

FORTNIGHTLY

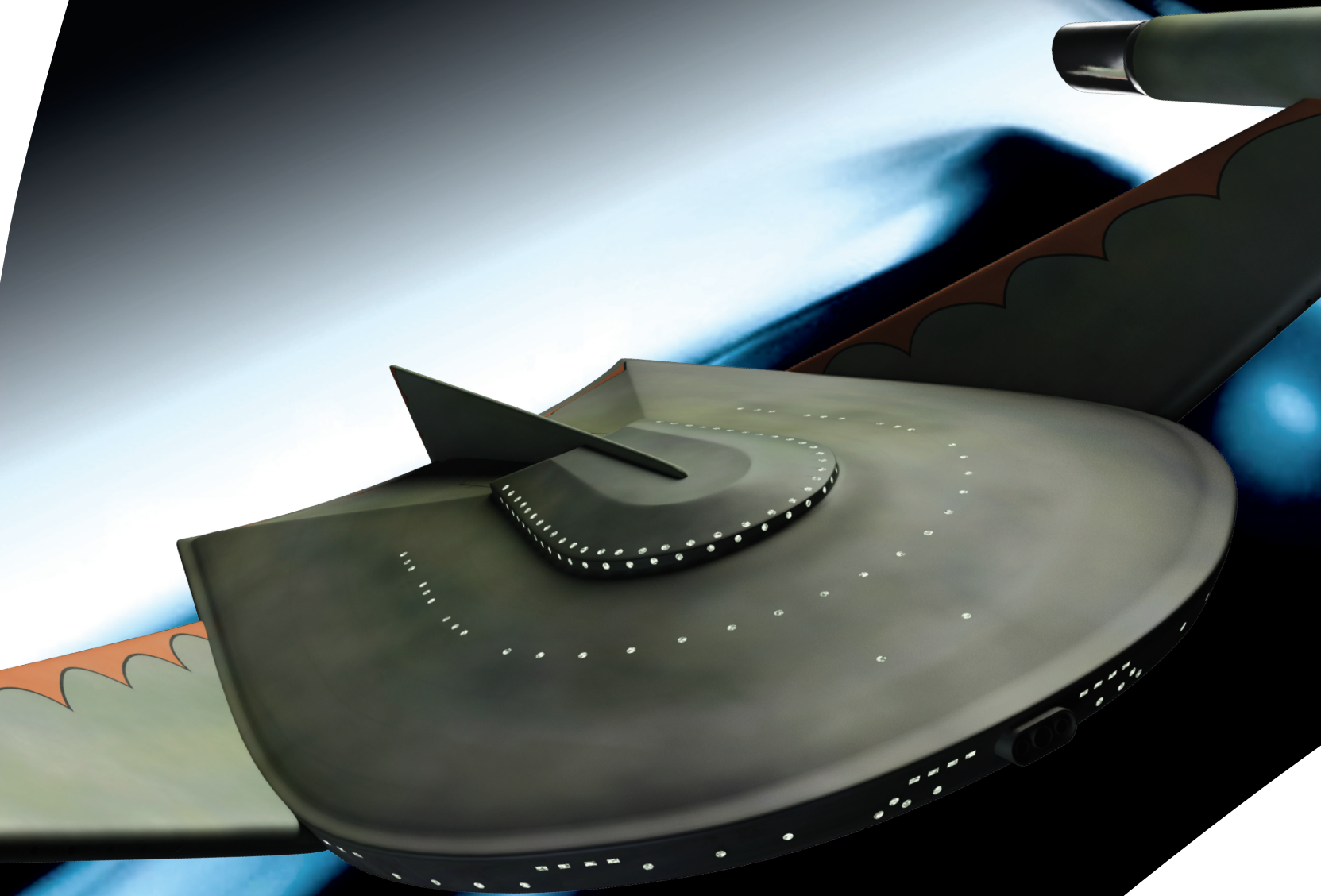
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ROMULAN
BIRD-OF-PREY (2260s)

TYPE: WARSHIP

LAUNCHED: 23rd C

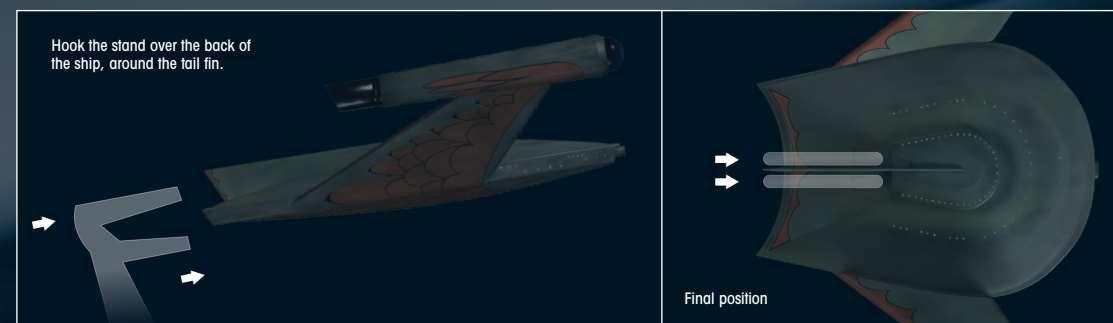
LENGTH: 131 METERS

WEAPON: PLASMA ENERGY

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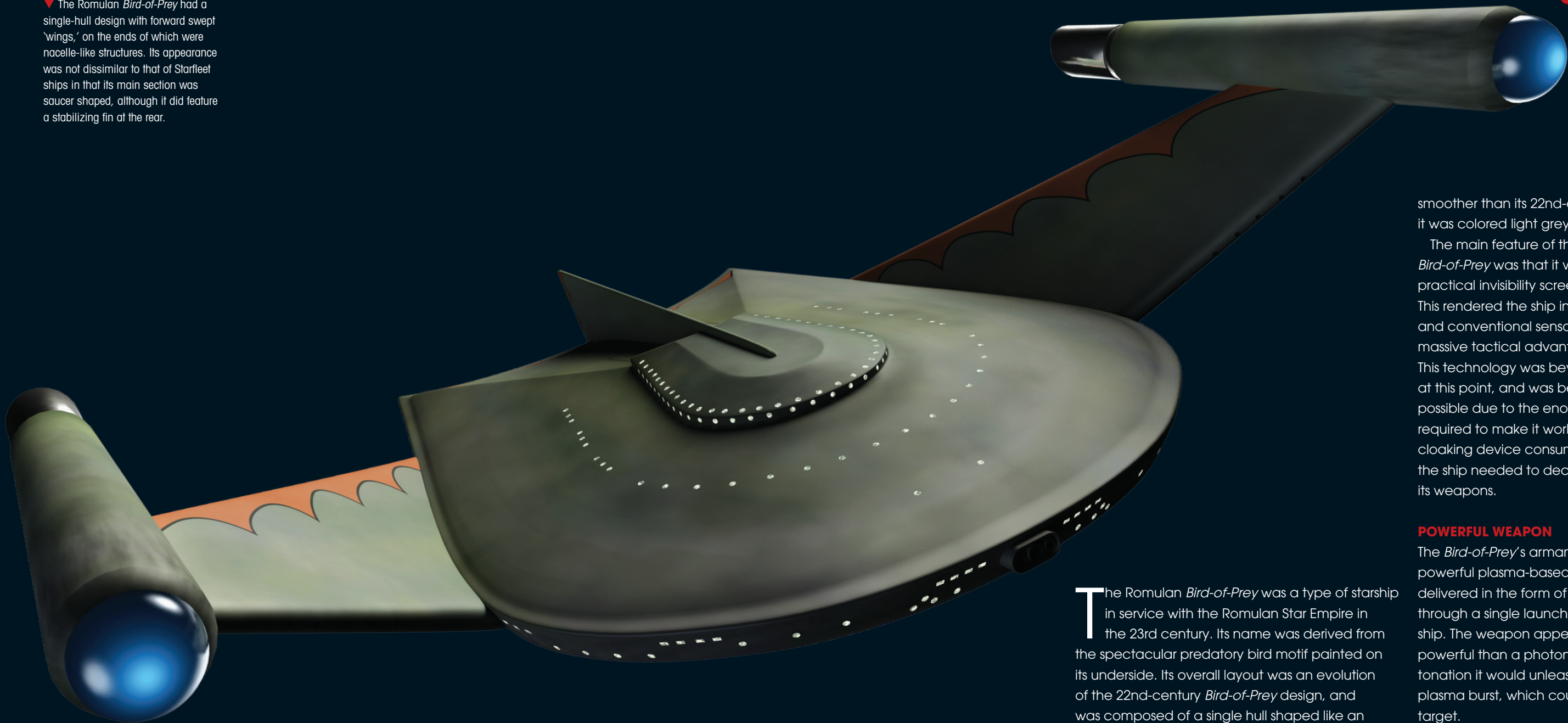
ROMULAN *BIRD-OF-PREY* SPECIFICATION



OPERATED BY:	ROMULAN STAR EMPIRE
IN SERVICE:	23rd CENTURY
LENGTH:	131 METERS (APPROX.)
DEFENSES:	CLOAKING DEVICE
WEAPONRY:	PLASMA-BASED TORPEDOES



▼ The Romulan *Bird-of-Prey* had a single-hull design with forward swept 'wings,' on the ends of which were nacelle-like structures. Its appearance was not dissimilar to that of Starfleet ships in that its main section was saucer shaped, although it did feature a stabilizing fin at the rear.



ROMULAN 23RD CENTURY BIRD-OF-PREY

The Romulan *Bird-of-Prey* was equipped with both a cloaking device and powerful plasma-based weapon.

The Romulan *Bird-of-Prey* was a type of starship in service with the Romulan Star Empire in the 23rd century. Its name was derived from the spectacular predatory bird motif painted on its underside. Its overall layout was an evolution of the 22nd-century *Bird-of-Prey* design, and was composed of a single hull shaped like an elongated saucer with upswept wings on either side. At the end of each wing was a nacelle-like structure, which appeared to provide the ship's propulsion. The surface of the hull was much



smoother than its 22nd-century counterpart, and it was colored light grey rather than dark green.

The main feature of the 23rd-century Romulan *Bird-of-Prey* was that it was equipped with a practical invisibility screen, or cloaking device. This rendered the ship invisible to the naked eye and conventional sensors, giving the Romulans a massive tactical advantage over their opponents. This technology was beyond Federation science at this point, and was believed only theoretically possible due to the enormous amounts of power required to make it work. Indeed, the Romulan cloaking device consumed so much power that the ship needed to decloak before it could fire its weapons.

POWERFUL WEAPON

The *Bird-of-Prey's* armaments included a powerful plasma-based weapon that was delivered in the form of a torpedo-like shell through a single launcher at the front of the ship. The weapon appeared to be much more powerful than a photon torpedo, and upon detonation it would unleash an all-consuming energy plasma burst, which could completely obliterate its target.

In 2266 a plasma torpedo destroyed Federation Outpost 4 even though it was constructed a mile underground on an asteroid composed mostly of solid iron. This weapon did have a limited range, however, and would dissipate quickly, giving a fast retreating starship a chance to outrun it. The *Bird-of-Prey* also carried nuclear weapons, and these could be used to self-destruct the ship rather than

◀ Romulan *Birds-of-Prey* were armed with high-energy plasma weapons that when fired took the form of a glowing red ball of light. Similar to a photon torpedo, the plasma payload was delivered in the form of a projectile that was launched from the front of the ship.



◀ The command center on a *Bird-of-Prey* was much smaller than the bridge on a Starfleet vessel. The ship's main functions were operated from terminals that faced each other around a single console that was positioned in the center of the room.

▶ *Birds-of-Prey* from the 23rd century were gray-green in color, unlike Romulan vessels of the 22nd and 24th century which had dark green-colored hulls.



▶ The Romulan commander who led the incursion into Federation space in 2266 chose to self-destruct his ship with a nuclear warhead rather than face the ignominy of being captured.

▼ The Romulan *Bird-of-Prey* was given its name in accordance with its most prominent feature – a huge predatory bird painted on its underside. In 2268, a *Bird-of-Prey* worked alongside two new Romulan battle cruisers to capture the *Enterprise*.



▶ Decius was the only named member of the *Bird-of-Prey* crew that carried out the incursion into Federation space in 2266. He sent a coded message to the Romulan leader informing him of their success in destroying several Starfleet outposts.



◀ The *Enterprise* found itself confronted by numerous *Birds-of-Prey* in 2267 when it crossed into the Neutral Zone. The Romulan ships tried to destroy the *Enterprise*, even though the crew were in the midst of a medical emergency. They were merely trying to take a shortcut to a Starfleet facility where they could receive treatment.



▲ Commander Hansen reported that Outpost 4 near the Neutral Zone was under attack from an unknown assailant. Soon after, the facility was pulverized by a plasma torpedo fired from a *Bird-of-Prey*, even though it was located a mile beneath the surface of an asteroid.

let it fall into enemy hands.

The bridge of the *Bird-of-Prey* was located on top of the ship, in the middle of the saucer. The room itself was small and decorated in bright reds and purples. All the ship's major functions were controlled from terminals that faced each other on a console that was situated in the center of the room. There was no seating for the bridge crew, just a couch-like piece of furniture off to one side.

Starfleet first encountered this vessel in 2266 when a cloaked *Bird-of-Prey* crossed the Neutral Zone. It attacked several Federation outposts in Sector Z-6, destroying each one completely with just a few shots from its plasma-based weapon. It was surmised that the Romulans were testing Starfleet's defenses in order to gauge whether an invasion

of Federation space would be successful.

The *Enterprise* NCC-1701 commanded by Captain Kirk was on patrol along the Neutral Zone when it responded to this unprovoked attack. Kirk and his crew were unable to see the cloaked *Bird-of-Prey*, but Spock found that it did show up as a blip on the *Enterprise's* motion sensors, and this allowed them to track its course.

BATTLE OF WITS

A deadly game of cat-and-mouse between the two vessels ensued for more than 10 hours as the *Enterprise* and the *Bird-of-Prey* attempted to outmaneuver one another. Eventually, Kirk managed to outwit the Romulan commander, and the *Enterprise* crippled the *Bird-of-Prey*. Rather than

surrender, the Romulan commander ordered one of the nuclear warheads onboard his ship to be detonated, ensuring its self-destruction.

After this incident, and perhaps worried about reprisals, it was found that the Romulans stepped up patrols of their border with the Federation. They employed groups of *Birds-of-Prey* to monitor for any incursions into their space. In 2267, a squadron of *Birds-of-Prey* intercepted the *Enterprise* when it violated the Neutral Zone on the orders of Commodore Stocker.

By 2268, the Romulans had formed an alliance with the Klingons and their *Birds-of-Prey* were largely supplanted by the larger and more powerful Klingon *D7*-class battle cruisers. Nevertheless, the *Birds-of-Prey* were still used for a time on patrol duties in conjunction with the *D7s*.

DATA FEED

The commander of the *Bird-of-Prey* that destroyed the Earth outposts along the Neutral Zone was a veteran of countless military campaigns. He was extremely wily, and even Captain Kirk was surprised by his tactics on a couple of occasions during their epic ten-hour starship duel. Perhaps because of his experience, the Romulan Commander appeared at times weary of conflict, but it did not stop him carrying out his duty for the Romulan Empire.

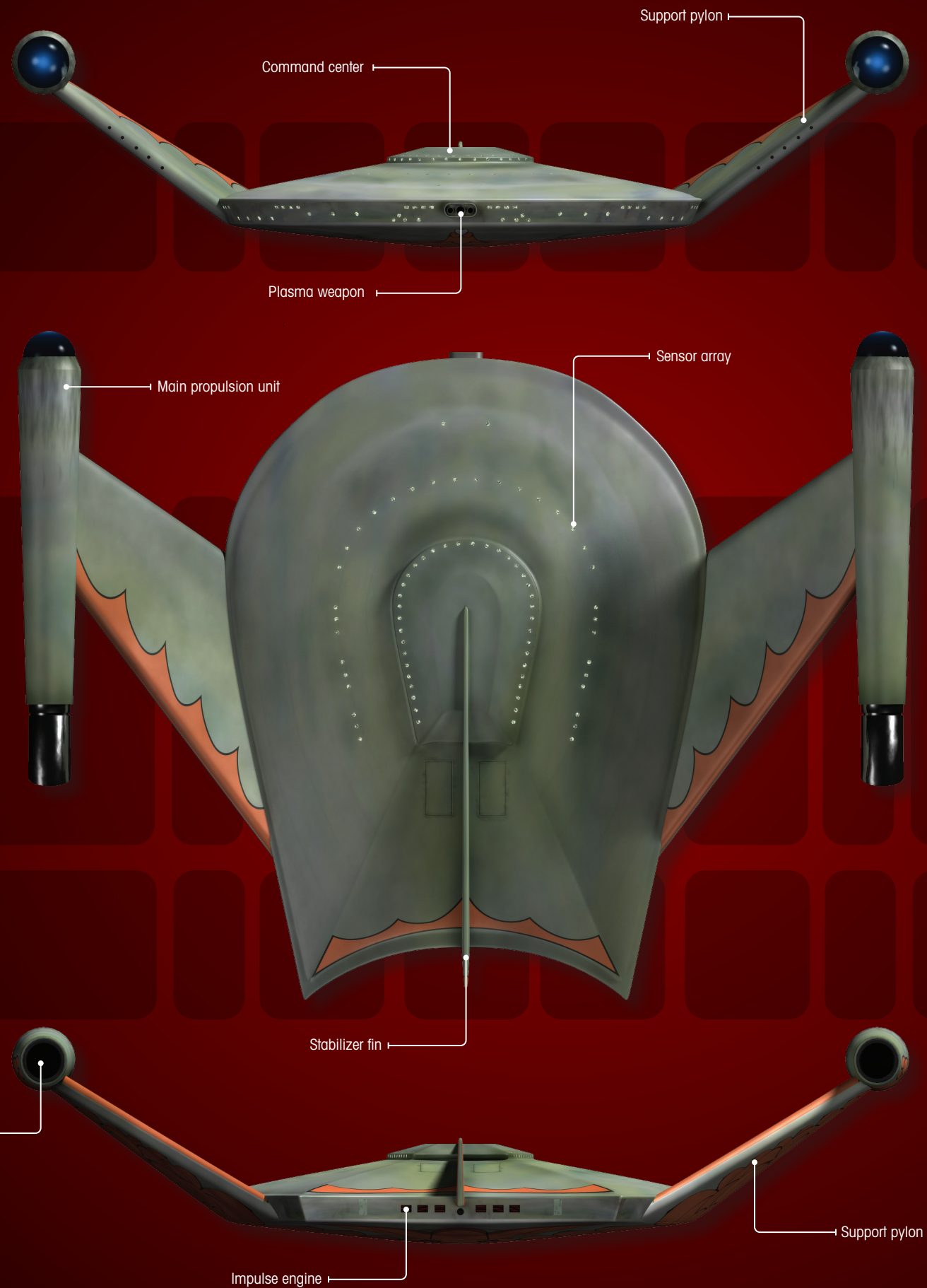


ROMULAN CLOAKING DEVICE

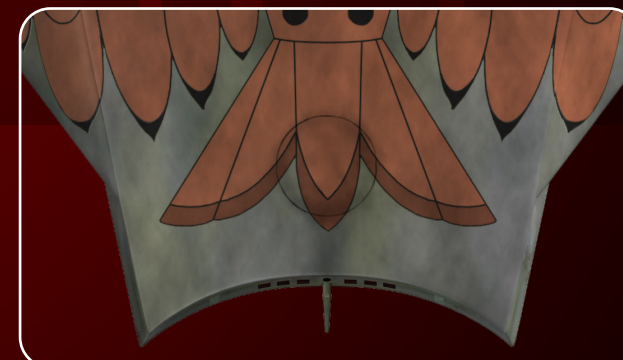
The Romulans had been using practical invisibility screens, or cloaking devices, since the 22nd century. The *Bird-of-Prey* in the 23rd century was fitted with such a device that rendered it invisible to the naked eye and to conventional sensors. It did have some drawbacks, however. Initially, it was not advanced enough to cloak the ship from tracking sensors, meaning it had to remain motionless to be completely undetectable. It also required so much power that the ship could not use its weaponry and remain cloaked at the same time. By 2268, the Romulans had developed a more sophisticated cloaking device that was so effective not even their own vessels could detect a ship that was using one. The device itself was portable and could be fitted to the main deflector of a vessel in minutes.



▲ Captain Kirk disguised himself as a Romulan as part of a covert mission to steal an upgraded cloaking device. The technology posed such a threat to Federation security that Starfleet scientists were desperate to study one in order to try to find a way to counteract it.

**DATA FEED**

There has been some debate as to whether the Romulan *Bird-of-Prey* of the 23rd century was capable of faster-than-light speeds because Scotty commented that its power was "simple impulse." It seems highly unlikely that it was not capable of warp speeds given that Romulan ships of a century earlier were able to reach such speeds. Scotty may just have been referring to the *Bird-of-Prey's* power generators rather than its propulsion systems. He may also have meant that the Romulan ship was only capable of impulse speeds when it was cloaked.

**PLASMA WEAPONS**

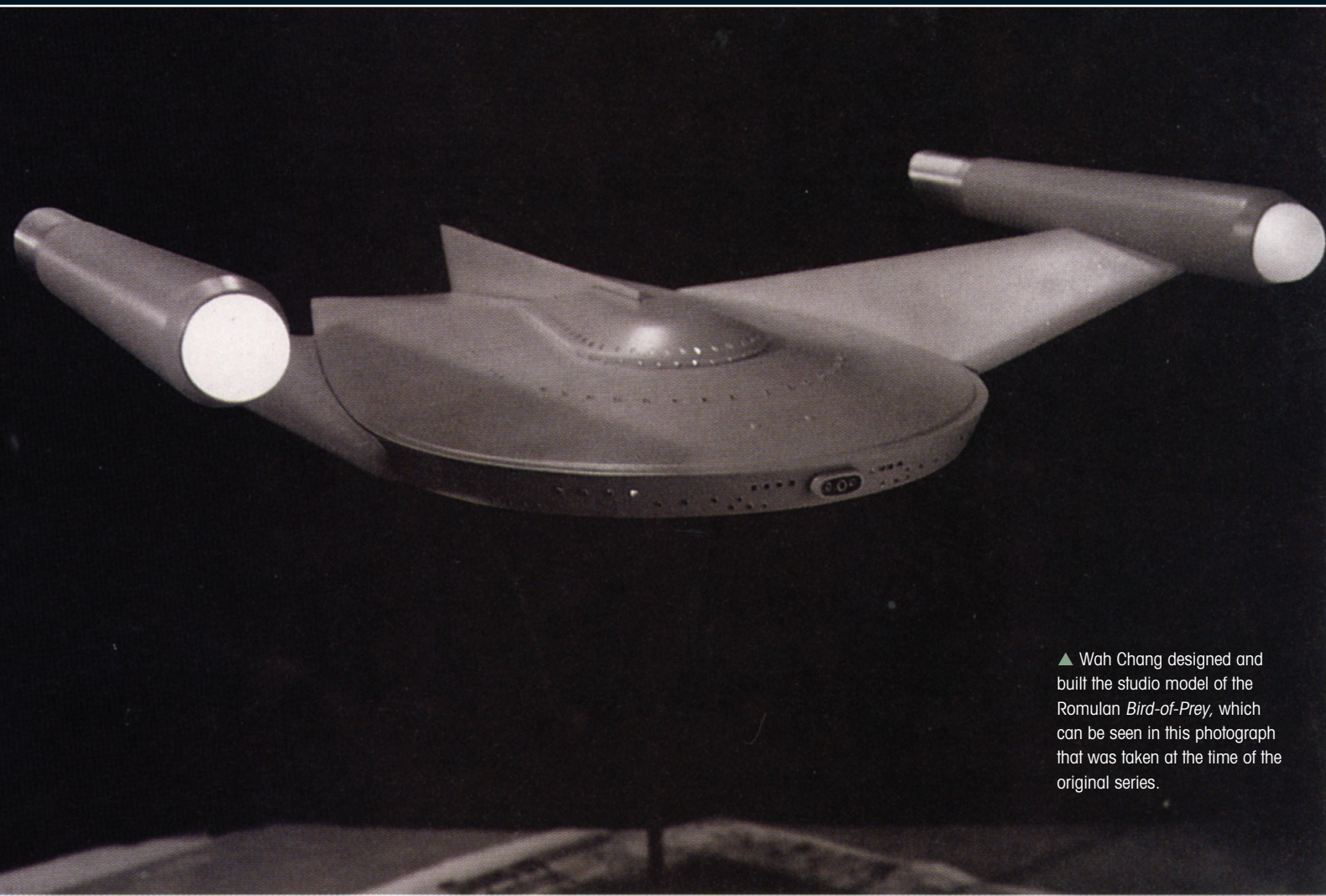
Apart from the Romulans, the only other races known to use plasma torpedoes have been the Kazon and the Cardassians.

ROMULAN FLAGSHIP

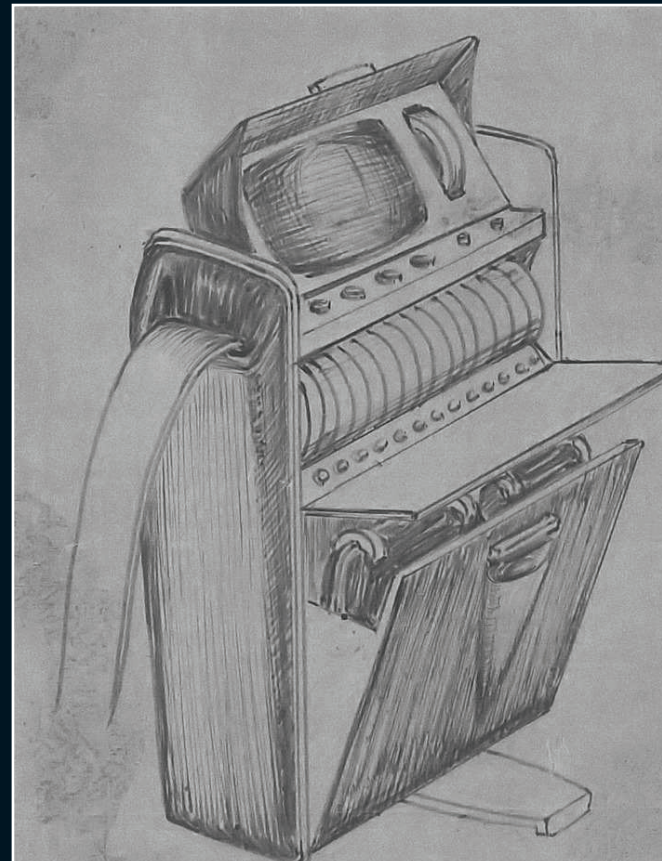
The leader of the Romulan Star Empire was known as the Praetor. According to Decius, a member of its crew, the *Bird-of-Prey* used to attack Earth's outposts in 2266 was the Praetor's finest and proudest flagship.

CLOAKING BAN

The Treaty of Algeron, a peace accord signed by the Federation and the Romulans in 2311, reinforced and redefined the Neutral Zone. It also expressly forbade Starfleet from attempting to develop or use its own cloaking technology.



▲ Wah Chang designed and built the studio model of the Romulan *Bird-of-Prey*, which can be seen in this photograph that was taken at the time of the original series.



▲ Chang drew up a concept illustration of the tricorder before he built two highly-detailed props for use in the show. The sketch showed a row of six buttons below the screen, whereas the finished prop featured three small indicator lights next to the screen that were sourced from wristwatch crowns.



THE *STAR TREK* DESIGNS OF



WAH MING CHANG

Celebrated artist Wah Ming Chang designed many of the most iconic props on *STAR TREK*, including the Romulan *Bird-of-Prey*.

Born in 1917 in Hawaii, Wah Ming Chang was an artist, designer and props builder, who made enormous contributions to filmmaking in general and *STAR TREK* in particular.

From an early age Chang had displayed prodigious artistic talent, and by the age of 21 he was working for Disney where he created

wooden models of Pinocchio and Bambi. By 1956, he had partnered up with Gene Warren and formed Project Unlimited Inc., a company that produced props and special effects for the film industry. Their creations appeared in films such as *The Time Machine*, *Spartacus*, *Cleopatra* and *Planet of the Apes*.

Chang also designed many of the monsters and special effects that appeared in the 1960s series *The Outer Limits*. It was on this show that Chang met Robert Justman, who would go on to be the associate producer on *STAR TREK*.

LEGENDARY DESIGNS

Greatly impressed by Chang's work, Justman turned to him again to fulfill some of *STAR TREK*'s design requirements. The first item Chang designed was the prosthetic heads of the

Talosians for the pilot show *The Cage*. He went on to design countless items for *STAR TREK*, the most notable being the tricorder, the communicator, the Balok effigy, the M-113 salt vampire, the Gorn and the tribbles.

Unfortunately, Chang's contributions to *STAR TREK* were largely unknown at the time as he could not be given an official credit due to union restrictions. The problem was that Chang was not a member of the propmakers' union, and as a non-member he was forbidden to work on the

▲ Chang built the Romulan *Bird-of-Prey* in just two weeks. It was delivered unpainted, and had the graphic added to its underside at *STAR TREK*'s studio. Unfortunately, the fate of this model is unknown, but many believe that it was destroyed by Chang himself.



◀ Chang would sometimes illustrate a design for a monster and show it to the producers for approval before making the actual costume. The Balok fake alien head was one of the most well known as it often featured in the closing credits.

◀ One of Chang's most popular designs was for the tribble. These were made using artificial fur stuffed with foam. Chang did not actually make the tribbles himself. They were sewn together by Jacqueline Cumeré, who was reportedly paid \$350 for 500 of them.

▲ Chang designed a number of creature costumes for *STAR TREK*, perhaps the most famous of which was for the Gorn. The Gorn head was sold at auction in 2006 for \$27,500.

show. Justman got around this by claiming that Chang's work already existed and had been bought from 'off the shelf' – in other words it had not been specifically built for the show.

Another of Chang's *STAR TREK* designs was the Romulan *Bird-of-Prey* studio model. Measuring about 2.5 feet in width, he constructed it in just two weeks and delivered it to the studio unpainted, where its *Bird-of-Prey* motif was added to the underside. It was made out of vacuum-formed plastic, plaster and metal parts, and was internally lit. Once the graphic had been applied, the model was sent to the visual effects company Film Effects of Hollywood. Here, footage of the model was filmed for its first appearance in the episode 'Balance of Terror.' The model also featured in the later second

season episode 'The Deadly Years,' but rather than go to the expense of filming it again, they just used stock footage from the earlier shoot.

UNCERTAIN FATE

There is some debate as to what became of this original studio model. Some believe it is intact and in the hands of a private collector, who wishes to keep it out of the public spotlight. Others believe that it was destroyed not long after it was filmed, either in an accident or by Chang himself.

This latter view appears to hold more credence, as in a radio interview in 1982, Chang himself reportedly revealed that the propmakers' union had gained evidence that the model had been specifically built for the show. The union agreed

to drop the grievance against the studio provided that Chang did not receive payment for the model. Unable to sidestep them this time, the studio acquiesced and returned the model to Chang, unpaid. Incensed by the outcome, Chang reportedly smashed the model to pieces.

According to some, this is why the Romulans are seen using the Klingon *D7* battle cruisers in the third season episode 'The Enterprise Incident.' Others, however, pointed out that Aluminum Model Toys had provided the *D7* studio model for free, and in return the producers wanted to help them sell the commercially available kit version by giving the ship as much exposure as possible. Whichever theory is correct, both explain why the model was not used by the time the third season of *STAR TREK* went into production.

In the end, the issues with the union became too difficult to overcome and Chang's association with *STAR TREK* ended in the middle of the second season. By this point, the late 1960s, Chang and Warren had already dissolved Project Unlimited, Inc., as the genres of films that had been the mainstay of their business were no longer as popular.

Later in life Chang retired with his wife Glennella to northern California where he concentrated on creating wildlife sculptures, selling his work to local galleries. In 1994, he was awarded the George Pal Memorial Award by the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films to honor his many contributions to film and TV. Chang continued his creative life right up until his death in 2003, at the age of 86.



◀ Vulcans and Romulans were physically almost identical, proving they shared a common ancestry. Their temperaments, however, were very different. Romulans were combative and much more like Vulcans had been before they embraced the teachings of Surak and learnt to suppress their highly-volatile emotions.



▲ Surak taught Vulcans to live their lives according to logic, but many did not follow his guidance and they ended up leaving. Their descendents eventually became Romulans.

THE ROMULAN EMPIRE BEFORE THE TOMED INCIDENT

The Romulan Empire was founded 2,000 years ago by a group of renegade Vulcans, who left their homeworld looking for a new planet.

The Romulans were a warlike offshoot of the peaceful Vulcans. The races had almost identical biology, with copper-based blood and pointed ears, yet they were vastly different – whereas the Vulcans were calm and logical, the Romulans were passionate and arrogant.

The people who became the Romulans left Vulcan in the 4th century of the Earth calendar, around the Time of Awakening. Unlike their Vulcan cousins, they refused to embrace Surak's philosophy of peace and logic, and chose to leave their planet rather than change their ways.

These renegade Vulcans established a number

of different civilizations, including the Debrune, and settled on several planets, including Calder II, Yadda Prime and Draken IV. One branch settled on the twin planets of Romulus and Remus and founded what became the Romulan Star Empire.

In the 23rd century, the Romulan Empire covered a large part of the Beta Quadrant and had borders with both the Federation and the Klingon Empire. The Romulans and Vulcans never reconciled and were often in conflict, at one point spending 100 years at war.

Accounts of the schism with Vulcan were suppressed on Romulus. In the 2260s at least, some

▲ Centuries ago, a large proportion of the Vulcan population, who were said to "march beneath the raptor's wing," left in search of a new home. After a long odyssey they settled on Romulus, a beautiful world on which they built grand cities.

Romulans were surprisingly ignorant of Vulcan beliefs and culture.

NEW HOMEWORLD

Romulus itself was a planet of stunning natural beauty, with many famous sights such as the firefalls of Gal Gath'thong, the Valley of Chula, and the Apex Sea. Romulan cities were places of great contrast; the elite lived in luxurious quarters, while the 'people' suffered relative poverty and were often forced to queue for the most basic provisions.

Due to centuries of isolation, Romulan culture did not have much opportunity to influence Vulcan or other Federation worlds, but Romulan ale (an extremely strong form of blue alcohol) was famous throughout the galaxy, despite being illegal in the Federation for many years.

The Empire's first recorded contact with humans occurred in 2152. *Enterprise* NX-01 discovered a planet recently annexed by the Romulans and was damaged when it stumbled into a cloaked minefield surrounding the planet. A *Bird-of-Prey* arrived and warned *Enterprise* that it would be destroyed if it did not leave immediately.



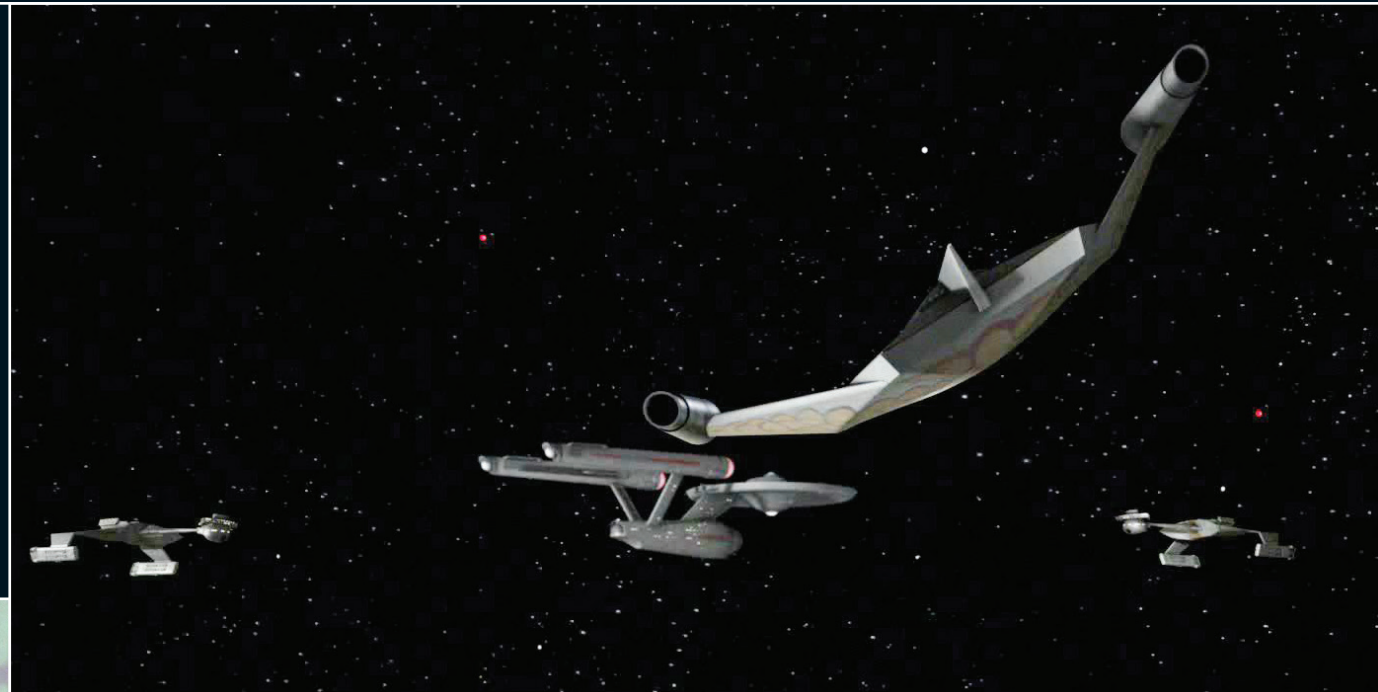
▲ The descendents of the Vulcans who left their homeworld eventually found the ideal planet to settle on. This became known as Romulus and was a world of great natural beauty that included many scenic wonders such as the Valley of Chula.



◀ Starfleet first encountered the Romulans in 2152 when a *Bird-of-Prey* chased *Enterprise NX-01* off from the orbit of a planet to which they laid claim. At no point during this encounter did the Starfleet crew actually see a Romulan, but it was clear that they were hostile and extremely territorial.



▶ Romulan women were just as likely to command a starship as the males. This female commander led a three-ship squadron that intercepted the *U.S.S. Enterprise NCC-1701* after it illegally entered Romulan space.



◀ This graphic showed the one-light-year-wide Neutral Zone, and the positions of the Earth outposts that were attacked by the cloaked *Bird-of-Prey* in 2266.



◀ By 2268, the Romulans had reached an agreement with the Klingons whereby they traded their cloaking technology in exchange for *D7* battle cruisers. These ships were tactically more advanced than their *Birds-of-Prey*, and enhanced their offensive capabilities.

◀ In 2287, Romulan ambassador Caithlin Dar was sent to Nimbus III, the 'Planet of Galactic Peace.' It was hoped that the Federation, the Romulans and the Klingons would work together to develop the planet, but the project did little to foster better relations between them.

▲ The commander of the *Bird-of-Prey* that crossed the Neutral Zone in 2266 was the first Romulan to be seen by human eyes.

Fortunately, the Starfleet crew managed to repair their vessel and it moved off without further incident.

In 2154, the crew of *Enterprise* helped expose a Romulan plot to destabilize a growing alliance between humans, Vulcans, Andorians and Tellarites. After this, relations between Romulans and United Earth deteriorated into open war. Beginning in 2156, the Earth-Romulan War was fought with nuclear weapons and lasted for four years. It came to an end in 2160 following the Battle of Cheron, in which the Romulans suffered heavy losses and a humiliating defeat. The subsequent peace talks, which were conducted via subspace radio, led to the establishment of the Neutral Zone, an area one light year wide that was designed to act as a buffer between Earth and Romulan space. If either side entered the zone it was to be considered an act of war.

After the Neutral Zone was established, the Romulans had no contact with Earth or the newly

formed Federation for more than 100 years. During this period the Romulans developed a potentially decisive weapon – the cloaking device.

TESTING THE BORDERS

In 2266, a cloaked Romulan *Bird-of-Prey* crossed the Neutral Zone and destroyed a number of Earth outposts. Following this incident, in which a renewal of hostilities was narrowly avoided, the Romulans became more involved in galactic politics, and soon had ambassadors on Earth. In late 2267, the Romulans entered into a joint project with the Federation and the Klingon Empire and established an experimental colony on Nimbus III, a Class-M planet in the Neutral Zone. The idea was to sponsor a colony of mixed races which would become the 'Planet of Galactic Peace.' It survived for 20 years, although the project was a disaster.

In 2268, the Romulans entered an alliance with the Klingons. This resulted in an important exchange of technology, with the Romulans

handing over the specifications of the cloaking device in return for advanced ship designs.

Before long, the Romulans were using Klingon-designed *D7* battle cruisers that were capable of cloaking and traveling at warp speed. This posed a significant threat to the Federation, which was forced to enter the Neutral Zone and steal a cloaking device.

END OF AN ALLIANCE

The Romulan-Klingon alliance had collapsed by 2271, and the following years saw them in regular conflict. The Klingons won an important early victory at the battle of Klach D'Kel Brakt, where their forces, led by Kor, crushed the Romulans.

From that time the two races developed a deep distrust and abiding hatred of one another. The Romulans typically dismissed the Klingons as brutal, unthinking creatures, while the Klingons looked on the Vulcan offshoots as cowardly and devious, with no sense of honor.

In 2293, following the destruction of Praxis and their key energy-production facility, the Klingons opened peace negotiations with the Federation. The Romulans were determined to make sure that their two greatest enemies did not forge an alliance, but these efforts failed thanks to the actions of Admiral Kirk and his crew. Hopes for peace were subsequently high when one member of the Romulan delegation at Khitomer, Senator Pardek, formed a lasting friendship with the renowned Ambassador Spock of Vulcan.

In 2311, the Tomed Incident put an end to diplomatic relations between the Romulans and the Federation. In that incident, thousands of Federation lives were lost in a Romulan attack. Almost immediately afterward, the Treaty of Algeron was signed, reaffirming the Neutral Zone and forbidding Starfleet from developing or using cloaking technology. The treaty succeeded in restoring peace, but led to a new period of Romulan isolation that would last until 2364.

ON SCREEN



TRIVIA

A note in the script for the *STAR TREK: THE ORIGINAL SERIES* episode 'Balance of Terror' explains why the Romulan *Bird-of-Prey* was similar in design to a Starfleet ship. It states, "The attacking vessel can now be seen definitely to be some modified version of a starship saucer main section...". Also, a scene was filmed, but later cut in which Commander Hansen [seen below] of Earth Outpost 4 stated that the Romulans had somehow acquired Starfleet's ship designs. In the deleted scene, Hansen said, "You see it, *Enterprise*?! Starship design. Warn Earth... espionage, stolen our designs... traitors."



When the *STAR TREK* episode 'The Enterprise Incident' was remastered in 2008, one of the Romulan battle cruisers that intercepted the *U.S.S. Enterprise* NCC-1701 in the original 1968 version was replaced with a CG version of a Romulan *Bird-of-Prey*.



Due to budgetary constraints, no special effect shots were created for the *STAR TREK* episode 'The Deadly Years.' All the scenes featuring the Romulan *Birds-of-Prey* attacking the *U.S.S. Enterprise* were created by reusing stock footage of them from 'Balance of Terror.'

- FIRST APPEARANCE: 'BALANCE OF TERROR' (TOS)
- TV APPEARANCE: STAR TREK: THE ORIGINAL SERIES
- DESIGNED BY: Wah Ming Chang

KEY APPEARANCES

STAR TREK: THE ORIGINAL SERIES 'Balance of Terror'

The *U.S.S. Enterprise* NCC-1701 is called in to investigate when Earth outposts along the edge of the Neutral Zone are completely obliterated by an unknown assailant. It soon becomes clear that a Romulan *Bird-of-Prey* hidden by a practical invisibility shield and armed with an enormously powerful energy plasma weapon is responsible. Captain Kirk finds himself engaged in a drawn-out battle of wits with the seasoned commander of the *Bird-of-Prey*, as his ship tries to track down and destroy the cloaked Romulan vessel before it can return to the safety of the Neutral Zone.

STAR TREK: THE ORIGINAL SERIES 'The Deadly Years'

During a routine resupply mission, Captain Kirk's landing party are exposed to a strange form of radiation. This causes them to age rapidly and soon they are unfit for duty. As the most senior unaffected officer on board, Commodore Stocker takes charge. He orders the ship to take a short cut through the Neutral Zone in order to reach a medical base, but it is intercepted by a squadron of Romulan *Birds-of-Prey*. Just as it looks as if the *Enterprise* will be destroyed, Dr. McCoy finds a cure - but can the revitalized Kirk find a way to escape the Romulans?

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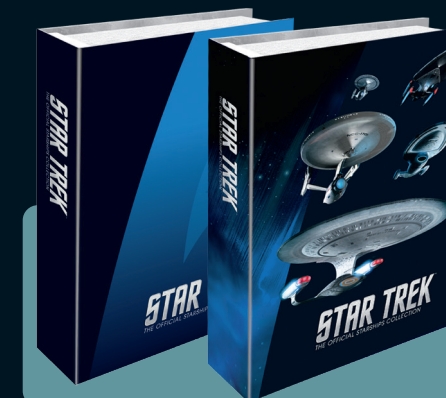
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- In-depth profile of the Borg *Tactical Cube*, a modified version of the Borg vessel that featured extensive hull armor.
- How *Doug Drexler* updated the classic Borg ship and designed a 'battle' cube for the two-parter 'Unimatrix Zero.'
- *STAR TREK: VOYAGER*'s executive producer *Brannon Braga* and the show's team of writers discuss how the Borg evolved during its run.

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