors and communications by assuming array configurations (termed “constellations” by one SI) to increase signal and reception strength and by acting as forward scouts and investigating beyond the range of the user's sensors. As with the Sky Swifts, the Star Swifts are highly expendable. If used properly, they can also boost ECM/ECCM capabilities, but only for automata; a ship's own ECM suite is usually significantly more powerful.

Defensive Uses

The Swifts are capable of defensive action at the direction of their controlling SI. Specific offensive formations are listed below. Use is ultimately up to the ingenuity of the controlling SI.

Detail:

"Hardball" Cannonball

Storage Location: Stone Swift cargo bays; cargo bays of the controlling SI's ship, if any are available

Launch Location: Mobile launchers

Primary Purpose: Anti-armor

Damage: Variable (usually around DR 4)

Range: [Indefinite](#)

Payload Varies by storage capacity

Notes: The Hardball cannonball is, like the Skyfire ammunition, manufactured out of materials the Swifts gather. It is a sphere about 10cm in diameter and composed of whatever metals the controlling automata or ship have on hand, but always has a skin of highly magnetic material just under the outer shell and manufactured fragmentation points. The cannonball is launched by a larger configuration of the Sky Swift arrays than the Skyfire "turrets", usually double the requirements of Skyfire to send a Hardball at the target with any significant speed.

The core of the explosive variety of a Hardball is composed of pressurized molten metal, injected into the hollow cannonball just before use, which causes significant damage on impact to low-armor targets (albeit mostly from the impact, not the explosion).

"Skyfire" Sky Swift coilgun turret configuration

Storage Location: Stone Swift cargo bays; cargo bays of the controlling SI's ship, if any are available

Launch Location: Mobile launchers

Primary Purpose: Anti-armor; sniping; annoyance

Damage: Variable (usually around DR 2 or 3)

Range: Indefinite

Rate of Fire: variable; not higher than 120 rpm

Payload Assumed 300 active Sky Swifts = approx. 150 "turrets". Maximum storage: One Stone Swift provides and stores ammunition for up to five minutes sustained fire at 120 rpm.

The Skyfire array is designed to distract more than damage. The damage output can be altered by adding or removing Sky Swifts from any given "turret" assembly, enabling it to send a five- to fifteen-kilogram mass at a target at speeds that can quickly bring down armor units²⁾ with concentrated fire from three or four "turrets", but only pester larger vessels. Unshielded magnetic discharges have a bonus of warping electromagnetic emissions and disrupting or destroying unshielded electronics along the axis of the array for a short, two-kilometer range in the standard configuration and further with the alternate configurations. Maximum output has been tested at the level of a starship's point-defense weapon³⁾, with a two minute charge time and a single barrel constructed of fifty Sky Swifts running a twenty-kilogram mass. The attempt destroyed half the Swifts and overloaded the power transfer links in the rest, so the configuration has been classified as a last-ditch effort, though the time spent in preparation makes it useless even in that capacity. Larger configurations are not recommended without a larger power supply, and even then they are theoretically impossible⁴⁾.

Alternative Uses

"Interpreter" Module

- Description: Star Swift add-on
- Role: Allows an S.I. Avatarial form.
- Production Requirements: Included in Star Swifts by default.

The "Interpreter" module is a minor add-on included in Star Swifts to allow an S.I. such as the Free State's Envoy to create volumetric displays or access an automata body and either "ride-along" with the body's inhabiting mind or to control a mindless body like a puppet. This becomes useful when the Envoy needs access to a form small enough to sit at a table or interact on a scale closer to that of the people the Envoy encounters in its role, using volumetric projectors to emulate an appearance and ease talks with encountered races.

Typically the volumetric representation is indistinguishable from a real person except that it has no mass and it is unable to interact directly with its surroundings. Since interaction is usually required, the Envoy utilizes a "doll" automata frame with volumetric projectors to create a desired appearance. The doll can operate without the volumetrics, but the skeletal and obviously fully-synthetic nature of the form and its user usually doesn't draw favorable reactions from Non-Freespacers. To use the doll, a Star Swift docks on its back, creating an uplink to the Envoy.

Summary

Easy to use, easy to replace, and much more controllable than the Junkers, the Swifts are a mass-production option for ships with low resources, high hazards, or a bored SI that wants to interact more directly with crew or the ship's exterior. On a personal scale, the Swifts can serve as unattached extensions of an automata's body - a spare hand or a remote eye - but are likely to be very, very rare until more types are introduced beyond the Stone, Sky, and Star types.

OOO Information

Questions? Comments? Contact [MissingNo](#) via the forum PM system or ask around the #stararmy IRC channel.

1)

Every Stone Swift can function as an ore processor, a parts manufacturer, and a unit assembly. The construction time listed assumes that parts are already manufactured and need only to be put together. If parts are not available, then construction time is significantly increased by a matter of hours or days

2)

[Armor DR 2](#)

3)

[Starship DR 1](#)

4)

"It was theoretically impossible, so it is not my fault!" -Leon D.S. Gehste.

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