

# HUMMING ALONG: A TACTICAL PRIMER FOR THE SINGERS

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The Singers, a minor empire in the Omega Octant, were human-sized hummingbirds conquered by the Koligahr in Y143, freed by the Loryill in Y169, and exterminated by the Souldra in Y194. For at least 50 years or so, they were players in the galactic game, using sonic technology to fight for their right to exist. This article will briefly touch on some of their ways and means.

The signature weapon of the Singers was the tachyosonic beam, or TSB. This weapon was much like the ISC's PPD in that it inflicted damage in multiple smaller waves; the Singers counted on the cumulative effect to destroy their foes.

The tachyosonic beam is superior to the plasmatic pulsar device in one way: in that after it has been focused on its target it cannot be shaken off by an electronic-warfare shift, or even a wild weasel. The base cost of the weapon required three points of power over two turns, and various levels of overload function existed. Each overload function needed three additional points of power, up to the critical overload which needed a whopping twelve points of power to fire and was only effective in a severely limited range bracket. The tachyosonic beam had a "myopic zone" of Range 2 or less from the firing ship (another commonality to the plasmatic pulsar device which had a myopic zone of three hexes range). On the positive side, however, a "light overload" could be fired out to Range 14. The repair cost of nine makes it more likely for a tachyosonic beam to be fixed using emergency damage repair rather than continuous damage repair.

As a side note, the original playtest version of the tachyosonic beam did far more damage than the final one, so much so that my playtest lab, at least, wondered why the Singers were not out conquering the Koligahr (at the very least!) rather than the other way around. That higher damage level is approached by the enhanced tachyosonic beam, an improvement of the weapon the

Singers were on the verge of putting into mass production, and which may have been a major reason the Souldra exterminated them. The enhanced tachyosonic beam can be considered an early example of X-technology in the Omega Octant.

Sonic pulsers are the Singer equivalent of phasers, and compare favorably with phaser-1s in most range brackets out to their maximum range of 12. Most of pulsers have 180° firing arcs, a nice feature. Their main drawback is that they are required to use reserve power to fire and do not have phaser capacitors until Y175, when the liberating Loryill provided this technology. Keep this factor in mind when using reserve power in the Singers (for speed changes, High Energy Turns, etc.) and do not forget to leave your pulsers some power to fire! A reasonable repair cost of four makes them fairly easy to get back into the battle.

When the Loryill freed the Singers from the Koligahr, perhaps as a kindred flying species, they also gave the Singers some of their technology in addition to phaser capacitors, and the Singers are unique in the Octant in this. A few Singer ships boast fireballs, quantum phasers, and even flame shields, so a perusal of Loryill tactics could be useful to aspiring Singer captains.

In general, the Singers tend to move slowly, both to keep the tachyosonic beams in arc and their targets within the appropriate range brackets, and because those weapons are quite power hungry. Keep in mind some Singer ships have tachyosonic beams firing into their left and right arcs, making a run-and-gun attrition game a little easier, but most are forward-arc dependent for major firepower.

If you like to play "what if" scenarios, use the original tachyosonic beam damage tables, if you can find them, or allow them to use the enhanced tachyosonic beam tables earlier. See how powerful the hummingbirds can become. Perhaps under your leadership, the Singers might have survived to grow into a major force in Omega!