

A Player Guide, v 2.0

Terran Confederation:

The Confederation, that we played as in most Wing Commander games, is the first faction that will be described in this guide. Its units, upgrades and my small experience playing it (I wish I played the mod even a tenth of the time spent coding it) will be described as well as I can in this first part. As a foreword, the units will be divided into five categories here:

- Light and Medium Fighters, pictured with a Triangle tactical icon,
- Bombers and Heavy Fighters, pictured with a Square tactical icon,
- Corvettes and Frigates, pictured with a Diamond tactical icon,
- Capital Ships and Production Facilities, pictured with a Parallelogram tactical icon,
- Utility Crafts, pictured with a Reverse Diamond tactical icon

Light and Medium Fighters

The Confed's fighters are, unlike the Kilrathi, quite standardized. While they are good at what they do, they will not carry the battle by themselves and shine the most when used alongside other units or micromanaged. In the current version, we have four of these fighters, though one of them is *de facto* not available yet and even when it will be, is hard enough to unlock that most Confed players will not use it. They have class-wide upgrades to improve their effectiveness:

New Afterburners

Available as soon as you build Medium Fighter Hangars somewhere, this upgrade will provide a 15 % bonus to your fighters' speed, with obviously an equal increase in fuel consumption.

Advanced Drives

After buying the New Afterburners, this upgrade pushes the speed increase from 15 % to 25 % for all your Light and Medium Fighters.

New Shields

Fighters are fragile, when everything is said and done. This upgrade gives a general 15 % bonus to their health.

Fighter Hull Reinforcement

This one is a biggie. Expensive, long to research but it can change the course of many battles, since it gives a whopping *40 %* increase to the health of your crafts. It comes as the second step after the New Shields.

F-27 Arrow V


3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Description: The Arrow is an *excellent* recon fighter. It is fast, it is cheap, it can see far, it has a low logistical footprint and it has a very high fuel endurance. In short, you want to have a lot of them, to have them everywhere and use them to win the information battle. They have no pre-requirement to be built, can land everywhere you have a hangar and are nasty mosquitoes.

Weaponry: 2 Laser Guns, 2 Ion Guns, HS missiles.

You will not outgun anyone with it, but the missiles can be a very bad surprise for any fighter. A micromanaged Arrow is a dangerous opponent in a missile fight, firing from far away and both fast and agile enough to outrun or outturn enemy missiles.

Specific Upgrades:

Recon Packages:

The secondary sensor range of the fighter is tripled. In sensor mode, you will see a lot more of the strategic situation. You will only get dots and tactical icons, but that's very valuable information already.

Advanced Recon Packages:

The primary sensor range of the fighter is tripled too. Now, you see a much bigger part of the map, with all the information on the enemy while remaining out of sensor range.

HP: 150; Speed: 400; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x1; Construction Cost: 150 RU; Construction Time: 12 seconds, 2 fighters per flight.

Rufus' Suggestions: I love to use them as hit-and-run fighters with their missiles giving a much bigger punch than expected on unaware targets. First look, first lock, first shot. Come in, get your missile shot at maximum range and pull out. A nasty but effective way to snipe some valuable targets.

F-42 Hellcat V

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Description: Medium. The word describes it well. It doesn't come with incredible tricks, it's not the fastest, it's not the toughest, and it's not the mightiest. But it does its job well, AKA escorting bombers or larger ships. Its use is definitely tactical and not strategic, bringing more guns and missiles where needed to allow the strategic units to turn the tide. Do not underestimate it, however, because battles are usually won by the humble ones.

Weaponry: 2 Ion Guns, 2 Particle Guns, IR missiles.

Light fighters that missed their missile shots will find themselves in a tough spot against these better guns and the IR missiles, more manoeuvrable than the HS, are dangerous weapons in larger battles. Heavier fighters will however keep their firepower advantage. Outflying them and/or getting help from a wingman will be crucial.

Specific Upgrades:

Overcharged Guns:

A 10 % increase in firepower for all weapons on the Hellcat is more than welcome, particularly when you have a lot of them flying around.

Next Generation Gun Systems:

The upgrade is now 25 % and the Hellcat starts looking like a semi-heavy fighter.

HP: 200; Speed: 300; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x1, [Interceptor] x1; Construction Cost: 450 RU; Construction Time: 24 seconds, 3 fighters per flight.

Rufus' Suggestions: What is there to be said for the standard medium fighter? It will pull its weight if you respect it, and acts best when supporting other units. Not shiny, but it does the job, and that's what counts, right?

F-103 Excalibur

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Description: Welcome to the guide if you jumped straight to the sexiest fighter of Wing Commander III. No need to apologize, she deserves it. It's a superfighter, no if, no but. It's fast, tough, powerful, has anti-matter engines and it even comes with a cloaking device! But more importantly, it's in pre-series, meaning you can have enough for them to actually matter in a war. And ask Prince Thrakhath how important it is. Oh, right, you can't, because it was that damn important. Keep in mind you need to unlock it through Research.

Weaponry: 4 Tachyon Guns, 2 Ion Guns, IR missiles.

I told you it's a superfighter. It will rip enemies to shreds as long as you do not run straight into their missiles. We could have gotten capital-grade phase shields on it, but it would have been expensive. Beyond that, yep, get these guns in the fray and the kills will come fast.

Specific Upgrades:

Advanced Cloaking Device:

You can roughly stop worrying about the duration of your cloak from now on. The result of a cloaked superfighter roaming around is left as an exercise to the reader.

Improved ECM:

There are people out there who do not want to play fair and want to break through your cloaking system. This upgrade will push several of them out of this game by making your cloak less vulnerable to sensors.

HP: 300; Speed: 400; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x1, [Interceptor] x4; Construction Cost: 1200 RU; Construction Time: 45 seconds, 4 fighters per flight.

Rufus' Suggestions: This craft is the force multiplier *par excellence*. It will not defeat everyone at once, but it will make any force much stronger. My favourite trick is the forward cover for bombers. When a bomber force is coming in on an enemy task force with its escort, get your Excalibur wing forward, cloaked and holding fire. Then, a few seconds before interception by the enemy CAP, uncloak just behind it and enjoy the glorious mayhem. Your bombers will enjoy even more the sudden opening in the enemy defence… And that's just one trick you can do with it, your imagination being the only limit.

F-104 Bearcat


3D model and textures: Klavs81

The successor of the Hellcat, this is probably the most advanced Medium Fighter with full production capability available in the game. It kept many of the advantages of the Excalibur but managed to tone down its cost and logistical footprint. As a frontline fighter, you can hardly hope for anything better. There is just one slight issue with that, however, and it is that Admiral Tolwyn agrees with you and me wholeheartedly and kinda, sorta, well, kept the crafts for himself. If you can capture one of his carriers and break the whole thing open, then you will have access to the fighter. Good luck, you'll need it.

Weaponry: 4 Light Tachyon Guns, IR missiles

It's not the Excalibur, but it's damn well better than the competition, with roughly one and a half the firepower of the Hellcat.

Specific Upgrades:

None, the fighter is brand-new and powerful enough as it is.

HP: 250; Speed: 400; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x2, [Interceptor] x2; Construction Cost: 500 RU; Construction Time: 30 seconds, 3 fighters per flight.

Rufus' Suggestions: Congratulations for unlocking it, it wasn't an easy job. I'd say keep it behind less valuable units and play nasty if you can micromanage it. With its speed, it can mess with a lot of enemies.

Heavy Fighters and Bombers

The Confed's heavier crafts are designed with one goal in mind: get torpedoes on their target. The glorious dogfighting and fighter killing job is best left to other pilots, even though their guns are nothing to sneer at in battle. These crafts, unlike the Kilrathi's, are therefore very utilitarian, even if their paper specifications do not look as pretty. As with Light and Medium Fighters, they have class-wide upgrades:

ITTS Block 1

The Internal Tracking and Targeting System allows for a 15 % accuracy increase of heavy fighters' weaponry, making each of the few times they shoot their guns more effective.

Tracking Guns

Having the guns slightly move to follow the enemy and give a better firing solution increase the accuracy to 25 % above its initial value.

Integrated Repair Systems

Repair Bots

These two upgrades to the Heavy Fighters will make their auto-repair systems faster and more effective, increasing survivability.

HF-66 Thunderbolt VII

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

The “Thud” is highly subtle. It subtly fires half a dozen heavy guns on enemy targets, subtly endures enemy fire and subtly fires its torpedo on a capital ship while subtly lacking in speed and agility. Faster than the heavier dedicated bombers, it can come in, drop a torpedo and run away to its carrier before the defenders can reposition, making it an invaluable raiding unit.

Weaponry: 2 Meson Guns, 2 Photon Guns, 2 Plasma Guns, HS missiles, One (1) Torpedo, 1 Rear Gun

Getting in front of it is a bad idea, period. Its torpedo make it an exceedingly annoying unit for the Kilrathi forces, threatening to do massive damage to any neighbouring capital ship.

Specific Upgrades:

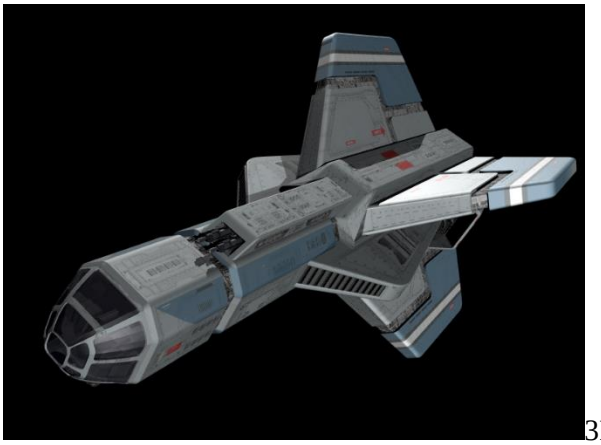
Improved Thrusters: Being 10 % faster (and cooler) means less time for the enemy CAP to intercept the Thud and more chance of evading pursuers long enough for reinforcements to come.

Advanced Fuel Systems: The Thunderbolt, with now 25 % bonus in speed, becomes almost as fast as a Medium Fighter, but with the armaments of a Heavy Fighter…

HP: 300; Speed: 270; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x1, [Heavy Fighter] x1; Construction Cost: 150 RU; Construction Time: 10 seconds

Rufus’ Suggestions: A very good workhorse, particularly anywhere your space superiority is not assured. A number of Thunderbolt tend to be a major threat to most capital ships, as long as you can pull them away fast enough.

F/A-76 Longbow



3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Whenever you want a pesky capital ship removed from your sights, the Longbow should be your first and last answer. Not very agile but definitely tough enough to survive a limited defensive gauntlet (your pilots will thank you for providing an escort, however), it can deliver a lovely and deadly payload of torpedoes, with a twist: it fires its four torpedoes in two pairs rather than doing a run for each torpedo. Sure, it has less lasting power than a Paktahn, but where it comes to an alpha strike, nothing comes close.

Weaponry: 2 Plasma Guns, 2 Ion Guns, FF missiles, Four (4) Torpedoes, twin-fired, 1 Rear Gun

It has quite the powerful gun armament, but let's be honest, that's not why you deployed it, was it? Still, it can win more than one game of chicken with light fighters when comes the time to do its actual job and scratch the flat tops.

Specific Upgrades:

Enhanced Warheads: Nothing says hello like an improved bang in the Bow's thermonuclear-tipped torpedoes. 25 % more fun at impact means more enemy captains without a job (and a ship).

Antimatter Torpedoes: Okaaaaay, you really don't know the meaning of the word "overkill", do you? Great, because neither do I. The boost is not up to 45 % and a single hit will be *painful*. Still won't scratch the paint of a Hvar'Kann.

HP: 600; Speed: 220; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x4, [Heavy Fighter] x2, [Torpedo Bomber] x1; Construction Cost: 250 RU; Construction Time: 20 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: Long story short? Subtlety is overrated with this one. Get the air superiority and get the mosquitoes to sting enemy turrets and the Longbow will work its magic.

Corvettes and Frigates

These ships are, theoretically, the workhorse of the fleet, doing the unassuming but critical roles needed by any respectable Navy, all the way back to the wet navies, when the ships were made of wood and their men (and occasional women) were made of steel. Escorting undefended ships, picketing ingress routes, giving advance warning against the flanks, their value lie in their long endurance and their low cost. Well, except for the Prowler, but that one is a special case, shall we say…

Like the fighters and bombers, they have a whole range of improvements available:

Improved Plating

Corvettes and Frigates ain't no capital ships, and they will fall quite quickly to even fighters' and bombers' guns. To mitigate this weakness and potentially turn the tide, improved plating on their hull will give them a 15 % bonus to their HP.

Automated Damage Control

This upgrade will make the ships' survivability even higher, allowing their crews to keep their tin cans in roughly one piece, pushing the HP bonus to 25 %.

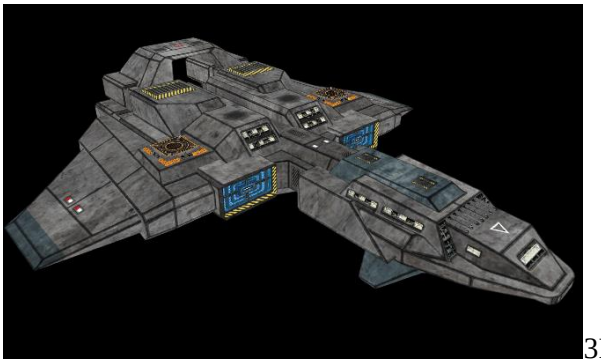
Capital-grade Thrusters

Quartermasters learned for centuries that creative accounting and decent beer can get their ships what they really need. A friendly admiral can get them what they *dream* about: capital ship thrusters instead of standard ones, with 15 % higher sustained speed. It was that or painting the ships in red to make them go faster.

Improved Generators

Those new thrusters being made for much larger ships, they obviously can receive more power to use them to their true potential, making the speed bonus climb up to a staggering 40 %, allowing fast redeployment of these small ships, maybe even outrunning some bombers.

Venture-class Corvette


3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

The virtue of annoyance. It annoys admirals to have such a lightly-armed ship under their command. It annoys their crews to be assigned to months-long patrols. It annoys enemy raiders who are unlikely to kill it before running out of fuel. At which point the crews are exhausted and the admiral pleased. A lightly-armed picket ship, it excels in showing the flag and keeping long-term battlefield awareness with good sensors and just enough armament and protection to make the life of a light raider difficult. Anything else will eat it for breakfast, though. It's a corvette, not a battleship!

Weaponry: Four (4) Laser Turrets

The armament is minimal, the kind that annoys light fighters and unlucky medium fighters. But also the kind that is more than enough to shoot down cruise missiles flying solo, turning a resource operation from a turkey shoot to an actual annoyance.

Specific Upgrades:

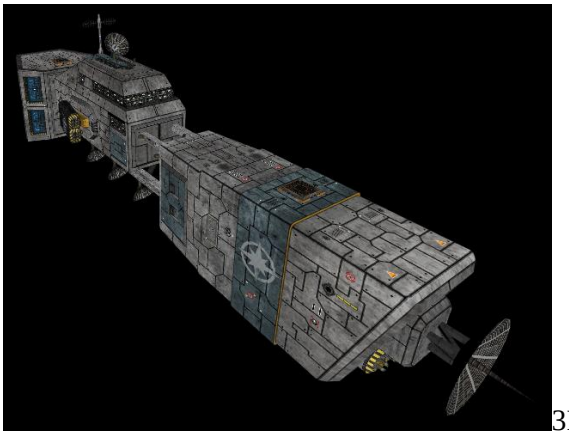
Long Range Sensors: Having better sensors means better battlefield management for the admiral, and an actual chance to run away in time from a large force for the corvette. A 150 % additional range on the primary sensors is a win-win for you and them. Not for the enemy's sneak attack, but, one cannot please everyone, right?

Passive Scanner Array: Seeing those threatening spots coming from outside sensor range is always a good thing. At least better than not seeing them until it's too late: better fleeing from the devil you don't know than dying at the hand of the devil you know, thanks to this 400 % bonus to passive sensors' range.

HP: 10000; Speed: 210; Logistics Footprint: [Corvette] x2; Construction Cost: 550 RU; Construction Time: 22 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: You do not want it to fire at the enemy, because it sucks at it. I consider it as an upsized Arrow, since it shares with it two very important roles: recon and missile defence. Having one of them escorting under anti-missile stance each capital ship in a fleet doesn't cost you that much more in the end and can make the enemy's life incredibly harder as your capital ships can fire at the real targets while anti-ship torpedoes and missiles will get torn apart.

Caernaven-class Frigate



3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Much more multirole, the Caernaven is still a tin can, but one with teeth, and it makes all the difference. Relatively fast, it can outrun what outguns it and can outgun what outruns it, the very definition of a frigate. At home among battle fleets, convoys or on its own, it can be a thorn in the side of even large Kilrathi forces as long as it does not let itself be outsmarted.

Weaponry: Four (4) Laser Turrets, Four (4) Short Range Missile Launchers, Two (2) Short Range Torpedo Launchers

The same gun armament as the Venture will not go very far, but the missiles are another matter entirely, making fighter-only runs on it a losing proposition while its torpedo tubes are the bane of undefended or distracted ships.

Specific Upgrades:

Frigate Torpedoes: These tubes are short-ranged and will not save their frigate from death at the hands of a destroyer, but a swarm of frigates will be quite terrifying, unleashing all their payload at short range at once. As for convoys, these mean a quick death before reinforcements can come.

Experienced Crews: Rare are the frigates that fight in large battles and live to tell the tale, but those crews who do it are usually better and more effective, with a measured accuracy 25 % superior to their green counterparts.

Automated Fire Control: New Combat VIs are making these small ships even more effective at hitting their targets reliably, with an accuracy 40 % superior to standard ships.

HP: 20000; Speed: 200; Logistics Footprint: [Frigate] x1; Construction Cost: 1000 RU; Construction Time: 60 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: Good raiders and excellent escorts, they need micromanagement to be used at their full potential, but they can be one particularly bad surprise on an unsuspecting opponent, whether by attacking a convoy or a resource base or during a pitched battle by rushing a large cruiser and overwhelming its defences with several torpedo salvoes.

Prowler-class Corvette



3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

This ship does not exist. Am I being clear about it, soldier? It never existed to begin with anyway. If it existed, it would be a small and heavily armed corvette with an incredibly large tool box to create chaos and confusion among enemy forces. Antimatter guns, mine fields and a cloaking device are mighty tools for a ship specialized in giving the enemy headaches and making the fight as unfair as it can be.

Weaponry: Two (2) Laser Turrets, One (1) Anti Matter Turret, One (1) Mine Deployment System

Oh boy, that's not something you would expect on a *corvette* or even a frigate, but there it is, the Spec Ops have money to spare. The AMG turret will threaten absolutely everyone smaller than a destroyer while the on-board mines can be used to superb effect while combined with the cloaking system in order to ruin the day of a fleet or any group of ships.

Specific Upgrades:

Prototype Thrusters: Apparently, they had even more cash and grabbed the thrusters not supposed to leave the labs, with an astounding 45 % additional speed, turning hit-and-run into hit-and-dash.

Unconventional Weapon Upgrades: Some of the craziest and most inventive engineers of the Terran Confederation work for the Spec Ops and the top-of-the-line components they work with can withstand some of their most… exotic ideas, pushing firepower to an extreme with 50 % more damage done by the guns and the mines of the Prowler.

HP: 75000; Speed: 200; Logistics Footprint: [Corvette] x6, [Spec Ops] x1; Construction Cost: 2000 RU; Construction Time: 125 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: If your enemy ever relaxes, this is the tool to use to cure this affliction. It is probably the best tool in the entire game to locate and strike at weak points, or, better yet, create enemy weak points. A mine field on the way of an enemy fleet thinking it will intercept your own smaller fleet can turn things around in a jiffy with a series of quite hilarious explosions, while convoys or mining sites will need a much larger escort to survive a raid from this nasty package. Putting an AMG turret on a corvette may be seen as cheating, but SpecOps has a saying: "Only cheaters prosper.". May you… live long and prosper.

Capital Ships

The heavy-hitters of the Terran Confederation Navy, these always bring with them a heavy punch to the battle. Maybe not quickly, but they represent a solution to many problems, including their counterparts. Now, they might be shiny, tough and powerful, they are still extremely vulnerable to dedicated anti-ship weaponry and a large investment can easily be turned into a debris field if the admiral in charge overestimates the survivability of these battlewagons.

Like other categories before them, they can be upgraded as a whole:

Improved Accuracy

Having a lot of guns isn't very useful if these guns cannot hit a planet. The next generation of targeting computers will make it 15 % more likely for all our turrets to actually nail their targets.

Superior Accuracy

Further automatization with expert systems push the accuracy bonus from 15 % to 25 %, making it more likely for point defence to pick out those pesky torpedoes and missiles.

Reinforced Hulls

Additional armoured plates are set up in the most vulnerable parts of the capital ships following post-battle damage assessments, increasing the survivability of these warships by 15 %.

New Hull Designs

Several compartments can be replaced by more modular systems, themselves capable of maintaining functionality despite catastrophic damage in nearby decks, pushing the survivability bonus to 40 %.

Southampton-class Destroyer


3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

The lightest of capital ships, this destroyer offers a fantastic escort capability in larger fleets, being more than capable of holding its own against attacks from fighters and limited groups of bombers with its numerous laser turrets. As a raider or as part of larger fleet actions, it can hold its own with its AMG turret, easily dispatching frigates or causing noticeable damage in other capital ships. It has however two trump cards that distinguish it from its Kilrathi counterparts, based on missile armament. A 8-tube Vertical Launching System for Extended Range Image Recognition missiles can offer a first defensive bubble against fighters, bombers and long range missiles alike, covering several ships at once from standoff distances. Its torpedo tubes make a closing destroyer a lethal threat to any capital ship.

Weaponry: Eight (8) Laser Turrets, One (1) Anti Matter Turret, One (1) Extended Range Image Recognition Vertical Launching System, Four (4) Short Range Torpedo Launchers

A single destroyer tasked with anti-missile defence will be the cause of frustration for many bombers and capital ships, since its armament is well-suited for this critical job, as well as culling strike crafts before and during their attack. Its four torpedo launchers make a run dangerous for both sides but potentially highly rewarding.

Specific Upgrades:

Destroyer Torpedoes: Like the frigate's, these tubes are short-ranged and hard to use properly, but can maul even the biggest cruisers from ranges at which interception is quite unlikely.

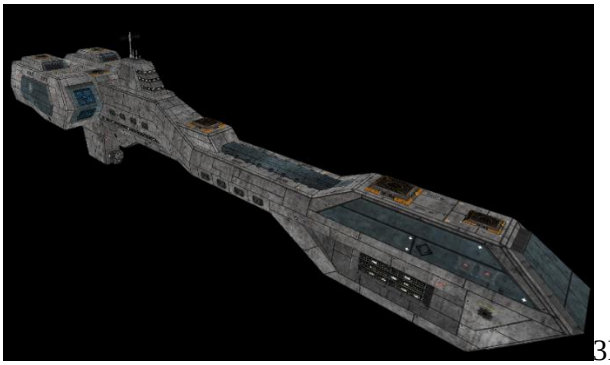
Improved Engines: New engines offer a 25 % increase in sustained speed for the destroyers, making them more capable of catching up with raiders, get in torpedo range or escape heavy ships.

Improved Engines: Overloading the engines for a 45 % increase in sustained speed will have a bad effect on their lifetime but will allow them to live long enough to be retired early.

HP: 85000; Speed: 180; Logistics Footprint: [Destroyer] x1, [Capital Ship] x1; Construction Cost: 2000 RU; Construction Time: 90 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: A very, very fine ship in my humble opinion. It isn't as flashy as the cruisers or the heaviest carriers, but used properly, it can take on any target and emerge victorious. A tactic I would suggest against cruisers is to come from above or below while targeting the enemy AMG turrets first, then closing in hard to fire the torpedoes. Ideally, these operate in pairs, with for example one of them being under anti-missile stance while the other deals with the remaining targets. Still, be very careful against enemy bombers, they will ruin your day. Think about bringing a flight or two of Arrow as escorts, occupying the enemy while your own missiles snipe them from afar.

Savannah-class Fast Cruiser



3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Very well-armed for anti-ship combat, this Fast Cruiser is a good flagship for heavy incursions and Recon-In-Force operations, keeping enough speed to outrun the heaviest ships while being almost as well armed as them. While its armament is dangerous enough to make small groups of bombers think twice before attacking it, such a role is very secondary and better suited for dedicated escort ships such as frigate or destroyers. It has, however, a small hangar capable of carrying its own interceptors for area defence and reconnaissance work.

Weaponry: Six (6) Laser Turrets, Three (3) Anti Matter Turrets, Two (2) Medium Range Image Recognition Turrets, Four (4) Short Range Torpedo Launchers

Definitely a tough customer there, capable of eating destroyers alive with its Heavy Turrets while being particularly annoying to any and all strike crafts ending up close to it thanks to a good number of missiles and laser bolts fired in its point defence bubble. As the destroyer, it sports four torpedo tubes if closing the range ends up being preferable to smashing the enemy from afar. A good all-around armament.

Specific Upgrades:

Fast Cruiser Torpedoes: Like with the other capital ships, these tubes are short-ranged and hard to use properly, but can make short work of many ships.

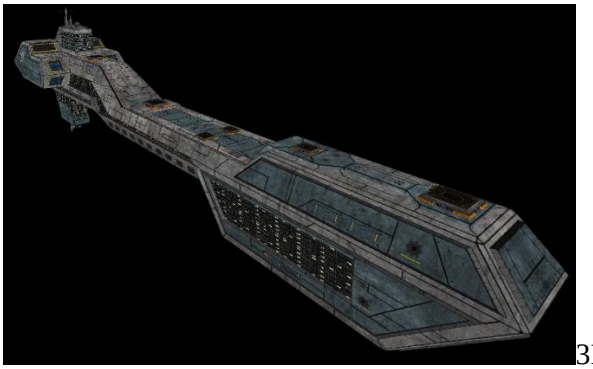
Long Range Sensors: To reinforce its role as a raiding cruiser, the ships' sensors can be upgraded to increase its primary sensor range by 150 %.

Advanced Sensors: As a response to the increased presence of stealth fighters, the short-range, high-powered sensors can be linked to the primary arrays, increasing their range by an additional 700 % (yes, I wrote that right) to counter possible insertion of scouts or camouflaged crafts near the fleet.

HP: 140000; Speed: 140; Logistics Footprint: [Battlecruiser] x1, [Capital Ship] x3; Construction Cost: 3500 RU; Construction Time: 120 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: An excellent heavy raiding unit and support cruiser that has two big uses. The first one is to threaten the entire economy of an enemy task force by forcing it to redirect heavy assets from the front lines to the rear, while simultaneously countering the usual Kilrathi light raiding parties with a healthy amount of brute force. The second use for it is a force multiplier for a larger fleet. Its short range missile launchers can be quite useful for terminal defence against enemy torpedoes and missiles while its sensor capability avoids many unpleasant surprises.

Tallahassee-class Heavy Cruiser

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

A big, unfriendly, giant. Designed for slugging it out with other capital ships, it is extremely well armed for that purpose and underequipped for almost everything else. Usually the flagship of many task forces and action groups, it has one job, which is to batter the enemy into submission, and it does it well. What else is there to be said?

Weaponry: Eight (8) Laser Turrets, Four (4) Anti Matter Turrets, Four (4) Short Range Torpedo Launchers

A lot of problems can be solve by brute force and the armament here is a testimony to this philosophy. Not many ships will survive long the broadsides of such a heavy cruiser.

Specific Upgrades:

Heavy Cruiser Torpedoes: If for some reason you want to have a short range high damage option…

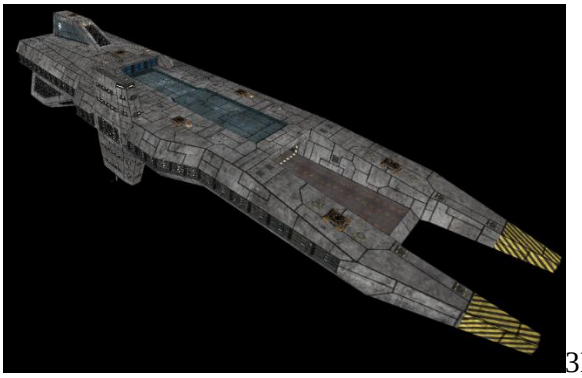
Advanced Firepower: You know what is better than firepower? Nothing, that's what. Therefore, we'll improve the average firepower of this heavy cruiser by 25 %, the equivalent of a fifth AMG turret.

Overloaded Guns: Who cares if the guns will have to be replaced next year if the war is going to be over one way or the other in six months? Let's overload the guns to get the increase to 50 %, with the equivalent of a sixth AMG turret.

HP: 170000; Speed: 100; Logistics Footprint: [Heavy Cruiser] x1, [Capital Ship] x4; Construction Cost: 4000 RU; Construction Time: 150 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: Keep the heavy cruisers protected from enemy bombers and cackle maniacally when they punch through anything smaller than another heavy cruiser. Simple and to the point, just like these heavy cruisers.

Eagle-class Fast Carrier

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

This advanced carrier is designed to take part of raiding and transport convoys in a defensive fashion, ensuring the most effective recon and bomber defence there can be, combined with the fastest speed on a carrier. It is however unable to build or support bomber groups.

Weaponry: Eleven (11) Laser Turrets, Two (2) Medium Range Image Recognition Turrets

Its defensive armament comes as a last line of defence against enemy strike crafts, but is definitely large enough on its own to make life hell for the opposition.

Specific Upgrades:

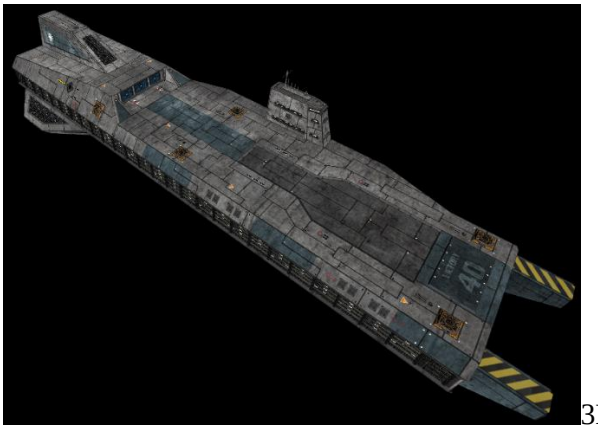
Improved Thrusters: Speed is of the essence for an escort carrier unable to take on capital ships. These engines will increase it by 15 %.

Structural Mass Reduction: Throwing out the kitchen sink at the Kilrathi might not damage their shields so much, but throwing out a lot of useless kitchen sinks away from the carrier actually helps increasing its speed by 25 %. Note: there are still kitchen sinks on-board, but a lot of useless mass has been left behind.

HP: 55000; Speed: 180; Logistics Footprint: [Carrier] x1, [Capital Ship] x1; Construction Cost: 1250 RU; Construction Time: 45 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: Hit and Run. If you see capital ships coming at this CV, just run away. It goes as fast as a destroyer and will outrun anything else. Usually, though, you'd want it in the middle of either a destroyer squadron for maximum mobility or escorting a pair of fast cruisers. It's amusing how annoyed an enemy player can be when the option for doing a nice bomber strike on juicy targets suddenly becomes unavailable due to escort fighters all over the place, right?

Ranger-class Carrier

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

An old carrier design, the workhorse of the Terran Confederation Navy after the Battle of Earth. Neither fast nor equipped with shiny toys, it does a single job and it does it well: carrying and supporting a full wing of fighters and bombers for support and attack missions. Ask the Kilrathi what they think of the old *Victory* to see how important such a job is.

Weaponry: Eleven (11) Laser Turrets

Its defensive armament is, once again, a last line of defence against enemy strike crafts, and given the kind of attacks usually aimed at carriers, it is *highly* recommended to escort them with frigates, corvettes and capital ships in addition to their own wing.

Specific Upgrades:

None. It's a box with engines and fighters. What's to upgrade?

HP: 90000; Speed: 100; Logistics Footprint: [Carrier] x1, [Capital Ship] x2; Construction Cost: 2000 RU; Construction Time: 75 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: It's not shiny, I'll grant you that, but once its Longbow squadron wrecks the shiny carrier on the other side, you'll enjoy it. A battlegroup like the *Victory*'s is a good option to work with many situations. A micro-management guru might want to coordinate actions with the escort ships, but in this case, I would seriously advise you to keep a handful of frigates around. More AAA, missiles, recon and, if everything else fails, more targets for enemy bombers.

Beyond that, one of my usual tactics is to move the CV towards a mining field ASAP to improve the economy through its production capabilities. Keep in mind, though, that you will need to build a refinery transport *in situ*, but having a logistic node away from you can be useful, especially when jump buoys become available. Last thing, think strategically with the carrier. It offers a large strategic mobility and allows you to strike from unexpected angles, unlike most capital ships.

Lexington-class Fleet Carrier


3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Now we're talking! This monster of a Fleet Carrier gives one hell of a punch to large fleets and is usually the tip of the spear for the Confederation's largest offensives. As such, it comes with extra engineering facilities and can support on its own entire fleets. A large investment that justifies itself in the largest of battlefields, where being able to support deep thrusts in enemy territory with strategic pauses is a must.

Weaponry: Eleven (14) Laser Turrets, Three (3) Medium Range Image Recognition Turrets

The *Lexington* should be in the middle of a fleet, with massive strike craft squadrons running CAP. If its weaponry comes to bear, someone messed up somewhere. But the mess is going to be painful for whoever comes close.

Special Equipment: The *Lexington* comes with some advanced support systems, doubling the self-repair rate of nearby (5 km) friendly ships, doubling the mining speed, unload and capacity of mining shuttles within 10 km, coordinating friendly weapons within 5 km to give them a 20 % bonus to accuracy and having itself twice the speed for construction operations.

Specific Upgrades:

Advanced Factories: The first ship of the class came with nano-engineered factories to build its own fighters deep behind Kilrathi lines. These can be installed on-board, increasing the construction speed by an additional *150 %*! Yes, you read that well. No, there is no typo. Yes, on top to its standard bonus construction speed. You can guess who is going to field the biggest wings.

Assisted Repair Crews: The factories can also churn out spare parts at lightning speed, making field repairs and old-school maintenance something from the past. You thought the previous upgrade was crazy? Well, this one increases the repair speed for docked ships by **300 %**. You land, you take off, it's as simple as that.

HP: 200000; Speed: 80; Logistics Footprint: [Carrier] x1, [Capital Ship] x4; Construction Cost: 3800 RU; Construction Time: 110 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: Another of the precious force multipliers. Get one of these and defend it against threats and you can buy the victory out by hilariously outproducing the enemy. With some balls, you can send it into the fray to laugh as the accuracy bonus makes your fleet even more dangerous.

Amateurs talk tactics.

Professionals talk logistics.

Jutland-class Strike Carrier

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Some people think carriers should stay away of the fight. These people should stay away from a *Jutland*. Designed as a spiritual successor to the *Bengal* class, it can stand its ground against most capital ships and win the day while sending fighters and bombers to overwhelm and destroy most targets.

Weaponry: Eleven (11) Laser Turrets, Two (2) Medium Range Image Recognition Turrets, Two (2) Anti Matter Turrets, Four (4) Short Range Torpedo Launchers

Almost as powerful as a fast cruiser in terms of heavy armament, more in light armament, it will eat alive most destroyers in a one-vs-one situation. Don't go thinking it can brawl with cruisers and get away with it in one piece, though: it's a carrier, not a battleship.

Specific Upgrades:

Strike Carrier Torpedoes: The very nasty surprise for a capital ship trying to come in close.

Advanced Training: Gunners on a carrier are usually expected to face less combat than their destroyers or cruisers colleagues, but getting them on an advanced training course can get them up to the level when the *Jutland* starts self-identifying as a howling ball of pain thrown at the Kilrathi, with 15 % more accuracy from the ball to the pain.

Automated Targeting Systems: In a perfect display of bureaucratic "optimization", it was found, after the expensive training, that replacing the gunners altogether by automated systems was even better for the ship's accuracy, increasing it by an additional 25 %.

HP: 170000; Speed: 125; Logistics Footprint: [Carrier] x1, [Capital Ship] x4; Construction Cost: 3500 RU; Construction Time: 90 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: The hell? The carrier is fighting back?! It's pretty glorious to see the *Jutland* wrecking frigate after frigate with impunity, but that's not a reason to endanger it recklessly. Think of it more like the centrepiece of a heavy raiding group, far enough that no ship should be useless in a fight. Also, its firepower make sacrificing its escorts more survivable if everything goes to hell, as unlike lightly-armed carriers, it can still punch its way through various opponents. Once again, though, its worst enemy is probably the players themselves, thinking they can charge gloriously against better-armed ships.

Don't be that player.

Confederation-class Dreadnought

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Oh. Yes. Sorry, let me reformulate that. OH! HELL! YES!

This is what you usually think when this baby enters the fight. The most impressive ship of the line in the Confederation arsenal, its namesake dreadnought is a battlegroup of its own, terrifying its opponents just before it wrecks them with massive firepower, in addition of being a good heavy carrier on its own.

Weaponry: Twelve (12) Laser Turrets, Two (2) Medium Range Image Recognition Turrets, Eight (8) Anti Matter Turrets, Eight (8) Short Range Torpedo Launchers, one (1) Phase Transit Cannon.

First you thought "Oh crap.", then you thought "I want one!". This is perfectly normal. Two heavy cruisers in one ship do that to people. If it exists and isn't a compensation tool for some lonely Space Marshall or Crown Prince, then it will get demolished by the *Confederation* in a stand-up fight.

Specific Upgrades:

Confederation Torpedoes: Eight torpedoes at once. Heh heh. Ouch.

Hardened Structure: A dreadnought should definitely live up to its name, and reinforcing its hull will help it do so, in this case by increasing its durability by 25 %.

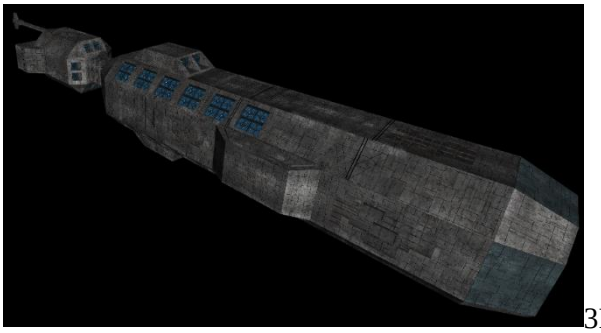
Damage Control Training: Advanced procedures and equipment are available in a very large ship where other capital ships could not support them. Thinking the *Confederation* like a mini-starbase allowed dramatic improvements of in-field repairs, in this case quadrupling the repair rate.

HP: 200000; Speed: 100; Logistics Footprint: [Carrier] x1, [Capital Ship] x6; Construction Cost: 8000 RU; Construction Time: 200 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: Admiral Adama approves of this ship. Darth Vader approves of this ship. Admiral Tolwyn sobs every night over losing this ship and hugs his Limited Edition *Concordia* plush toy.

It's a beast, it will project crazy amounts of firepower on the enemy and its armament is definitely oriented towards ship-to-ship direct combat. The enemy should well concentrate most of its firepower on it or be destroyed whenever the ship turns itself towards a new target. This means protecting the dreadnought and supporting it by many screens and other capital ships. Of course, this also means it is one hell of a juicy target for a large bomber strike. It has big runways in addition to its big guns, so remember to get this CAP up and running.

Behemoth-class Dreadnought

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Tolwyn seriously needs to get laid.

I mean, the hell? The guy just commissioned his very own personal Death Star!

Weaponry: ~~One (1) Supercond…~~ The One Gun, period.

First you thought "Oh crap.", then you thought "Oh crap." again. This is perfectly normal. You know the compensation tools I was talking about before? This is definitely one. The One Gun will kill anything it hits in one shot from across the map, and I mean it. Good thing, though, because its rate of fire is appalling. But if the guy on the other side of the map also wanted to compensate for something…

Specific Upgrades:

Hull Reinforcement: Sooooo, that superweapon is kinda, sorta, not absolutely finished, so it has a few weak points. Nominally? From the front of the ship to its rear. Which might make it a problem if someone happened to notice the ship taking half the map and firing a supermassive death ray and decided to send a single squad of bombers to take it out. For a "small" fee (read: enough resources to field several endgame fleets), it could be possible to multiply its durability by 25, making it slightly less likely to die an infamous death. Your choice.

HP: 25000; Speed: 50; Logistics Footprint: [Superweapon] x1, [Capital Ship] x8; Construction Cost: 40000 RU; Construction Time: 300 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: The Emperor approves of this ship.

It's way too expensive, it's way too fragile, it's way too slow, it's way too big. But all of these matter not when you see a Kilrathi superdreadnought and say "lolnope" before using your finger of death on it right as it jumps in and cause a massive detonation inside the enemy base. Expect a revenge strike soon enough, though, with Luke Clawwalker and his Paktahn squadron firing a few non-proton torpedoes in your big gun.

Or, you know, you could build a proper fleet and hope no superdreadnought gets built?

Kilrathi Empire:

The Cats. The bad kittens who almost always end up being treacherous, vile and cunning, etc. But this is the story as it was told by the winners, AKA the Terran Confederation, after destroying all the Imperial Archives. If you choose to play as the Kilrathi, then you have the opportunity to prove the hairless apes wrong. As with the Confederation, the units will be divided into five categories here:

- Light and Medium Fighters, pictured with a Triangle tactical icon,
- Bombers and Heavy Fighters, pictured with a Square tactical icon,
- Corvettes and Frigates, pictured with a Diamond tactical icon,
- Capital Ships and Production Facilities, pictured with a Parallelogram tactical icon,
- Utility Crafts, pictured with a Reverse Diamond tactical icon

One of the fundamental differences to acknowledge is that while the Confederation usually relies on bombers to torpedo the hell out of enemy capital ships and installations, the Kilrathi have missiles. A lot and a lot of ship-launched long-range cruise missiles, making it a perfectly viable tactic for them to remain at standoff ranges with the fighters' role being to keep enemy bombers away without ever getting in range of the enemy fleet.

Light and Medium Fighters

The Kilrathi fighters are numerous in types, with the main difference with the Confed ones being that their feudal structure leads to competing designs for similar roles. They tend to have a base fighter for a role and a more advanced one, usually supported by specific fleet units such as clan flagships and the largest of carriers. Their class-wide improvements tend to be the same as with the Confederation, while the specific upgrades can vary from time to time, when the roles diverge from their Confederation equivalents.

Light and Medium Fighters

New Afterburners

Available as soon as you build Medium Fighter Hangars somewhere, this upgrade will provide a 15 % bonus to your fighters’ speed, with obviously an equal increase in fuel consumption.

Advanced Drives

After buying the New Afterburners, this upgrade pushes the speed increase from 15 % to 25 % for all your Light and Medium Fighters.

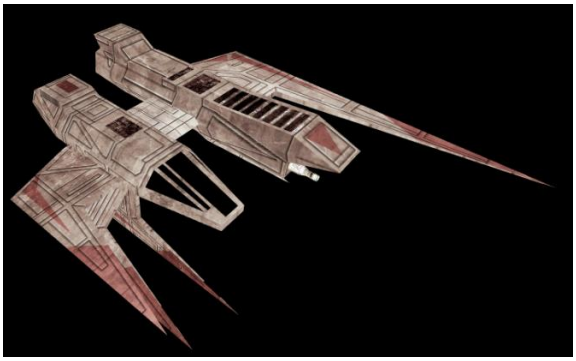
New Shields

Fighters are fragile, when everything is said and done. This upgrade gives a general 15 % bonus to their health.

Fighter Hull Reinforcement

This one is a biggie. Expensive, long to research but it can change the course of many battles, since it gives a whopping *40 %* increase to the health of your crafts. It comes as the second step after the New Shields.

Darket



3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Description: The Kilrathi counterpart to the Arrow, it is less geared towards recon and more towards combat. Fast, maneuverable and still good at scouting, it is usually found as the outer layer of Kilrathi forces, usually in pairs. It will not hold the line by itself, but when there is one, often a lot of them will come soon.

Weaponry: 2 Meson Guns, HS missiles.

Small, roughly as well-armed as the Arrow, but ideally, you will have a lot of them in the… furball. No, I'm not ashamed. Deal with it as I had to deal with dozens of these overwhelming my poor fighters.

Specific Upgrades:

Recon Packages:

The secondary sensor range of the fighter is tripled. In sensor mode, you will see a lot more of the strategic situation. You will only get dots and tactical icons, but that's very valuable information already.

Advanced Recon Packages:

The primary sensor range of the fighter is tripled too. Now, you see a much bigger part of the map, with all the information on the enemy while remaining out of sensor range.

HP: 140; Speed: 390; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x1; Construction Cost: 120 RU; Construction Time: 10 seconds, 2 fighters per flight.

Rufus' Suggestions: Do you know the word "zergling"? Do I need to say more? For those of you who lived in a cave, I mean that this is the cheap stuff you mass and send at the enemy to show the importance of quantity over quality. One Darket will get slaughtered by one Excalibur, but five or six Darket will fire enough missiles and guns to destroy the enemy. Plus, mixing a lot of them in the middle of more valuable targets is a good way to grab several seconds for bombers, torpedoes and the rest of the nasty stuff. Maybe I'll get some area-of-effect weaponry in the game one of these days…

Dralthi IV

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Description: Perhaps the most iconic Kilrathi fighter, the Dralthi IV medium fighter, nicknamed pancake for obvious reasons by Confederation pilots, is a good all-rounder that often fills escort and patrol roles.

Weaponry: 1 Particle Gun, 2 Meson Guns, IR missiles.

The Dralthi armament is pretty weak compared to a medium fighter like the Hellcat, meaning you would rather use it to keep light fighters at bay or fight with numerical superiority in mind.

Specific Upgrades:

Overcharged Guns:

A 10 % increase in firepower for all weapons on the Dralthi allows it to reduce the gap in firepower to its Confederation counterpart.

Next Generation Gun Systems:

The upgrade is now 25 % and the Dralthi becomes even more cost-effective.

HP: 180; Speed: 290; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x1, [Interceptor] x1; Construction Cost: 375 RU; Construction Time: 20 seconds, 3 fighters per flight.

Rufus' Suggestions: The Dralthi IV is a lesson in cost-effectiveness. It's objectively worse than the Hellcat, until you look at its price, pretty cheaper than its rival. In a situation where numbers decide the issue of the battle, it can definitely tip the scales in your favour, but keep in mind that in smaller encounters, if similar groups find one another, the Dralthi IV will statistically lose. So cheat by bringing more friends to the party.

Beyond that? Well, it's a medium fighter, it brings reliable firepower to the battle. It can be a really great option to cover your cruise missiles or to keep enemy bombers away from the litter.

Ekapshi


3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Description: The Ekapshi is originally an atmospheric interceptor using its high speed to quickly move to any place above a planet where it might be needed. A good defence against fighters like the Hellcat, it proved itself… inadequate against Excalibur raids. This spaceborne modification is available on Bhantkara heavy fleet carriers only.

Weaponry: 4 Laser Guns, 2 Meson Guns

A lot of relatively weak guns make the Ekapshi a moderate threat against enemy strike crafts but a dangerous obstacle to light and medium fighters, as well as longer-ranged missiles/torpedoes.

Specific Upgrades:

Risk Taking:

Removing useless things like shields and armour plating can reduce the Ekapshi's health by 50 %, making it even more of a death trap. Yay.

Hot Rods:

Using the now freed space to get massive capacitors linked directly to the engines can boost the Ekapshi's speed by 80 %. Yay!

HP: 160; Speed: 440; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x1, [Interceptor] x2, [Advanced Fighter] x1; Construction Cost: 300 RU; Construction Time: 30 seconds, 3 fighters per flight.

Rufus' Suggestions: The faster, the better. Live fast, die young. These principles describe well this short-ranged advanced interceptor. With all of its upgrades, it becomes absurdly fast, capable of catching up to everything, including hostile missiles and torpedoes, to drown them in a torrent of weak energy bolts. It will also die to anything stronger than Catscratch's daily milk glass (strawberry-flavoured), but that's the fate of those who feel the need.

The need for speed.

K'ha'haf

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Description: It's a rock! It's a fighter! It's ugly! It's impossible to remember its name correctly! It's the asteroid fighter, a bunch of huge engines strapped to a cockpit and some guns embedded in a small asteroid, built and maintained by special teams in Bhantkara heavy fleet carriers.

Weaponry: 2 Ion Guns, 4 Particle Guns, IR missiles

It's not a rock. It's a battle-rock, and it will rock you in battle. Yes, these are awful puns, but you knew they were coming. For the guns? Ouch, ouch, these are very annoying for everyone who comes in range.

Specific Upgrades:

Artificial Asteroids:

Rocks are tough. Like, you know, rocks. But there are tougher things than that, and these tougher things can be painted to look like rocks, which will have 40 % more durability over normal rocks. This rocks!

Hollowed-out Asteroids:

In a superb cycle of habitat design, the best Kilrathi architects have been hired to redesign the interior of rocks for the first time since Stone (which is a rock) Age on Kilrah (a really big rock that turns around a star). The optimized space allows the fighter to have more power, and therefore more speed. The fighter is now 20 % faster (and cooler).

HP: 800; Speed: 250; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x1, [Advanced Fighter] x2; Construction Cost: 200 RU; Construction Time: 20 seconds, 1 fighter per flight.

Rufus' Suggestions: Heh heh. This one is slow but incredibly tough. Even tougher with some upgrades. Powerful, tough and slow, it would be classified as a Heavy Fighter, but its role in the fleet is kinda different. Unlimited autonomy and a superb camouflage allow it to lurk in asteroid fields, undetected from unwary enemies as they do not appear on long-range sensors as enemy units (seriously, they don't have fighter icons in-game for this reason). Great sensor pickets and extremely dangerous ambush units that can ruin any light force's day in a few seconds with a lot of guns.

Strakha

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Description: The fighter that destroyed the Tiger's Claw and Blair's career in a single mission. The latest iteration of the infamous stealth fighter is a light craft valued for the ambush and recon capabilities offered by its cloaking device, usually seen on-board Bhantkara heavy fleet carriers.

Weaponry: 2 Laser Guns, 1 Meson Gun, FF missiles

Its armament is very light, and the Strakha will need numbers to defeat most enemies, and even then, the missiles will be the most useful tools rather than the guns, as they are better ambush weapons.

Specific Upgrades:

Advanced Cloaking Device:

An important efficiency improvement on the cloaking device allows the Strakha to remains invisible five times longer.

Improved ECM:

In the constant sensor/stealth race, an improvement to the Strakha's ECM suite will guarantee the resilience of its cloaking capabilities against a lot more enemy sensors.

HP: 140; Speed: 360; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x2, [Advanced Fighter] x2; Construction Cost: 480 RU; Construction Time: 45 seconds, 4 fighters per flight.

Rufus' Suggestions: A very effective replacement to the Darket in the recon role, the Strakha is probably the best craft in the whole game for this, short of a hypothetical cloak-capable Arrow. Fast and capable of remaining cloaked for long times, it offers an excellent capability to a Kilrathi commander, particularly one who likes to snipe enemy strategic targets with long range cruise missiles.

Heavy Fighters

The Kilrathi heavy fighters and bombers tend to be slightly less versatile as their Confederation counterparts, but are very good at what they do, with very heavy firepower. Their doctrine has shifted from long-range strikes to being used in coordination with fleet units, hedgehogs of death in the middle of larger battles.

Targeting Systems

An improvement to these heavy crafts' targeting systems, to increase their accuracy by 15 %.

Auto-tracking Guns

This additional improvement to the accuracy makes it increase from 15 % to 25 % for all your Heavy Fighters and Bombers.

Integrated Repair Systems

This improvement will accelerate by 15 % the repair speed of this class.

Repair Bots

Nothing says safety more than having your craft covered in tiny repair bots crawling all over your hull, pushing the repair speed bonus to 25 %.

Gothri

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Description: Anyone who flew in the Gemini sector knows the Gothri is a tough old gal, and an opponent to consider very carefully before attacking. The Bhantkara heavy fleet carriers sometimes fill their hangars with these crafts when more modern fighters are unavailable (read: grabbed by a certain Crown Prince to fill his own personal dreadnought's hangars in orbit of Kilrah).

Weaponry: 4 Particle Guns, IR missiles, 2 Torpedoes

A lot of strong guns coupled with missiles, and you have a very straightforward medium/heavy fighter that will ruin the day of pretty much everyone facing it.

Specific Upgrades:

General Maintenance:

An additional round of preventive maintenance can increase the old guns' accuracy by 5 %, which is always good to take.

Advanced Maintenance:

More maintenance work will also improve the effectiveness of the Gothri's engines by 10 %.

HP: 280; Speed: 300; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x1, [Interceptor] x2, [Advanced Fighter] x1; Construction Cost: 175 RU; Construction Time: 12 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: It's old, but it's tough. A decently armoured fighter that will have enough forward weaponry to rip bombers to shreds and a very good alternative altogether to the Dralthi, for a higher cost. Against it? Meh, I would suggest many light fighters sniping it with missiles, as it's better to avoid gun fights with it altogether given its serious firepower.

Paktahn

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Description: It's scary-looking, and its armament is even scarier. The main – and currently only – torpedo bomber in the Kilrathi fleet, it will do its job really well, wrecking oversized planet-killer guns as well as smaller ships.

Weaponry: 2 Ion Guns, 4 Plasma Gun, FF missiles, 6 Torpedoes, 1 Rear Turret

It's not supposed to face fighters, but if it does, they will feel it. If the situation asks for it, the Paktahn can act as a makeshift heavy fighter, but its agility is not up to this role.

Specific Upgrades:

Enhanced Warheads:

More boom for the… Kilrathi-buck? Heh, whatever. Better fusion warheads imply a 25 % increase in firepower for this bomber, and that's always awesome.

Antimatter Torpedoes:

The bonus to firepower goes up to 45 % as the torpedoes now use similar warheads to ship-mounted missiles and torpedoes.

HP: 600; Speed: 230; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x4, [Heavy Bomber] x1; Construction Cost: 250 RU; Construction Time: 20 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: Six torpedoes. This sounds awesome on paper, but isn't actually that great if you envision to use the Paktahn like a standard strike bomber, since there are few battles that will last long enough for every torpedo to be fired. Plus, it's likely to run out of fuel anyway in such situations. The Longbow will be objectively better at firing its payload quickly before running home. However, if you want to use the Paktahn as a torpedo platform around fleet units, the situation becomes an entirely different thing: without spending too much fuel, it can stay there and increase for a long time your number of torpedoes fired during a fleet battle, making it much more likely to overwhelm enemy defences.

Sorthak

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Description: What the hell?! This monstrosity is gigantic, a miniaturized corvette with the role of a superheavy fighter. It's absurd, but it seems to work, and is covered with enough weaponry to make everyone cry for their mom. Only Bhantkara heavy fleet carriers are large enough to maintain and deploy such beasts.

Weaponry: 2 Ion Guns, 4 Plasma Guns, 3 Meson Turrets

The same impressive forward firepower of a Paktahn, combined with medium turrets covering all angles. This stuff is going to clear everyone around itself very fast.

Specific Upgrades:

Reinforced Hulls:

The Sorthak can be even further reinforced to frustrate the living hell out of enemy pilots, for a 25 % bonus to survivability.

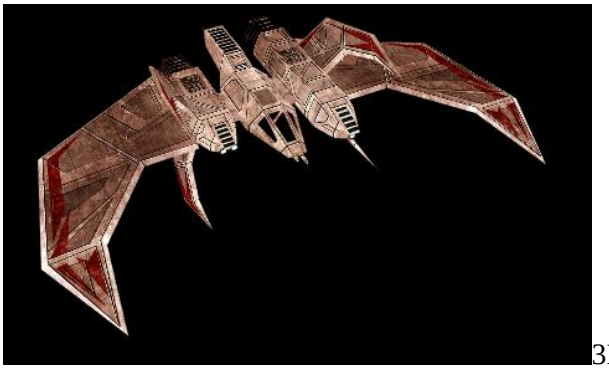
Survivability Redesign:

The second generation of superheavy fighter is even more durable than the enhanced first generation, with the bonus being 50 %.

HP: 800; Speed: 250; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x6, [Advanced Fighter] x4; Construction Cost: 500 RU; Construction Time: 30 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: OK, that one is genuinely scary. Its forward firepower will maul anyone stupid enough to face it while its meson turrets are more than enough to tip the scales in surrounding dogfights. It will completely aggro anyone you face and will be on the receiving end of many missiles, so take this into consideration. The cost for the deployment and maintenance of the Sorthak make a full force of it pretty much impossible, but as the core of a larger fighter/bomber force, it can be magnificent. Keep it in mind as a fast and versatile raider against enemy resource operations as it enjoys unlimited range.

Vaktoth

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Description: The standard Kilrathi heavy fighter offers good dogfighting capabilities combined with excellent gunnery to crush quickly enemy bombers and medium fighters.

Weaponry: 2 Meson Guns, 2 Plasma Gun, 1 Tachyon Gun, IR missiles

Straightforward heavy gun armament and good missiles make the Vaktoth an ideal candidate for space domination.

Specific Upgrades:

Improved Thrusters:

10 % more speed go a long way towards making the Vaktoth more effective at its primary role of ensuring aerial supremacy for the Kilrathi fleet.

Advanced Fuel Systems:

Replacing the current fuel systems by better ones allow the speed bonus to reach 25 % and therefore the speeds of current medium fighters.

HP: 290; Speed: 280; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x3, [Interceptor] x2; Construction Cost: 400 RU; Construction Time: 30 seconds, 2 fighters per flight.

Rufus' Suggestions: While the Vaktoth is a bit slow, its forward firepower make it extremely effective at cleaning house with enemy fighters currently stuck dogfighting its lighter brethren. Nor much more is there to be said for it, because in the end, its job is pretty simple and without complications.

Bloodfang

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Description: This superfighter was designed and built to the Crown Prince's specifications, and is supposed to be the ultimate in Kilrathi fighter design, with a high level of performance on all attributes. Its advanced logistics system only works on the Bhantkara heavy fleet carriers.

Weaponry: 2 Tachyon Guns, 2 Plasma Gun, IR missiles

Do I need to spell it out? This is pretty damn powerful.

Specific Upgrades:

None.

HP: 400; Speed: 420; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x4, [Elite Fighter] x1; Construction Cost: 1200 RU; Construction Time: 75 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: It's slightly tougher and faster than the Excalibur, while being a lot more expensive and restricted to very limited production runs (and has unlimited range, just like the Excalibur). But it's the best all-around fighter for the Kilrathi forces, so if you think you can spare the money and need the edge, go for it.

Corvettes and Frigates

This is where the Kilrathi diverge probably the most from the Confederation. Unlike the latter who favours its CAP to protect and attack fleets, the Kilrathi Empire has developed various small and medium warships with the goal of making their task forces as tough as possible while pushing the fight to the enemy. They offer the tools to do tactically what CVE like the *Tarawa* did strategically: push deeply in enemy lines with important firepower and attack critical targets before heavy reinforcements can be summoned.

Like all classes, the escorts have various improvements available for research:

Improved Firepower

Both for raids and fleet defence, inflicting as much damage as possible as fast as possible is a necessity. Improvements to both energy and missile weapons will increase the average damage done by 15 %.

Optimized Firepower

Further refinements to the escorts' armaments will push that damage bonus to 25 %.

Capital-grade Thrusters

Speed is life for escorts and raiders. It allows forward defence and a safe escape from pursuers. Replacing all of their thrusters by ones usually found on capital ship gives them 15 % higher sustained speed. Painting them in red was tried but did not improve the speed.

Improved Generators

Those new thrusters being made for much larger ships, they obviously can receive more power to use them to their true potential, making the speed bonus climb up to a staggering 40 %, allowing fast redeployment of these small ships, maybe even outrunning some bombers. This makes for excellent raiders all over the place.

Dukara-class Escort Corvette


3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

An escort corvette, with just enough armament to protect a small convoy and repel groups of fighters. It can usually be found either on the outskirts of a battle fleet, as a picket that will hold the enemy attackers long enough for the CAP to avenge it, or *en masse* near the fleet to provide massed turret fire.

Weaponry: Two (2) Laser Turrets, Four (4) IR missile launchers

The armament for this corvette is a beautiful trap, with a pair of turrets that will try to take pot shots at enemies, but most importantly a very dangerous set of missile launchers that will tend to eliminate any strike craft that loiters too long around the Dukara.

Specific Upgrades:

Experienced Crews: Despite the corvette's life expectancy being low in combat, investing in experienced crews for these will make their sacrifice even more effective, as their accuracy will improve by roughly 25 %.

Advanced Fire Control: Kilrathi accountants (yes, these do exist, and yes, they are ferocious) showed that it would be less expensive in the long run, plus more efficient in combat effectiveness, to go back to lower-caste crews using better computer systems, pushing the accuracy bonus to 45 %. The bodies of the defeated accountants who suggested the previous upgrade will be disintegrated within the hour.

HP: 8000; Speed: 200; Logistics Footprint: [Corvette] x1; Construction Cost: 600 RU; Construction Time: 25 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: It's cheap and can be annoying, particularly if the enemy ends up being stuck near it without being able to destroy it, as it will fire enough missiles to depopulate an entire air group if given enough time. If the enemy spares a torpedo or two on it, it's most likely dead, though lucky shots do exist.

Kamrani-class Strike Corvette



3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

One of the most feared sights in rear line sectors, the Kamrani is the epitome of the light raider, an expendable unit that moves fast enough to avoid patrols and can wreck undefended installations and convoys quite easily. Its very existence justifies numerous annoying and expensive patrols from the enemy, which is, by itself, a success.

Weaponry: Four (4) Laser Turrets, One (1) Tachyon Turret, One (1) Long Range Cruise Missile Launcher (optional)

The gun armament of the Kamrani is a bit larger than for the Dukara, and it will make it a tough customer for many patrols, even granting it decent odds of survival against single torpedoes if the crews are reactive enough. The trump card is, however, its launcher, allowing it to hammer strategic targets from standoff ranges.

Specific Upgrades:

Kamrani Missile Launchers: Activating these launchers turns the Kamrani from a heavy escort corvette to a full-fledged strike one, and one hell of a headache for everyone else.

Long Range Sensors: Being able to see what you are sniping is useful, as our accountants decided in a bloody claw-fight that spending for better sensors was more rational than deploying useless corvettes in greater numbers. Therefore, they will now receive a 150 % bonus to passive sensors' range.

Passive Scanner Array: The dying sounds you heard were the conclusion of a financial dispute over the benefits offered by making strike corvettes double as recon units compared to the additional deployment of dedicated recon fighters. The recon fighters' proponent is now cooling down in his own blood, so it seems the funding for better passive sensors can be secured. These will give a 400 % bonus to passive sensors' range.

HP: 12000; Speed: 200; Logistics Footprint: [Corvette] x2; Construction Cost: 750 RU; Construction Time: 50 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: You will love it or hate it, depending on your side of this beauty. It's cheap, and with enough production lines, can be used to spam cruise missiles at your opponent while being survivable enough to require a large deployment to ensure its destruction. A couple of them can easily lay waste to an unprotected mining operation before leaving, and as part of a battle fleet, they seriously improve the standoff capabilities to keep enemy fighters and defences busy. Plus, their turrets will be extremely annoying on anyone who flies close enough.

Zakhari-class Escort Frigate

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Its confirmed identification has been the source of many annoyed comments and the general development of the swear words vocabulary among the bomber community of the Terran Confederation Navy. A heavy escort that will make life more difficult for any strike craft around, as well as a useful element to any battle fleet.

Weaponry: Four (4) Tachyon Turrets, Eight (8) IR missile launchers, One (1) Long Range Cruise Missile Launcher (optional)

The Zakhari will not go down alone if attacked by strike crafts. Its turret armament is very dangerous for them, will ensure destruction of incoming missiles and torpedoes in a single hit while its very heavy short range missile armament will slaughter any air group stuck in a prolonged battle near it.

Specific Upgrades:

Zakhari Missile Launchers: Activating these launchers turns the Zakhari from an escort frigate to a multirole one that will contribute to the fleet's output of cruise missiles.

Modular Hull: The armament of the Zakhari was deemed, after many heated arguments, sufficient, and the accountant's debates settled on reinforcing its survivability by making its hull fully modular, which made the ship 25 % tougher.

Armour Plating: A better internal structure can only be improved by better external resistance, and budget for additional armour plating was won through sweat and blood (mostly blood, though), raising the health bonus to 50 %.

HP: 20000; Speed: 180; Logistics Footprint: [Frigate] x1; Construction Cost: 1000 RU; Construction Time: 50 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: That one will definitely be your best friend whenever you get attacked, and a priority target for enemy bombers due to its heavy missile load. Protect it and it will ruin most attacks by itself.

Zakhari-class Electronic Warfare Frigate



3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Just as annoying as her cousin, but very differently, this electronic warfare variant of the Zakhari will reduce enemy combat capabilities of all enemy units within a large radius of its emitters, tipping the scales before a single shot is fired.

Weaponry: Four (4) Laser Turrets, Electronic Warfare equipment.

The turrets of this ship are much lighter than the escort variant, and missiles were removed. However, its effect on an attack force can be described as more dangerous than a few more guns and missiles: within 12,000 m, the accuracy and firepower of enemy weapons are reduced by 15 %, friendly cloaked units are harder to detect and enemy sensor range (both active and passive) is halved.

Specific Upgrades:

None.

HP: 20000; Speed: 170; Logistics Footprint: [Frigate] x2, [Electronic Warfare] x1; Construction Cost: 1250 RU; Construction Time: 50 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: A painful force multiplier, or, in this case, a force divider. It will grant you local recon superiority and will make enemy forces less effective in combat. Use it in combination with other escort ships or as the core of a raider group and you will seriously mess with the other players.

Capital Ships

The heavy-hitters of the Kilrathi Fleet, these ships are, despite the importance of strike crafts, the final element allowing the battle's decision. Quite slow, they are very well armed, and represent an active threat to most enemy forces by their varied weaponry. The Kilrathi capital ships distinguish themselves from their human counterparts by the presence of dedicated standoff weaponry in the form of long range cruise missile launchers. These give the initiative to Kilrathi fleets by allowing them to damage or even destroy enemy heavy units before entering gun range. These missiles are usually the first sign of an incoming imperial Kilrathi battle fleet.

Like other categories before them, they can be upgraded as a whole:

Improved Accuracy

Having a lot of guns isn’t very useful if these guns cannot hit a planet. The next generation of targeting computers will make it 15 % more likely for all our turrets to actually nail their targets.

Superior Accuracy

Further automatization with expert systems push the accuracy bonus from 15 % to 25 %, making it more likely for point defence to pick out those pesky torpedoes and missiles.

Reinforced Hulls

Additional armoured plates are set up in the most vulnerable parts of the capital ships following post-battle damage assessments, increasing the survivability of these warships by 15 %.

New Hull Designs

Several compartments can be replaced by more modular systems, themselves capable of maintaining functionality despite catastrophic damage in nearby decks, pushing the survivability bonus to 40 %.

Dubav-class Light Fleet Carrier

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

A common sight, this light fleet carrier offers support capabilities for the basic fighters and bombers of the Kilrathi war machine. Properly escorted, it can project considerable amounts of firepower to the enemy.

Weaponry: Ten (10) Laser Turrets

Heavy defensive armament, but it won't save the kittens on its own if bombers attack with numbers on their side.

Specific Upgrades:

Optimized Hangar Zones: Lessons learned with the Hakaga supercarriers led to better practices for maintenance and reparation of strike crafts inside hangars, increasing the repair speed by 20 %.

Strike Carrier Configuration: The deep strikes performed by the Terran Confederation led to a rethinking of the Dubav's role, and with this package, it can increase its speed by 20 %, making it better suited as a raid group's core.

HP: 70000; Speed: 150; Logistics Footprint: [Capital Ship] x2; Construction Cost: 1500 RU; Construction Time: 105 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: The basic carrier. It does its job and can serve as a rally point and supply base for fleets. Outside full fleet commitment, it should be your option of choice.

Bhantkara-class Heavy Fleet Carrier

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

One of the biggest ships in service, this heavy fleet carrier comes with specialized logistics equipment allowing it to field every single strike craft class of the Kilrathi forces. Only seen with the largest battlegroups, it is a tough nut to crack.

Weaponry: Sixteen (16) Laser Turrets

Yep, this one will have some pretty intense fireworks. Of course, it won't be attacked by small forces, so escort it well. But if small forces stumble on it, they are in for a world of hurt.

Specific Upgrades:

Optimized Hangar Zones: Lessons learned with the Hakaga supercarriers led to better practices for maintenance and reparation of strike crafts inside hangars, increasing the repair speed by 50 %. The larger hangars in the Bhantkara allow for the increased effectiveness of these new practices in comparison to the Dubav.

Autonomous Assembly: The Shiraak class deep strike carrier led to breakthroughs in automated assembly systems, and some of this equipment can be adapted for Bhantkara class ships, leading to a 50 % increase in on-board manufacturing speed.

HP: 155000; Speed: 150; Logistics Footprint: [Capital Ship] x4; Construction Cost: 3500 RU; Construction Time: 120 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: You will need at least one of these since it is the only Kilrathi carrier capable of building the advanced classes of strike crafts. In addition, it can represent the core of your main strike fleet, being extremely well defended by itself and capable of flooding the field with Ekapshi fast interceptors to ruin the enemy's day while your capital ships fire cruise missiles all day long.

Ralarrad-class Light Destroyer

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

This ship is usually found either in pairs or patrolling alone, a fast responder to raiders or a raider itself. The lightest of Kilrathi capital ships, its shape is a painful reminder of its status as a thorn in the enemy's foot.

Weaponry: Seven (7) Laser Turrets, One (1) Tachyon Turrets, One (1) Long Range Cruise Missile Launcher (optional)

This ship lacks dedicated anti-ship gunnery and while its cruise missiles can be annoying, they will not help much against a properly armed warship. It will however be extremely painful against lighter opponents.

Specific Upgrades:

Ralarrad Missile Launchers: Activating these launchers turns the Ralarrad from an escort destroyer to a multirole one that will contribute to the fleet's output of cruise missiles or a much heavier cousin to the Kamrani strike corvettes.

Improved Engines: This destroyer will not face capital ships directly and live to tell the tale, but at the same time must be able to force the combat against the lighter units it is able to destroy, so improving its engines is a necessity, giving an additional 25 % speed to the ship.

Optimized Engines: Prototype antimatter engines can further improve the effectiveness of the light destroyer by pushing its speed bonus to 45 %.

HP: 65000; Speed: 160; Logistics Footprint: [Capital Ship] x1; Construction Cost: 1700 RU; Construction Time: 100 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: The heavier cousin of the Kamrani, it will offer the same cruise missile capability but with a much tougher package that most patrols will be unable to harm. As a Reconnaissance in Force package, it can excel, being very fast if upgraded and destroy a lot of soft targets. It will die quickly in close range combat against anything heavier than a frigate, and even then, smaller Confederation ships can outgun the Ralarrad with AMG guns and short-range torpedoes.

Ralaxath-class Heavy Destroyer

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

A heavy escort ship, the Ralaxath can more than hold its own in ship-to-ship combat, and is probably the first real ship of the line for the Kilrathi fleet, with good all-around armament that will pummel to oblivion non-capital ships.

Weaponry: Ten (10) Laser Turrets, Two (2) Tachyon Turrets, One (1) Antimatter Turret, One (1) Long Range Cruise Missile Launcher (optional)

This armament is way more dangerous than the Light Destroyer's. Very heavy anti-air gunnery are combined with short- and long-range anti-ship capability.

Specific Upgrades:

Ralaxath Missile Launchers: This upgrade will offer long-range anti-ship capabilities to this destroyer, contributing the total cruise missile output of its fleet.

Turret Accuracy: Having a lot of turrets helps only if they can hit accurately. New targeting algorithms improve this by 25 %.

Kilrathi-Machine Interface: These experimental interfaces will allow gunners to control with greater efficiency their weapon, leading to a predicted accuracy boost raised to 50 %.

HP: 100000; Speed: 140; Logistics Footprint: [Capital Ship] x2, [Heavy Destroyer] x1; Construction Cost: 2500 RU; Construction Time: 110 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: Now we're talking. This ship can do it all, slugging it out while mauling enemy strike crafts viciously. It is a small ship of the line, and must be treated accordingly. Be careful with it, as it shares the short-range weakness of the Ralarrad against enemy capital ships, with only one AMG turret and no short-range torpedoes. Beyond this, it is a sure bet for most jobs.

Fralath-class Light Cruiser

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

This cruiser is there to provide direct fire support and will do it really well, crushing ruthlessly almost anything else in space with its heavy armament. It will be among priority targets for enemy bombers in any case.

Weaponry: Eleven (11) Laser Turrets, Four (4) Antimatter Turrets, One (1) Long Range Cruise Missile Launcher (optional)

That's it. A whole lot of punch with an optimal firing angle towards the front. Few ships, if any, can survive long under this kind of firepower, while strike crafts will have a tough job breaking through these defences.

Specific Upgrades:

Ralaxath Missile Launchers: This upgrade will offer long-range anti-ship capabilities to this cruiser, contributing the total cruise missile output of its fleet.

Long-Range Scanners: One of the roles usually attributed to light cruisers is to ensure the surveillance of the defence perimeter around the battlegroup. New sensor arrays can give a 150 % range bonus to the primary sensors of this ship.

Advanced Sensors: Having pioneered the field of cloaking devices, the Kilrathi know better than anyone else the danger these create to any capital ship. To fulfil the surveillance roles properly, the close-range anti-cloak sensors can see their ranges multiplied by *eight* with this upgrade.

HP: 135000; Speed: 110; Logistics Footprint: [Capital Ship] x3, [Cruiser] x1; Construction Cost: 3000 RU; Construction Time: 125 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: This cruiser will wreck most enemy units by itself and getting it into range of a strategic target is enough to consider that target eliminated. A good part of an offensive will be summed up in keeping it safe from enemy strike crafts. If this can be done, victory is virtually ensured.

Fralthi II-class Heavy Cruiser

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

This heavy cruiser is the backbone of many Strike Action Groups, the pinnacle of direct heavy combat for the Kilrathi fleet. It couples a direct firepower superior to that of a light cruiser with additional fighter support capabilities, making it virtually autonomous. But not unstoppable, as many wrecks can show.

Weaponry: Eleven (11) Laser Turrets, Four (4) Antimatter Turrets, Two (2) Torpedo Launchers, One (1) Long Range Cruise Missile Launcher (optional)

The same gun armament of the light cruiser, with slightly better arcs and two torpedo launchers that can definitely make a difference in combat.

Specific Upgrades:

Fralthi II Missile Launchers: This upgrade will offer long-range anti-ship capabilities to this cruiser, contributing the total cruise missile output of its fleet.

Specialized Damage Control Teams: When capital ships slug it out, it is as important to deal massive amounts of damage as it is to survive them. With dedicated damage control teams, we can boost the self-repair capabilities of this class by 50 %.

Regenerative Nanites: Experimental nanorobots can be seeded on the armour plates of these cruisers, helping increase even further their self-repair capabilities, raising the bonus to 80 %.

HP: 180000; Speed: 80; Logistics Footprint: [Capital Ship] x4, [Cruiser] x1; Construction Cost: 4500 RU; Construction Time: 150 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: The Fralthi II is the main puncher of the fleet, and most importantly, your tank. It will survive incredible amounts of damage and will repair them on the go. In addition to this, it gives limited fighter support capabilities so that a fleet is not *entirely* crippled by the loss of its carrier, while increasing the overall resupply cycle of escorts. On the other hand, it's damn slow and the time you lose waiting for it to reach its target can make you lose the battle. Hard choices…

Hvar'Kann-class Dreadnought



3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Oh God. You remember my comment about having something to compensate? Well, the Crown Prince definitely belongs to that case and instead of talking it out with a therapist or going to Vegas, he built that… thing. That's… oh, crap.

Weaponry: Ha ha ha ha ha! Oh, wait, you seriously ask? Sixteen (16) Superheavy Antimatter Turrets, Twelve (12) Superheavy Tachyon Turrets, Twenty-Four (24) Superheavy Laser Turrets

Why, yes, each of this ship's turrets is much bigger and more powerful than their equivalents on other ships. And, yes, this madcat had more of them than entire fleets, on a single vessel. Do I need to draw you a damn picture?!

Specific Upgrades:

Royal Palace: We only spent the GDP of a few solar systems on this ship and we have some cash left, so why shouldn't we build a full-scale replica of the Imperial Palace from Kilrah on-board this ship? I mean, it's not as if we had any accountant left. Those cats clawed their eyes out when they saw the bill for the ship itself!

HP: 1500000; Speed: 100; Logistics Footprint: [Capital Ship] x 10, [Superweapon] x1; Construction Cost: 60000 RU; Construction Time: 450 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: You just made Tolwyn look like a rational, sane and balanced individual. Congratulations. Now go to town with your damn ship before someone one-shoots it with a Behemoth. But if this doesn't happen, do whatever you want, dude, dudette, because you just bought the game out from the other players.

Now I need a strong drink, because you actually went and built it. And let me guess, you also built the Royal Palace in it, just because you could, right?

Union of Border Worlds:

The Border Worlds are a group of independent human systems on the edges of the Terran Confederation, with a number of their systems having been the frontlines during the War. Close allies of the Terran Confederation for obvious reasons, their own forces were mostly made of hands-me-down Confederation equipment, from fighters to capital ships. Near the end of the War and after it, however, their engineers and design bureaus started working on new equipment while maintaining a healthy tradition of repurposing obsolete equipment in cheap but effective front-line units, often in very different roles from their initial purposes. And what they couldn't buy or design, they outright stole in order to ensure their safety in a troubled political situation after the War.

As with the Confederation, the units will be divided into five categories here:

- Light and Medium Fighters, pictured with a Triangle tactical icon,
- Bombers and Heavy Fighters, pictured with a Square tactical icon,
- Corvettes and Frigates, pictured with a Diamond tactical icon,
- Capital Ships and Production Facilities, pictured with a Parallelogram tactical icon,
- Utility Crafts, pictured with a Reverse Diamond tactical icon

The Border Worlds tend to have cheap units, usually inferior to their Confederation or Kilrathi counterparts, but some upgrades can make them surprisingly dangerous against many enemies. If backed to the wall and allowed to bring all of their toys, the Border Worlders can show themselves exceedingly resourceful.

[Rufus' Note: some new specialized units might still be introduced to the faction and some special weapons might be a bit buggy at the time, particularly the Leech ones]

Light and Medium Fighters

The Union of Border Worlds' military is first and foremost a militia, with the equipment that goes with it: a lot of obsolete fighters from the middle of the Kilrathi War, acquired *en masse* when phased out of Confederation service. In addition to these death traps, various fighters got upgraded to give them a fighting chance against modern threats while some more advanced prototypes ended up being built near the end of the War, from new designs or stolen plans. Their chaotic origin and supply chains preclude the existence of general upgrades and such improvements must be done on a per-class basis.

P-64 Ferret



3D model and textures: Klavs81 (very minor texture edits by Rufus Shinra)

Description: A very small patrol fighter that literally goes back to before the Kilrathy War. Yep, it's that damn old. Cheap and weakly armed, its high speed made it a decent fit for patrol roles thorough the War and only the arrival of second-hand Arrow and Darket after the War threatens its domination in Police and In-System Patrol hangar rosters. For the Union of Border Worlds, this is usually the first responder in any crisis, which doubles as a decent enough recon fighter, but not much more.

Weaponry: 2 Mass Driver Guns

A pair of guns, no missiles, the craft gets overshadowed by everything in terms of firepower, even other light fighters.

Specific Upgrades:

Targeting LIDARs:

The fighter is made so cheaply that adding a simple laser ranger would improve its accuracy by roughly 15 %.

Software Update:

Most of the Militia's fighters are running on decade old operating systems and updating that could increase that bonus to 25 %. We will just pirate it and… *gets jumped on by a wild Kilrathi accountant* *Growl. Software piracy is bad, kids. Pay the licence or you will get jumped upon like this cool software pirate.*

HP: 80; Speed: 390; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x1; Construction Cost: 360 RU; Construction Time: 15 seconds, 4 fighters per flight.

Rufus' Suggestions: It's pretty pad as far as fighters go. Sure, you can use these as missile meatshields or zerg-rush the enemy with them, but I'm at a loss over what you can do with them. Well, you can use them as pickets and long-range patrols, they do have a good range. Heh, that's the role in which they were used anyway.

F-54 Epee



3D model and textures: Klavs81 (very minor texture edits by Rufus Shinra)

Description: After some time, the Militia realized it needed some way to destroy pirate frigates without ramming fighters or getting them in conveniently placed and abnormally dense asteroid fields. It took some time but the idea made its way into procurement, which obviously chose the cheapest option available: a fighter with even less protection than the Ferret. Yes, that's actually possible. This *interesting* and *original* tactical choice, coupled with bargain-bin torpedoes, did technically fill the requirements. Technically.

Weaponry: 2 Laser Guns, One (1) Light Torpedo

Even less forward firepower than the Ferret. Can you believe it? Its torpedo is also the bargain-bin variant, with the firepower to damage, not destroy, a frigate. Yep, this is bad.

Specific Upgrades:

New Torpedoes:

A massive investment could correct the screw-up from procurement and replace the light torpedoes with heavy ones, which would dramatically change the usefulness of this cheap and plentiful light bomber, as its firepower would be increased… *ten-fold*.

HP: 60; Speed: 270; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x1, [Light Bomber] x1; Construction Cost: 150 RU; Construction Time: 8 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: It's an awful bomber, period. It has, however, two redeeming points. First of all, it will offer the possibility to spam a lot and a lot of bad torpedoes to cover the attack run of better bombers and torpedoes, making a proper defence much harder. The second thing is that if you get the very expensive upgrade done, you can suddenly spam a lot and a lot of good torpedoes and zerg-rush everyone in endless waves of bombers that will wreck almost any defence or fleet. Even the mighty dreadnought will fall easily against these.

CF-105 Scimitar


3D model and textures: Klavs81 (very minor texture edits by Rufus Shinra)

Description: An iconic medium fighter from the Terran Confederation, serving in different variants for over a century. This version, modernized with some more recent avionics, has been refurbished by the Union of Border Worlds as tensions with the Terran Confederation increased in intensity, offering a cheap way to fill in the metaphorical holes in the line with a fighter that still had to be taken seriously.

Weaponry: 4 Mass Driver Guns, FF Missiles

A decent punch that will maul light fighters and even hold its own some time against basic medium fighters.

Specific Upgrades:

Second-hand Engines:

Yes, second-hand engines are an upgrade for these fighters, because they are on average flying with fourth-hand ones. Having unclogged hydraulics alone will improve the speed of the fleet's Scimitar groups by around 15 %.

New Engines:

This early Christmas gift will raise the speed bonus to 30 % and will have your mailbox littered with thank you letters from all the Militia's mechanics.

HP: 220; Speed: 250; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x1, [Interceptor] x1; Construction Cost: 480 RU; Construction Time: 24 seconds, 4 fighters per flight.

Rufus' Suggestions: A decent all-around medium fighter except for its speed. It barely reaches, when fully upgraded, the speed of vanilla medium fighters from other factions. Other than that, it's a cheap way to improve the close-range defence of heavier ships.

Banshee



3D model and textures: DefianceIndustries

Description: The symbol of the Union of Border Worlds' aerospace design capabilities, this light fighter is the most advanced human design for such a category. Fast, nimble and yet very versatile with its experimental gun weaponry, it is a cornerstone of the Militia's heavier forces, available once the main fleet has been called.

Weaponry: 4 Laser Guns, 2 Leech Guns (optional), 2 Scatter Guns (planned), HS Missiles

Fast-firing guns with good missiles are completed with the central hardpoints and their EMP weaponry as well as their high power scatter guns.

Specific Upgrades:

Lightened Frame:

A good way to increase the speed of a light fighter is, pretty obviously, to make it even lighter. With lighter frames, we can get a 10 % improvement.

Overloaded Engines:

We can raise the speed bonus to 40 % by overloading the engines. Of course, it will reduce the lifetime of the fighters, but that won't matter much in the end if the crisis with the Confederation doesn't end quickly.

HP: 250; Speed: 420; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x2, [Interceptor] x1; Construction Cost: 450 RU; Construction Time: 25 seconds, 3 fighters per flight.

Rufus' Suggestions: One of the best fighters of the game. Pretty cheap, but extremely fast while surprisingly tough, its light armament is not much of an issue when it gets used *en masse* or as a hit-and-run fighter. With a decent range, it can be the ideal candidate for long-range CAP.

Rapier J


3D model and textures: DefianceIndustries

Description: The F-44 J Rapier is a bit of an oddity in the Union Militia. Not only is it visually distinct in a naval air arm that favors functionality and ease of maintenance over technical wizardry; but due to its design as a dedicated space superiority fighter, its home in a force that relishes multi-role fighters for pretty much every front-line deployment leaves the Rapier as an odd-ship-out. Though largely relegated to a second line status within the Union Militia, the Rapier J still fills out an important role as a fleet interceptor, convoy escort, and advanced trainer.

Weaponry: 2 Laser Guns, 2 Particle Guns, 1 Stormfire Gun Pod (optional), FF Missiles

An average level of firepower for a medium fighter, with good tools in long range combat with the Stormfire pod and the close range one with its missiles.

Specific Upgrades:

Stormfire Pod:

The Stormfire gun, a hybrid chemical/electro-magnetic gun, fires a large quantity of solid shells towards its target and shows optimal effectiveness when fired in long bursts, making it an ideal weapon against large and slow targets such as mining operations or bombers.

Updated Armour:

Improved armour plates can go a long way towards keeping these frames flight-worthy in combat, increasing their survivability by 20 %.

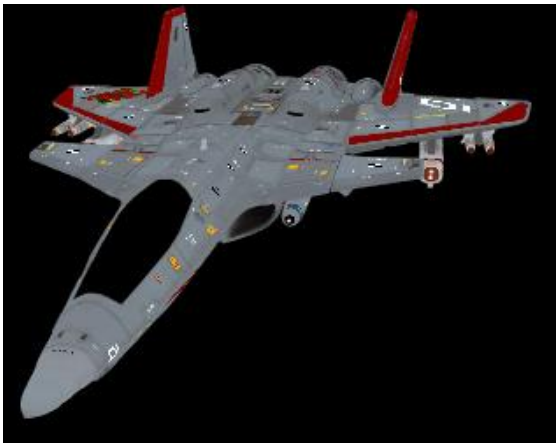
Super Ceramics:

The accidental discovery of these new ceramics, caused by a malfunction of the food dispensers aboard a Militia carrier, was quickly used for additional armouring of the Rapier J on-board, with great effectiveness, pushing the survivability increase to 45 %. This upgrade calls Tech Chief Z. Morgenstern and trades some supplies with her for her "recipe".

HP: 250; Speed: 280; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x1, [Interceptor] x2; Construction Cost: 450 RU; Construction Time: 24 seconds, 3 fighters per flight.

Rufus' Suggestions: Amusingly, this medium fighter is cheaper to deploy than its corresponding light fighter, but it trades speed for good sustained firepower and toughness once properly upgraded. A good choice to pursue heavy fighters, as its Stormfire Pod will show all its effectiveness in such a situation.

F-95 Morningstar



3D model and textures: Klavs81 (very minor texture edits by Rufus Shinra)

Description: The Morningstar was a stillborn superfighter concept from the Terran Confederation, destroyed as part of the False Peace's Armistice. Very heavily armed, it was the true successor of the famous Sabre, capable of doing most missions by itself. Unknown to either the Confederation or the Empire, Border Worlds' operatives stole copies of the plans for the Militia. Years later, a slight redesign by the local bureau Bloch Aviation made it possible to produce the fighter without any part from the Confederation, making it a very secret ace in the hole for the Union of Border Worlds.

Weaponry: 2 Mass Driver Guns, 4 Particle Guns, 1 Mace Nuclear Rocket (optional), IR Missiles

The gunnery on this fighter is nothing short than superb, offering very heavy firepower, and the Mace is capable of depopulating entire fighter groups if detonated in their midst, while severely damaging capital ships.

Specific Upgrades:

Nuclear Weapons:

Sunshine in a can. Oppenheimer's Light. The Big Stick. Many names for what is in the end a strategic thermonuclear weapon designed not for capital ship armour penetration but for area damage. The medium range rocket, once fired, zips straight ahead until it hopefully hits a target. At that point, a twin-stage warhead activates, the first stage expelling numerous canisters of fusion fuel that will get remotely initiated by the second stage, where a thermonuclear device initiates, firing X-Ray lasers straight in the canisters as it explodes. The secondary canisters, becoming small nuclear weapons themselves, ensure a massive area of damage around the rocket.

HP: 250; Speed: 390; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x1, [Interceptor] x4, [Morningstar] x1; Construction Cost: 400 RU; Construction Time: 20 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: Bwahahahahahahahahaha! I'm still laughing, weeks after the fact, of the very first Mace shot, which happened in a MP game. The superb take-off of the rocket, the speed of it and then the complete annihilation of two dozen fighters in a single fireball. This was a magical moment, one I cherish fondly. This rocket is hard to intercept and utterly devastating against fighters sticking near a large target. Fire it when the enemy is landing or launching an air wing and you will be on the receiving end of many, many insults while you grin as a madman. This is the trump card, the ace in the hole and it will make you an asshole for using it. But it's so sweet.

Plus, the fighter is both excellent itself and cool-looking, an almost-Excalibur in pure dogfight.

Ooooooh, pretty canards too!

Heavy Fighters and Bombers

Designing bombers ain't so hard, you know. Take a craft big enough for torpedoes and add torpedoes. The rest is details, as they say. Of course, the rest of the known galaxy disagrees with that sentiment, but the rest of the known galaxy also happens to have proper funding for its bomber design bureau, so if you want to see nicely engineered dedicated bombers, go elsewhere. If, on the other hand, you want to see jury-rigged bombers made up from completely unrelated crafts, please stay here. As with Light and Medium Fighters, they have class-wide upgrades:

Afterburner Fuel

Extra afterburner tanks can slightly increase the average speeds of the UBW bombers, therefore improving their chances of getting their payload on target. Expect the fighters to go 10 % faster globally.

New Fuel Mixes

It so happens that the fuels used by the Militia were made according to compositions described in hopelessly outdated manuals. Getting the last chemistry handbooks and Confed plans could increase the speed boost to 25 %.

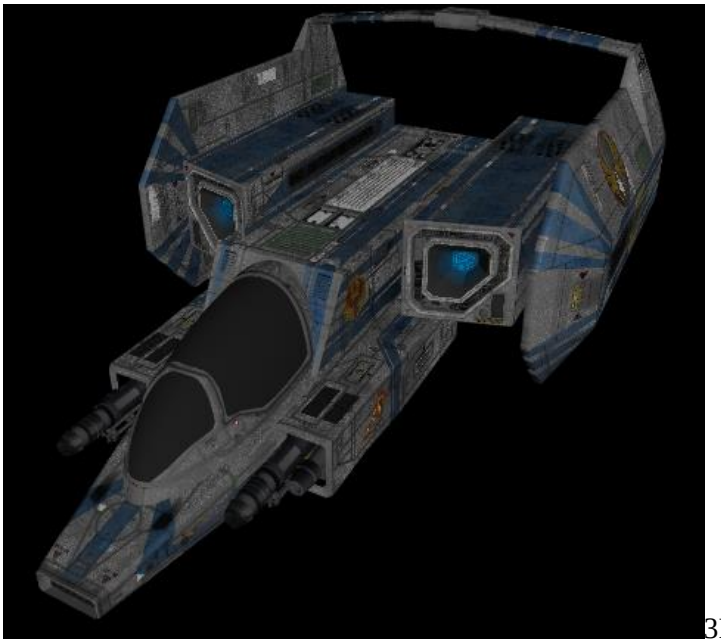
Kilrathi Warheads

When the Treaty of Torgo disarmed the Kilrathi forces, most Kilrathi considered it a dishonour. Some of them saw it as an opportunity for a quick profit. Capitalism, ho!

Fissile Material Purifying

Most of the torpedoes in storage are old, some second-hand and their thermonuclear warheads' fuel has been decaying. With a regeneration program, we could increase the firepower from the previous 15 % improvement to 25 %.

Vindicator



3D model and textures: DefianceIndustries

Superficially similar to the Kilrathi Ekapshi, the Vindicator is first and foremost an atmospheric fighter that was heavily modified to perform space combat missions without forgetting its initial role. It fills a strange role of a lightly-armoured medium fighter with a good punch, designed to do all missions by itself: one of the first takes on the omnirole concept.

Weaponry: Two (2) Tachyon Guns, Two (2) Laser Guns, Two (2) Stormfire Guns, IR missiles, Three (3) Torpedoes, One (1) Rear Gun

Its gun armament is decent, nothing more. It will be enough to give a hard time to light and medium fighters, but won't tip the scales against heavier ones. Its torpedoes, on the other hand, are a really welcome addition to the fight, making the Avenger almost redundant. Almost.

Specific Upgrades:

Surveillance Package: The only role the Vindicator didn't do was recon, so this first passive sensor package should correct the oversight, increasing its coverage by an additional 150 %.

Active Sensors: Better radars and lidars will double the active scan rage of this craft, making it a decent recon fighter on its own.

Stormfire Guns: These projectile guns are ancient technology, pre-spaceflight, but with modern systems, they can still pack a punch, and activating them would increase the firepower on slow targets.

HP: 275; Speed: 300; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x1, [Heavy Fighter] x1; Construction Cost: 150 RU; Construction Time: 12 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: One size fits all. Get enough of them and you can deal with almost all threats (except maybe light and advanced fighters). It will not be the best at anything, but it can do everything, so if in doubt, send a group of Vindicator, you can't go wrong with them.

Avenger

3D model and textures: DefianceIndustries

It's ugly, isn't it? Well, that's because the Avenger is a shuttle with torpedoes, missiles and guns crammed everywhere. The kind of mash-up one would expect to see during the Battle of Earth, not during Fleet Reviews. But it's relatively cheap (bulk purchases of shuttles are nice) and in the end, the torpedoes are delivered, as long as the shuttle survives.

Weaponry: Two (2) Mass Driver Guns, Two (2) Photon Guns, Two (2) Stormfire Guns, FF missiles, Four (4) Torpedoes, Two (2) Rear Guns

A decent gun armament, but nothing really powerful, to be honest. The Stormfire guns can help a bit against slow targets, but don't send a shuttle in a gunfight.

Specific Upgrades:

Armour Plates: It actually helps if the bombers can reach their targets to fire their torpedoes and replacing the shuttle-grade armour plates with Marines dropships' ones is a good start, giving them 20 % more survivability (though not coolness).

Antimatter Torpedoes: Using the same type of warheads as our capital ships' torpedoes would help increasing the firepower of our bombers, giving them a serious 45 % boost.

Stormfire Guns: These projectile guns are ancient technology, pre-spaceflight, but with modern systems, they can still pack a punch, and activating them would increase the firepower on slow targets.

HP: 400; Speed: 260; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x4, [Heavy Fighter] x2, [Torpedo Bomber] x1; Construction Cost: 200 RU; Construction Time: 10 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: It's a lot of firepower hampered by relative weakness on the defensive side. It does have a good rear armament, so that counts for something, and with all its upgrades, it becomes a better bomber than the Vindicator, so if I had to make a suggestion, it would be to stick with the Vindicator first and only shift to the Avenger when you can make it useful. Still, it's the fastest of the heavy bombers, so yay?

Corvettes and Frigates

The Union of Border Worlds, being a rather small political entity with a limited amount of sectors and population centres, isn't used to the typical roles of a rather young Navy that just started to take over roles usually carried by its Militia. The very existence of the Navy is due to the impending need for heavy firepower, and the existence of an omnipresent Militia led to the patrol missions to be put on the backburner. All of this to indicate that, well, the forces of the Union do not field modern corvettes and its frigates are rather old.

Like all classes, the escorts have various improvements available for research:

Improved Firepower

Both for raids and fleet defence, inflicting as much damage as possible as fast as possible is a necessity. Improvements to both energy and missile weapons will increase the average damage done by 15 %.

Optimized Firepower

Further refinements to the escorts' armaments will push that damage bonus to 25 %.

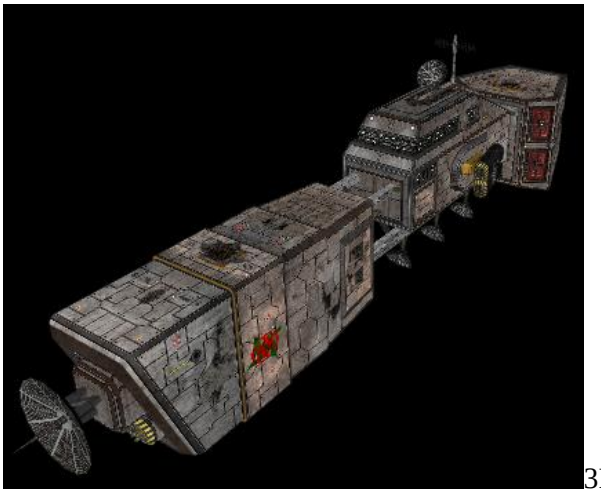
Capital-grade Thrusters

Speed is life for escorts and raiders. It allows forward defence and a safe escape from pursuers. Replacing all of their thrusters by ones usually found on capital ship gives them 15 % higher sustained speed. Painting them in red was tried but did not improve the speed.

Improved Generators

Those new thrusters being made for much larger ships, they obviously can receive more power to use them to their true potential, making the speed bonus climb up to a staggering 40 %, allowing fast redeployment of these small ships, maybe even outrunning some bombers. This makes for excellent raiders all over the place.

Caernaven-class Frigate

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team (very minor texture edits by Rufus Shinra)

The main ship of the Militia, this frigate is a relatively common sight in Border Worlds' space. It offers a cheap chassis from which anti-piracy operations can be fielded. The lack of availability for modern fighters has led to a tradition of customization on these ships, which can field different weapon configurations depending on their current assignments and missions.

Weaponry: Four (4) Light Mounts – Default Laser Turrets, Four (4) Short Range Missile Launchers, Two (2) Short Range Torpedo Launchers

Depending on its armament, it can be the same jack-of-all-trades seen in the Confederation or end up being a specialized defensive craft with enough guns and missiles to make strike crafts cry.

Specific Upgrades:

Frigate Torpedoes: These tubes are short-ranged and will not save their frigate from death at the hands of a destroyer, but a swarm of frigates will be quite terrifying, unleashing all their payload at short range at once. As for convoys, these mean a quick death before reinforcements can come.

Call The Reserves: Filling the holes in the patrol frigates' crews with veterans from the Kilrathi War could help a bit, at least to hit the hull of a Behemoth when inside its gun, with a measured accuracy 15 % superior to their Militia counterparts. Don't ask how that one frigate got into a Behemoth gun. Please don't.

Full Training: Actually paying for the full suite of training software and doing some live-fire exercises could help getting our entire crews up to speed in terms of accuracy, giving them a 25 % bonus over the untrained ships.

HP: 16000; Speed: 220; Logistics Footprint: [Frigate] x1; Construction Cost: 850 RU; Construction Time: 45 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: Cheaper, weaker and faster than their Confed' equivalent, they remain pretty nice escort ships, and if you're willing to pay the cash to upgrade their turrets to more specialized variants, these frigates can definitely pull their weight as fleet defence assets. Thing is, they'll still die very quickly, so it might not be the best idea to spend a crapload of resources on what is in the end an expendable asset.

Capital Ships

Well, this is where the Union's trademarked ingenuity comes to strike again. As the tensions grew between it and the Terran Confederation, several ships defected from the Earth-led juggernaut in reaction to perceived illegal orders or through feelings of loyalty towards the crews' worlds. In addition to this, when whole systems rallied themselves to the UBW, some of them brought entire shipyards with them, allowing the newly-minted Navy to build and most importantly maintain these ships.

However, the low number of available capital units and the need for specialized work without dedicated units or supply lines led to heavy in-field modifications to their armament.

Available Modifications

Light Mounts

Laser Turrets

Ships from the frigates to the battlecruiser come with a standard armament of dual-purpose laser turrets, capable of taking on both strike crafts and heavier ships alike. A classic sight for all veterans, this turret has a respectable effectiveness against incoming torpedoes and missiles while being able of repelling some attacking enemies.

Missile Turrets

The standard turret can be replaced by a defensive turret loaded with numerous Image Rec missiles to attack both strike crafts and missiles or torpedoes at a medium range, potentially turning any ship in a veritable hedgehog of missiles that will cause massive damage to light opponents during longer battles around an allied fleet.

Stormfire Turrets

A prototype with plans shared under the table between commanders and mechanics, crudely mounting several fighter-grade Stormfire guns to fire massive amounts of solid projectiles at enemy strike crafts and missiles or torpedoes at medium range, ideal against bombers in a torpedo run as the stream of projectiles is likely to hit both targets on their way in.

Heavy Mounts

AMG Turrets

The standard anti-matter turret from most capital-grade starships is a reliable weapon system providing numerous high-powered shots that will kill instantly any strike craft and severely damage light ships. A very good choice for short- to medium-ranged combat.

VLS Modular Grid

A series of missile tubes that host both medium-range and long-range projectiles, both launched in salvo. The long-range anti-ship missiles are renowned for their effectiveness at crippling or even destroying lightly-protected targets as they come slowly upon them before jettisoning their cruise engine to activate a much faster short range torpedo as they reach close proximity to their target. The medium-range missiles, densely packed into the larger cells and similar to the standard defensive grid mounted on destroyers, are designed to provide good area coverage to a battlegroup, firing automatically at enemy strike crafts or cruise missiles as they attempt to reach or escape it.

Like all classes, the escorts have various improvements available for research:

Tinkered Engines

Speed is life, for capital ships moreso than any other group: the destroyer late to the ambush is useless and the destroyer caught up by the angry Confed response team is also useless because it's spending it's time as an expanding cloud of debris. In a pure Darwinian phenomenon, the UBW capital ships slowly evolved engines tinkered to give as much as they can do, which is roughly 10 % more than without these improvised upgrades.

Streamlined Improvization

So, when the engineer said that "She's giving all she's got, cap'n!" last time, it happens that he was wrong. Duct tape and WD-40 are great tools in the heat of the action, but once the people in the design bureau have stopped drinking brain bleach after receiving the pictures of these "upgrades", it happens that they can distribute better tools and protocols to actually give more thrust to the engines in an efficient way, pushing the improvements to 25 %.

Super Ceramics

Those ceramics used for the Rapier J look quite promising and once the food dispenser system malfunction could be reproduced (easy) and the shipyards convinced to build a food dispenser system the size of a frigate (not easy), armour plates could be built from the new material (tentatively named Meta-Reticulated Elastomers) and improve the capital ships' survivability by 10 %.

Improved Generators

Our MRE project attracted a lot of attention from the media, most of it being obviously mockery and derision. Most, not all. Some Kilrathi travelling merchants and salvagers felt pity for us. Which is a good thing, actually, since they offered to relieve our shipyards from the shame of mass-printing defective food by selling us slightly-used armour plate from the various Hakaga wrecks they salvaged, which would increase the survivability bonus to 25 %.

Southampton-class Destroyer


3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team (very minor texture edits by Rufus Shinra)

The heaviest ship of the Militia until the Crisis, this destroyer comes from the Confederation, sold as a second-hand ship after one battle too many against the Kilrathi. Refitted in our shipyards, it offers more firepower than any pirate outfit can ever hop to field. As their first commanding officers were successful Militia frigate captains, they quickly became test-beds for fast manufacturing and modification capabilities to improve their odds depending on the tactical situation. It is interesting to notice that during his short career in the Union of Border Worlds, Colonel Christopher Blair saw the potential of such a philosophy and pushed its development in the upcoming Midway-class megacarriers.

Weaponry: Eight (8) Light Mounts – Default Laser Turrets, One (1) Heavy Mount – Default Anti Matter Turret, One (1) Extended Range Image Recognition Vertical Launching System, Four (4) Short Range Torpedo Launchers

With its standard armament, this destroyer is already very annoying. With an improved anti-air capability, it creates a terrifying interdiction bubble around itself, throwing missile after missile. If you give it the VLS grid, tears will be shed.

Specific Upgrades:

Destroyer Torpedoes: Like the frigate's, these tubes are short-ranged and hard to use properly, but can maul even the biggest cruisers from ranges at which interception is quite unlikely.

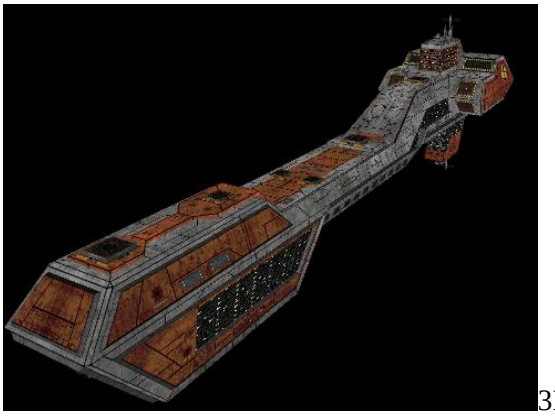
Mixed Crews: These important ships are crew-hungry, and sending to them defectors from the Confederation could simultaneously fill whatever holes are there and make us benefit from the more expensive training they received, giving a 5 % increase in general accuracy.

Modern Firing Computers: These ships were built when the Tiger's Claw was still alive, which is why they got sold to us, and their firing computers are simply ancient. Spending the cash to get more modern systems could seriously help us, pushing the accuracy bonus to 25 %.

HP: 75000; Speed: 200; Logistics Footprint: [Destroyer] x1, [Capital Ship] x1; Construction Cost: 2000 RU; Construction Time: 125 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: This is where things start getting quite different. This destroyer can be, with the right upgrade, a full-blown missile ship, the first capital ship to have a full missile armament. With the VLS grid, you can do with one ship what the Kilrathi do with half a dozen and start harassing enemy forces from standoff distances without fear of retaliation, particularly so as you enjoy great missile defence capabilities too. I would suggest using it as part of a two-level unit system, with frigates and recon crafts finding the targets while you simply fire and fire away safely until they beg for mercy or move enough forces to block your attacks. At which point you simply attack elsewhere. Hit and run, baby!

Tallahassee-class Heavy Cruiser

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team (very minor texture edits by Rufus Shinra)

Noone in the Union of Border Worlds would have dreamed getting such ships barely a few years ago. Now that several of them defected and that Confederation shipyards followed, no one can imagine fighting fleet actions without them. Each of them has its own history, legacy and quirks following colourful defection stories, and the emergency refits done to them led to strange, unconventional, but very effective weapon suites.

Weaponry: Eight (8) Light Mounts – Default Laser Turrets, Four (4) Heavy Mounts – Default Anti Matter Turrets, Four (4) Short Range Torpedo Launchers

A lot of problems can be solve by brute force and the armament here is a testimony to this philosophy. Not many ships will survive long the broadsides of such a heavy cruiser. Or it can become a missile cruiser. Heh. Heh heh. Bwahaha!

Specific Upgrades:

Heavy Cruiser Torpedoes: If for some reason you want to have a short range high damage option…

Advanced Firepower: Let's be clear, the Confeds know better than us how to work with cruisers. If they think improve the average firepower of this heavy cruiser by 25 % is a good idea, who are we to tell them they're wrong?

Overloaded Guns: Meh, we'll follow through with their upgrades plans and push the firepower even further! Let’s overload the guns and increase the warheads size to get the firepower improvement to 50 %.

HP: 150000; Speed: 135; Logistics Footprint: [Heavy Cruiser] x1, [Capital Ship] x4; Construction Cost: 4000 RU; Construction Time: 150 seconds

Rufus’ Suggestions: If you actually spend the cash to make it a full missile cruiser and you can keep it away from direct firepower… Oh God. That will be bloody legendary, because everyone else will be yelling at you as they must devote a large number of their battle line to missile defence and they will be pressed to strike as soon as possible, or more likely sooner than possible. Which means that their strike crafts will enjoy the torrent of defensive missiles and stormfire guns you'll throw at them. It's not untouchable, by far, but it will still be seriously annoying. And expensive.

Durango-class Converted Carrier



3D model and textures: DefianceIndustries

This is the most advanced carrier of the Militia. This is also an antique Durango-class heavy destroyer with a large hole (and hold) dug in the middle to turn it in a carrier. Yep, while everyone else fields several types of dedicated carrier ships, the Militia works with makeshift stuff. It works… ish. The strike craft can take off reliably, land almost as reliably and they even manage to get maintained properly on good days. Just don't expect spare parts for the food dispensers.

Weaponry: Eight (8) Light Mounts – Default Laser Turrets

The ship should not fight the enemy directly, but if it comes to it, it can actually act as a decent, if old, destroyers. Without the native anti-air missiles. Or the heavy torpedoes. Or the armour.

Specific Upgrades:

We turned an obsolete destroyer into a carrier! What else do you want from us, dammit?!

HP: 60000; Speed: 140; Logistics Footprint: [Carrier] x1, [Capital Ship] x2; Construction Cost: 1800 RU; Construction Time: 70 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: A lot of things can be said about this carrier. They will involve French, curses and French curses. It's not a good carrier by any definition, except maybe the most important: it's there. You can deploy a lot of stuff from it, and if you have the resources to spare, it can become a really tough little ship with the anti-air firepower of a destroyer.

Black Lance

The Black Lance is a top secret unit part of the Strategic Readiness Agency. Its origins come from the Kilrathi War, one of the most well-equipped black ops unit that was inherited by Admiral Geoffrey Tolwyn in the last months of the conflict. The most famous naval officer of the war, whose psyche was irremediably tainted by the conflict, saw an opportunity with this off-the-record tool whose former patrons and overseers disappeared in the chaos of the Battle of Earth: he would use it to sow the seeds of a conflict between the Terran Confederation and the Union of Border Worlds, during which he could enact his plans. Convinced that Humankind's survival depended on being kept fit through constant conflict, he pushed his mad logic to its absurd conclusion with the deployment of a genocidal nanite-based weapon of mass destruction that would ensure the future generations would fit with his vision of a warrior species. To achieve this goal, he used pirates as pawns, acquired equipment from his adversaries and had some of the most advanced prototype units designed and crafted by the Terran Confederation's Strategic Readiness Agency.

As with the other factions, the units will be divided into five categories here:

- Light and Medium Fighters, pictured with a Triangle tactical icon,
- Bombers and Heavy Fighters, pictured with a Square tactical icon,
- Corvettes and Frigates, pictured with a Diamond tactical icon,
- Capital Ships and Production Facilities, pictured with a Parallelogram tactical icon,
- Utility Crafts, pictured with a Reverse Diamond tactical icon

The Black Lance units are, once their commander goes beyond the pirate ones, way above and beyond the competition, but also much more expensive. They will not fare well in a stand-up battle where industry and production will prevail, but they have all the tools imaginable for unexpected strikes at the weakest spots of the enemy. One of their characteristics is that they usually do not have any specific upgrade available, being already the very top of the available technology.

Light and Medium Fighters

The Black Lance forces is relatively diverse, due to its missions, but the master word is deception. Its units can and will trick the unwary player, either due to their identity or from their capabilities. The presence of privateers and pirates in the battlefield can help mask the real purpose of the lightest Black Lance units who act with another purpose entirely than convoy raiding and random destruction. If multiple factions are present then deploying some of their signature fighters can help start false flag operations or trick the enemy into not noticing the wolf among the lambs.

The most dangerous threat, however, is their dedicated space superiority crafts, which are a cut above all but the best units available to anyone else.

F-27 Arrow V Eclipse



3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team (very minor texture edits by Rufus Shinra)

Description: The Arrow Eclipse is an improvement on the Kilrathi War era recon fighter on all levels. It is faster, tougher, it can see further, has improved anti-cloak sensors and comes with its very own cloaking devices. It is possibly the best light fighter out there, combining the Arrow and the Strakha's advantages at an admittedly higher price. They require a fighter hangar to be built, can land everywhere you have a hangar and are actually quite dangerous nasty mosquitoes.

Weaponry: 2 Laser Guns, 2 Ion Guns, HS missiles.

You will not outgun anyone with it, but the missiles can be a very bad surprise for any fighter. This flight has the same armament as its standard cousin, but the cloak capability virtually guarantees the first shot.

Specific Upgrades:

The stealth requirements for the Eclipse precluded the use of active sensors that can be mounted on the Confed Arrow. It will not receive additional upgrades.

HP: 175; Speed: 420; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x1; Construction Cost: 480 RU; Construction Time: 24 seconds, 4 fighters per flight.

Rufus' Suggestions: The Strakha, but much better in most regards. Fast, cloak-capable decently-armed and coming with most of the Arrow's advantages. In the long run, it will not be a far-seeing platform as the Confed Arrow but it will remain an excellent light fighter for harassment.

Razor


3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Description: The Razor is a privately-designed light fighters, mostly encountered in pirate hands. Its armament isn't much to be afraid of, and its performance suffers from its origins as well as usual maintenance. It is, however, a common sight in many border areas and various pirates ended up accepting a very lucrative deal to attack some specific targets as part of a larger campaign.

Weaponry: 2 Laser Guns, 2 Particle Guns, FF missiles.

As a light fighter, it is decently armed but very fragile, even moreso than the flimsy Darket! As its pirate origins imply, it is best used to attack defenceless targets or to do some recon.

Specific Upgrades:

The value of this craft is being undistinguishable from its pirate brethren.

HP: 120; Speed: 400; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x1; Construction Cost: 260 RU; Construction Time: 12 seconds, 4 fighters per flight.

Rufus' Suggestions: The first deception unit, to be used either for Zerg rush taking missiles instead of more valuable units, or to look like one of the squadrons of pirates roaming around when the Convoy option is activated. It won't fool someone paying attention, but it can go under the radar and act as an impromptu recon unit if used correctly.

F-42 Hellcat V

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Description: Medium. The word describes it well. It doesn't come with incredible tricks, it's not the fastest, it's not the toughest, and it's not the mightiest. But it does its job well, AKA escorting bombers or larger ships. This particular flight was acquired by the Black Lance to launch false flag actions.

Weaponry: 2 Ion Guns, 2 Particle Guns, IR missiles.

Light fighters that missed their missile shots will find themselves in a tough spot against these better guns and the IR missiles, more manoeuvrable than the HS, are dangerous weapons in larger battles. Heavier fighters will however keep their firepower advantage. Outflying them and/or getting help from a wingman will be crucial.

Specific Upgrades:

None

HP: 200; Speed: 300; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x1, [Interceptor] x1; Construction Cost: 600 RU; Construction Time: 24 seconds, 4 fighters per flight.

Rufus' Suggestions: The Black Lance's Hellcat is an odd duck in that… it isn't special. Its price is actually very competitive for a good medium fighter, because the SRA had access to a lot of surplus, so there isn't any premium paid for it. It has one more fighter in its flights than the standard Confed ones, which can make it recognizable from it, but beyond that, it's a surprisingly good investment. It will, however, start to lag behind as it doesn't receive the Confed's upgrades to it.

Banshee



3D model and textures: DefianceIndustries

Description: The symbol of the Union of Border Worlds' aerospace design capabilities, this light fighter is the most advanced human design for such a category. Fast, nimble and yet very versatile with its experimental gun weaponry, it is a cornerstone of the Militia's heavier forces, available once the main fleet has been called. And it is in Black Lance possession for false flag actions.

Weaponry: 4 Laser Guns, HS Missiles

Fast-firing guns with good missiles are quite decent, but the craft does not have improved armament however.

Specific Upgrades:

None

HP: 250; Speed: 420; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x2, [Interceptor] x1; Construction Cost: 1050 RU; Construction Time: 27 seconds, 3 fighters per flight.

Rufus' Suggestions: This good light fighter comes at a prohibitive premium, making it mainly a deception option rather than an actual frontline one. While tougher than the Arrow Eclipse, it struggles everywhere else. A very situational unit at best.

Dralthi IV

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Description: Perhaps the most iconic Kilrathi fighter, the Dralthi IV medium fighter, nicknamed pancake for obvious reasons by Confederation pilots, is a good all-rounder that often fills escort and patrol roles. And it is in Black Lance possession for false flag actions.

Weaponry: 1 Particle Gun, 2 Meson Guns, IR missiles.

It suffers from the same comparison results with the other medium fighters, a sub-par frontline unit.

Specific Upgrades:

None

HP: 180; Speed: 290; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x1, [Interceptor] x1; Construction Cost: 1050 RU; Construction Time: 21 seconds, 3 fighters per flight.

Rufus' Suggestions: While the Dralthi IV is a lesson in cost-effectiveness, the acquisition cost for the SRA make it a quite outrageous waste of resources. It's objectively worse than the Hellcat, until you look at its price and realize it is spectacularly worse than its rival. Perhaps even moreso than the Black Lance's Banshee, their Dralthi IV is a unit to use only for specific and situational false flag operations in multiplayer.

F-103 Excalibur

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Description: Now, we are talking. The Black Lance unlock the Excalibur very quickly, and it serves as their main space superiority fighter, with all the effectiveness one can expect from the premier fighter of the Terran Confederation, fitted with the latest cloaking devices as well as anti-cloaking detection systems.

Weaponry: 4 Tachyon Guns, 2 Ion Guns, IR missiles.

I told you it's a superfighter. It will rip enemies to shreds as long as you do not run straight into their missiles. We could have gotten capital-grade phase shields on it, but it would have been expensive. Beyond that, yep, get these guns in the fray and the kills will come fast.

Specific Upgrades:

None

HP: 300; Speed: 400; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x1, [Interceptor] x2; Construction Cost: 650 RU; Construction Time: 25 seconds, 2 fighters per flight.

Rufus' Suggestions: This is where the Black Lance start looking interesting. They can deploy the Excalibur at a competitive price, and it comes fitted with better upgrades than the best the Confederation can field, capable of negating all cloaking systems within range while being an Excalibur. That craft is exceedingly dangerous.

F-104 Bearcat


3D model and textures: Klavs81

The successor of the Hellcat, this is probably the most advanced Medium Fighter with full production capability available in the game. It kept many of the advantages of the Excalibur but managed to tone down its cost and logistical footprint. As a frontline fighter, you can hardly hope for anything better. There is just one slight issue with that, however, and it is that Admiral Tolwyn agrees with you and me wholeheartedly and kinda, sorta, well, kept the crafts for himself. By the way, you work for him so you have access to these prototypes.

Weaponry: 4 Light Tachyon Guns, IR missiles

It's not the Excalibur, but it's damn well better than the competition, with roughly one and a half the firepower of the Hellcat.

Specific Upgrades:

None, the fighter is brand-new and powerful enough as it is.

HP: 250; Speed: 400; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x2, [Interceptor] x2; Construction Cost: 340 RU; Construction Time: 20 seconds, 2 fighters per flight.

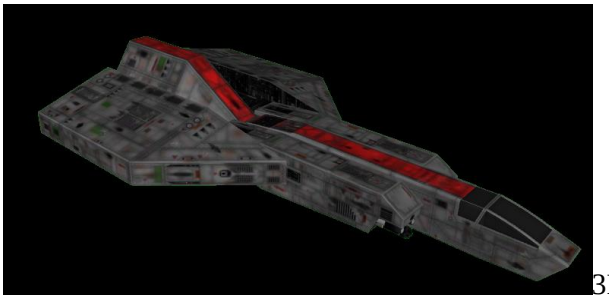
Rufus' Suggestions: It's less effective than the Excalibur, lacking its full armament and sensors, but it can still break through earlier cloaking devices while being an excellent mainline fighter. Where the other side fields Hellcat, you will have much better for a barely higher cost.

Heavy Fighters and Bombers

The Black Lance’s roster of heavy fighters and bombers is a collection of repurposed crafts from other factions, for a simple reason: a very large part of their design budget went into the faction’s signature superheavy fighter.

Enough said.

HF-66 Thunderbolt VII – Pirate-operated



3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Some Thunderbolt heavy fighters ended up in pirate hands, with some help from the SRA. They make their main attack unit, capable of posing a credible threat to InSys and Militia units.

Weaponry: 2 Meson Guns, 2 Photon Guns, HS missiles, One (1) Torpedo, 1 Rear Gun

A little less armed than its legitimate brethren, it remains armed with a very dangerous torpedo.

Specific Upgrades:

None

HP: 300; Speed: 270; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x1, [Heavy Fighter] x1; Construction Cost: 150 RU; Construction Time: 10 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: It can be used in the same role as the Razor, for deception, but it also remains a cheap torpedo bomber with a single shot. However, its gun armament is quite weaker due to the lack of plasma guns, making it particularly unsuitable for more conventional combat.

Avenger

3D model and textures: DefianceIndustries

As the Orlando Depot ruins and Pasqual X can attest, the Black Lance got their hands on a number of Avenger torpedo bombers, which do most of the required jobs decently, AKA making the crisis even worse through devastating false flag attacks and actually acting as a correct torpedo bomber.

Weaponry: Two (2) Mass Driver Guns, Two (2) Photon Guns, FF missiles, Four (4) Torpedoes, Two (2) Rear Guns

A decent gun armament, but nothing really powerful, to be honest. It's a torpedo platform and not much more.

Specific Upgrades:

None.

HP: 400; Speed: 260; Logistics Footprint: [Fighter] x4, [Heavy Fighter] x2, [Torpedo Bomber] x1; Construction Cost: 400 RU; Construction Time: 10 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: That bomber was acquired in numbers at a premium and represents a good torpedo platform even though more expensive than the ones regularly acquired, and lacking the Border Worlds' signature Stormfire guns. Odds are you will not start fielding large squadrons of regular torpedo bombers, but when such units are needed, you can go for it and a strike force made of Banshee and Avenger can be confusing when playing with another Border Worlds' player.

F-107 Lance "Dragon"


3D model and textures: DefianceIndustries

Why, yes, it does look evil. That superheavy fighter is the ultimate development of fighter-bomber technology of the post-Kilrathi War era. Going above and beyond all performance requirements, its capabilities are described by superlatives more than anything else. The firepower and cloaking capabilities of the Excalibur, combined with similar firepower and agility, higher speed even, bomber levels of toughness and two anti-ship torpedoes.

Weaponry: Two (2) Plasma Guns, Two (2) Tachyon Guns, Two (2) Torpedoes

Its gun armament

Specific Upgrades:

None.

HP: 400; Speed: 420; Logistics Footprint: [Heavy Fighter] x2, [Torpedo Bomber] x1; Construction Cost: 500 RU; Construction Time: 30 seconds

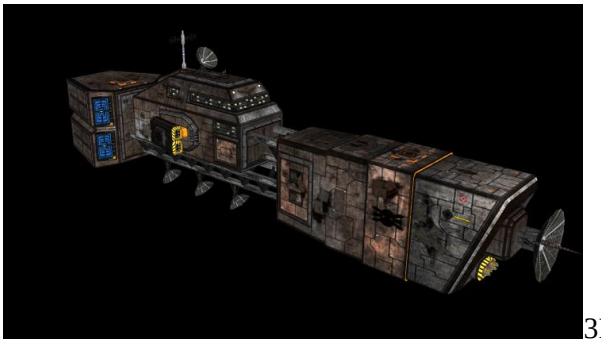
Rufus' Suggestions: This is the absolute fighter-bomber, period. It enjoys top of the line cloaking capabilities, a level of firepower and toughness that outmatches all opposition and can drop two torpedoes. A flight of these can lay waste to all but the most protected targets, and can do so at any time. Once you have started deploying the Dragon, all opponents will start being properly paranoid because you can ambush anything anywhere with it.

And if they lack overwhelming numerical superiority, there is little they can do when you decide to strike.

Corvettes and Frigates

The Black Lance light capital ships are not designed for escort jobs or patrol but first and foremost to make raiding more effective, efficient and lethal. To do that, they rely on a mixture of presence and high-tech tools to better control the flow of battle.

Caernaven-class Frigate – Pirate-operated

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Actually quite rare, these ships are the heaviest pirate assets found within human space. Captured or stolen frigates, they often represent a mobile base of operation for these gangs. Much effort has been put into maintaining their original armament capabilities, which came at the cost of engine maintenance, their crews knowing well enough that no amount of speed would save them from military retribution were the Confederation managed to locate them.

Weaponry: Four (4) Laser Turrets, Four (4) Short Range Missile Launchers

A raider unit that will at best stop some small reinforcement units or attack the most defenceless of convoys.

Specific Upgrades:

HP: 20000; Speed: 150; Logistics Footprint: [Frigate] x1; Construction Cost: 1000 RU; Construction Time: 60 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: Like the Razor and the Thunderbolt, these frigates can look like normal pirates while being expendable during their recon runs. The closest the Black Lance will have to a picket unit, they are slow and fragile, meant to die in the stead of their betters.

Prowler-class Corvette

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

Of course the mainstay of the Black Ops' "official" fleet would be available to the Black Lance. It's the one unit anyone who heard of them would expect to see, and it is there, with various improvements compared to its War-era baseline model.

Weaponry: Two (2) Laser Turrets, One (1) Anti Matter Turret, One (1) Mine Deployment System

Oh boy, that's not something you would expect on a *corvette* or even a frigate, but there it is, the Spec Ops have money to spare. The AMG turret will threaten absolutely everyone smaller than a destroyer while the on-board mines can be used to superb effect while combined with the cloaking system in order to ruin the day of a fleet or any group of ships.

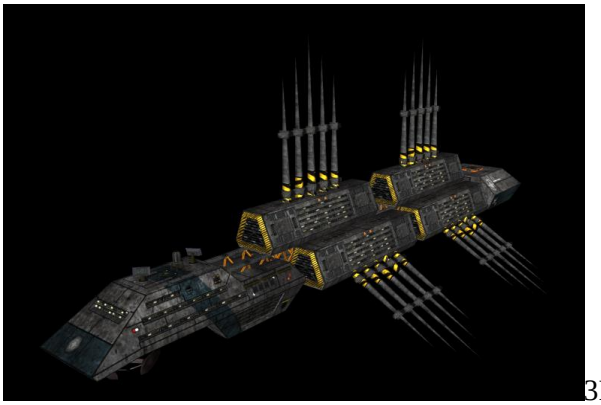
Specific Upgrades:

None

HP: 100000; Speed: 300; Logistics Footprint: [Corvette] x6, [Spec Ops] x1; Construction Cost: 2500 RU; Construction Time: 125 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: The same reflexions apply to this ship from the Confed equivalent. It is however quite faster and, most importantly, tougher, than even the most upgraded variant in Confed "official" service, though not as powerful as an upgraded Confed model. Hit and run, lay mines, laugh.

Jammer Transport

3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team (with a bit of kitbash from Rufus Shinra)

That ships is one of the nastiest tools available to the Black Lance, creating a “Dead Zone” of insidious jamming progressively neutralizing enemy combat capabilities, starting with their sensors until they are deep enough, where they will suddenly lose most of their engine, gun and targeting computer power. At that point, your unaffected units will be able to pounce on surprised targets who have no idea where the exit of the trap can be.

Weaponry: Two (2) Laser Turrets, Wide-Area Jamming System

> If it gets to fight, you really screwed the pooch.

Specific Upgrades:

None

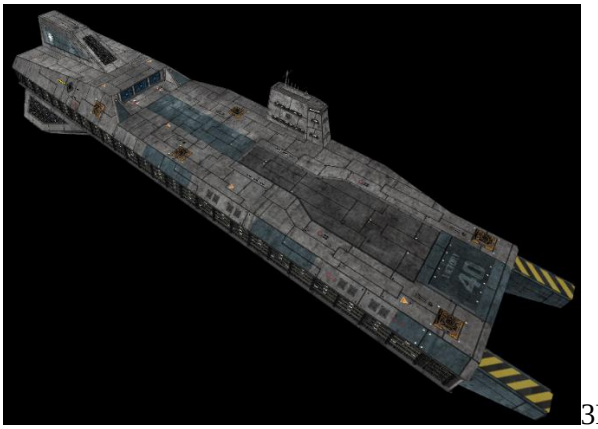
HP: 16000; Speed: 180; Logistics Footprint: [Corvette] x6, [Spec Ops] x1; Construction Cost: 4000 RU; Construction Time: 1000 seconds

Rufus’ Suggestions: That’s sadistic, and glorious at the same time. Lay your trap carefully, wait for the enemy to get into the jamming area without noticing it and strike at their weakened force, combining all of your advantages such as a mine field, cloaked units, etc. If the enemy player survives this move, they’ll become a lot more paranoid. Heh heh.

Capital Ships

When the Black Lance has to deploy capital ships, it is very clear that numbers will not be available, which is why they have quality in mind for their handful of heavy assets. Seeing one of these in combat is rare and often a very calculated move.

Ranger-class Carrier


3D model and textures: Wing Commander Saga team

An old carrier design, the workhorse of the Terran Confederation Navy after the Battle of Earth. Neither fast nor equipped with shiny toys, it does a single job and it does it well: carrying and supporting a full wing of fighters and bombers for support and attack missions. Several of them got decommissioned and the Black Lance got hold of a couple of them to carry equipment and fighters to their more secretive installations.

Weaponry: Eleven (11) Laser Turrets

Its defensive armament is, once again, a last line of defence against enemy strike crafts, and given the kind of attacks usually aimed at carriers, it is *highly* recommended to escort them with frigates, corvettes and capital ships in addition to their own wing.

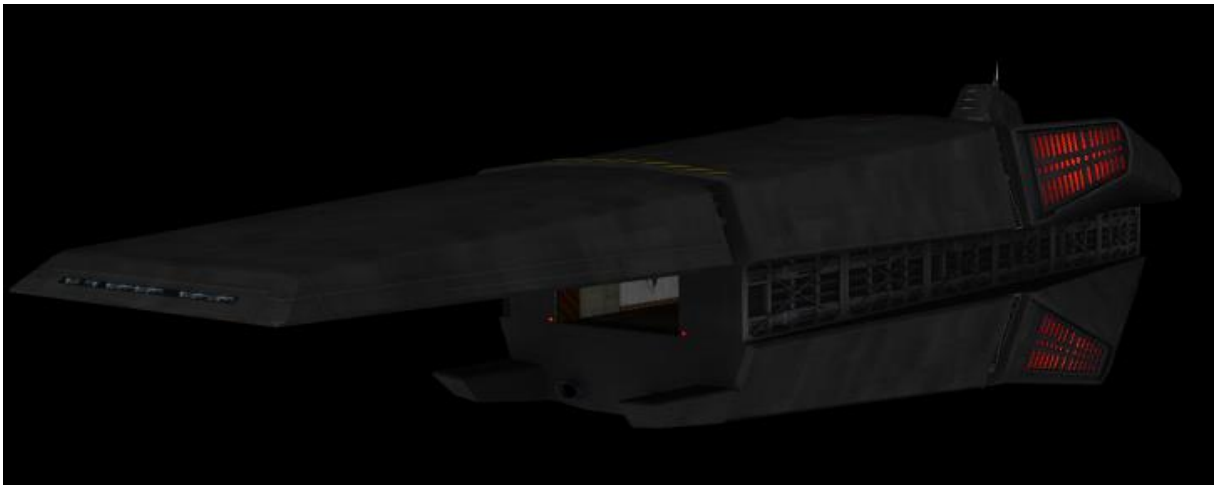
Specific Upgrades:

None. It's a box with engines and fighters. What's to upgrade?

HP: 90000; Speed: 100; Logistics Footprint: [Carrier] x1, [Capital Ship] x2; Construction Cost: 2000 RU; Construction Time: 75 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: This ship is identical in most respects to its Confed cousin, except for the craft it will build.

Typhon-class Stealth Carrier



3D model and textures: DefianceIndustries

This is probably an even more secretive project than the Dragon, the one and only class of capital ship designed specifically for Black Ops purposes, not seen nor even rumoured outside the highest circles of this group: the very first cloak-capable carrier. A decently fast ship, it is surprisingly well-armed in addition of being the privileged deployment platform for the mighty Dragon. Unlike its smaller cousins, the Typhon's cloaking capabilities remain limited in time but represent a strategic asset of incalculable value in the right hands.

Weaponry: Three (3) Laser Turrets, Two (2) Anti Matter Turrets

Its defensive armament is capable of keeping even a destroyer away while it replenish the weapons of its wings. A surprisingly effective capability that comes at the cost of its anti-fighter/missile performance.

Specific Upgrades:

None

HP: 75000; Speed: 145; Logistics Footprint: [Carrier] x1, [Capital Ship] x2; Construction Cost: 3000 RU; Construction Time: 125 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: Paranoia doesn't even begin to describe what the enemy will feel facing this ship and a wing of Dragon.

Tolmacs-class Strike Cruiser



3D model and textures: DefianceIndustries

The Tolmacs is considered the spiritual successor of the Bengal-class strike carriers, a strike cruiser offering deep raiding capabilities to the Confederation. The project was discontinued with the False Armistice and no ship of the class got ever completed. None whatsoever. There is no trace of a self-escorting fast cruiser defined by high firepower and thin armour anywhere in the Confederation's archives.

Weaponry: Two (2) Heavy Laser Turrets, Eleven (11) Laser Turrets, Two (2) Missile Turrets

This ship comes with a pretty hefty self-defence armament completed with fighter (but not bomber) hangar capability and two semi-fixed heavy weapon emplacements to provide raiding capabilities.

Specific Upgrades:

None

HP: 75000; Speed: 220; Logistics Footprint: [Carrier] x1, [Capital Ship] x2; Construction Cost: 2000 RU; Construction Time: 125 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: Another take on the fast raider unit, more armed than any destroyer, faster than them, but more fragile. This is a quick strike unit that can be highly effective as long as it doesn't get hit by whatever fast response the enemy can muster.

Vesuvius-class Supercarrier

3D model and textures: DefianceIndustries

Tolwyn's need for compensation strikes again. This time in the shape of a surprisingly fast supercarrier that is designed to hold the firepower and the wings of an entire fleet in its hull. Initially designed as the core of the future Confederation fleet, the Vesuvius got appropriated by Tolwyn for his nefarious schemes and represents a striking change in the Black Lance's philosophy, by being a very blunt hammer.

Weaponry: Thirty-three (33) Laser Turrets, Seven (7) Anti Matter Turrets

Tolwyn clearly missed his time on the Concordia and decided to get more guns on his ride. The number of heavy turrets is frightening, but not all of them can concentrate their fire on a single target; The anti-fighter ones, on the other hand… they are rightfully frightening.

Specific Upgrades:

None.

HP: 500000; Speed: 155; Logistics Footprint: [Carrier] x1, [Capital Ship] x2; Construction Cost: 9000 RU; Construction Time: 300 seconds

Rufus' Suggestions: A very, very tough nut to crack, one that almost sounds like an actual good design idea for a superweapon. The best carrier in the game bar none, it will need a concentrated effort to bring down. You can stop being subtle once you deploy it, or you can use it as a very big distraction while your Dragon wings hit the weakest and most critical points of the enemy economy, ensuring a devastating blow even if the Vesuvius ends up destroyed.