TYPE: WARSHIP
LAUNCHED: 23rd Century
LENGTH: 131 METERS
WEAPON: PLASMA ENERGY

ROMULAN BIRD-OF-PREY (2260s)
Stand assembly:

Hook the stand over the back of the ship, around the tail fins.

In service: 23rd Century

Length: 131 meters (approx.)

Defences:

CLOAKING DEVICE

Weaponry:

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

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

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

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

The Romulan Bird-of-Prey was equipped with both a cloaking device and powerful plasma-based weapon.
Soon after, the facility was under attack from an unknown assailant. Commander Hansen reported that Outpost 4 was located near the Neutral Zone, although it was located a few shots from its plasma-based weapon. It was destroyed each one completely with just a single console that was positioned in the center of the room. Birds-of-Prey from the 22nd century were gray-green in color, unlike Romulan vessels of the 23rd and 24th century which had dark green-colored hulls.

The commander center on a Bird-of-Prey was much smaller than the bridge on a Starfleet vessel. The ship’s main functions were controlled from terminals that faced each other around a single console that was positioned in the center of the room. Birds-of-Prey from the 23rd century were gray-green in color, unlike Romulan vessels of the 22nd and 24th century which had dark green-colored hulls.

The Romulan commander who led the incursion into Federation space in 2266 chose to self-destruct his ship with a nuclear warhead rather than face the ignominy of being captured. The Romulan Bird-of-Prey was given its name in accordance with its most prominent feature—a huge predatory bird painted on its underside. In 2268, a Bird-of-Prey worked alongside two new Romulan battle cruisers to capture the Enterprise.

The Enterprise found itself confronted by numerous Birds-of-Prey in 2267 when it crossed into the Neutral Zone. The Romulan ships tried to destroy the Enterprise, even though the crew were not in the midst of a medical emergency. They were merely trying to take a short cut to a Starfleet facility where they could receive treatment.

BATTLE OF WITS
A deadly game of cat-and-mouse between the two vessels ensued for more than 10 hours as the Enterprise and the Bird-of-Prey attempted to outmaneuver one another. Eventually, Kirk managed to outwit the Romulan commander, and the Enterprise crippled the Bird-of-Prey. Rather than surrender, the Romulan commander ordered one of the nuclear warheads onboard his ship to be detonated, ensuring its self-destruction.

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

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

**DATA FEED**
The commander of the Bird-of-Prey that destroyed the Earth outpost along the Neutral Zone was a veteran of countless military campaigns. He was extremely wily, and even Captain Kirk was surprised by his tactics on a couple of occasions during their epic ten-hour starship duel. Perhaps because of his experience, the Romulan Commander appeared at times weary of conflict, but it did not stop him carrying out his duty for the Romulan Empire.
Apart from the Romulans, the only other races known to use plasma torpedoes have been the Kazon and the Cardassians. The leader of the Romulan Star Empire was known as the Praetor. According to Decius, a member of its crew, the Bird-of-Prey used to attack Earth’s outposts in 2266 was the Praetor’s finest and proudest flagship. Support pylon

DATA FEED

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

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

The Romulans had been using practical invisibility screens, or cloaking devices, since the 22nd century. The Bird-of-Prey in the 23rd century was fitted with such a device that rendered it invisible to the naked eye and to conventional sensors. It did have some drawbacks, however. Initially, it was not advanced enough to cloak the ship from tracking sensors, meaning it had to remain motionless to be completely undetectable. It also required so much power that the ship could not use its weapons and remain cloaked at the same time. By 2266, the Romulans had developed a more sophisticated cloaking device that was so effective not even their own vessels could detect a ship that was using one. The device itself was portable and could be fitted to the main deflector of a vessel in minutes.

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

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

From an early age Chang had displayed prodigious artistic talent, and by the age of 21 he was working for Disney where he created wooden models of Pinocchio and Bambi. By 1956, he had partnered up with Gene Warren and formed Project Unlimited Inc., a company that produced props and special effects for the film industry. Their creations appeared in films such as The Time Machine, Spartacus, Cleopatra and Planet of the Apes.

Chang designed and built the studio model of the Romulan Bird-of-Prey, which can be seen in this photograph that was taken at the time of its original series. He also designed many of the monsters and special effects that appeared in the 1960s series The Outer Limits. It was on this show that Chang met Robert Justman, who would go on to be the associate producer on STAR TREK.

Legendary Designs

Greatly impressed by Chang’s work, Justman turned to him again to fulfill some of STAR TREK’s design requirements. The first item Chang designed was the prosthetic heads of the Talosians for the pilot show The Cage. He went on to design countless items for STAR TREK, the most notable being the tricorder, the communicator, the Balok effigy, the M-113 salt vampire, the Gorn and the tribbles.

Unfortunately, Chang’s contributions to STAR TREK were largely unknown at the time as he could not be given an official credit due to union restrictions. The problem was that Chang was not a member of the propmakers’ union, and as a non-member he was forbidden to work on the
Chang would sometimes illustrate a design for a monster and show it to the producers for approval before making the actual costume. The Balok fake alien head was one of the most well known as it often featured in the closing credits.

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

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

Another of Chang’s STAR TREK designs was the Romulan Bird-of-Prey studio model. Measuring about 2.5 feet in width, he constructed it in just two weeks and delivered it to the studio unpainted, where its Bird-of-Prey motif was added to the underside. It was made out of vacuum-formed plastic, plaster and metal parts, and was internally lit. Once the graphic had been applied, the model was sent to the visual effects company Film Effects of Hollywood. Here, footage of the model was filmed for its first appearance in the episode ‘Balance of Terror.’ The model also featured in the later second season episode ‘The Deadly Years,’ but rather than go to the expense of filming it again, they just used stock footage from the earlier shoot.

**UNCERTAIN FATE**

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

This latter view appears to hold more credence, as in a radio interview in 1982, Chang himself reportedly revealed that the propmakers’ union had gained evidence that the model had been specifically built for the show. The union agreed to drop the grievance against the studio provided that Chang did not receive payment for the model. Unable to sidestep them this time, the studio acquiesced and resumed the model to Chang, unpaid. Incensed by the outcome, Chang reportedly smashed the model to pieces.

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

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

Later in life Chang retired with his wife Glennella to northern California where he concentrated on creating wildlife sculptures, selling his work to local galleries. In 1994, he was awarded the George Pal Memorial Award by the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films to honor his many contributions to film and TV. Chang continued his creative life right up until his death in 2003, at the age of 86.
The Romulans were a warlike offshoot of the peaceful Vulcans. The races had almost identical biology, with copper-based blood and pointed ears, yet they were vastly different – whereas the Vulcans were calm and logical, the Romulans were passionate and arrogant. The people who became the Romulans left Vulcan in the 4th century of the Earth calendar, around the Time of Awakening. Unlike their Vulcan cousins, they refused to embrace Surak’s philosophy of peace and logic, and chose to leave their planet rather than change their ways. These renegade Vulcans established a number of different civilizations, including the Debrune, and settled on several planets, including Calder II, Yadalla Prime and Draken IV. One branch settled on the twin planets of Romulus and Remus and founded what became the Romulan Star Empire.

In the 23rd century, the Romulan Empire covered a large part of the Beta Quadrant and had borders with both the Federation and the Klingon Empire. The Romulans and Vulcans never reconciled and were often in conflict, at one point spending 100 years at war. Accounts of the schism with Vulcan were suppressed on Romulus. In the 2260s at least, some Romulans were surprisingly ignorant of Vulcan beliefs and culture.

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

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

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

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

Surak taught Vulcans to live their lives according to logic, but many did not follow his guidance and they ended up leaving. Their descendants eventually became Romulans.
Unfortunately, the Starfleet crew managed to repair their vessel and it moved off without further incident. In 2154, the crew of Enterprise helped expose a Romulan plot to destabilize a growing alliance between humans, Vulcans, Andorians and Tellarites. After this, relations between Romulans and United Earth deteriorated into open war. Beginning in 2156, the Earth-Romulan War was fought with nuclear weapons and lasted for four years. It came to an end in 2160 following the Battle of Cheron, in which the Romulans suffered heavy losses and a humiliating defeat. The Battle of Cheron, in which the Romulans suffered heavy losses and a humiliating defeat. The subsequent peace talks, which were conducted via subspace radio, led to the establishment of the Neutral Zone, an area one light year wide that was designed to act as a buffer between Earth and Romulan space. It either side entered the zone it was to be considered an act of war.

After the Neutral Zone was established, the Romulans had no contact with Earth or the newly formed Federation for more than 100 years. During this period the Romulans developed a potentially decisive weapon – the cloaking device.

**TESTING THE BORDERS**

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

**END OF AN ALLIANCE**

The Romulan-Klingon alliance had collapsed by 2271, and the following years saw them in regular conflict. The Klingons won an important early victory at the battle of KhaZ D’Kok Brakt, where their forces, led by Kor, crushed the Romulans. From that time the two races developed a deep distrust and abiding hatred of one another. The Romulans typically dismissed the Klingons as brutal, unthinking creatures, while the Klingons looked on the Vulcan offshoots as cowardly and devious, with no sense of honor.

In 2293, following the destruction of Praxis and their key energy-production facility, the Klingons opened peace negotiations with the Federation. The Romulans were determined to make sure that their two greatest enemies did not forge an alliance, but these efforts failed thanks to the actions of Admiral Kirk and his crew. Hopes for peace were subsequently high when one member of the Romulan delegation at Khitomer, Senator Pardek, formed a lasting friendship with the renowned Ambassador Spock of Vulcan. Almost immediately afterward, the Treaty of Algeron was signed, reaffirming the Neutral Zone and forbidding Starfleet from developing or using cloaking technology. The treaty succeeded in restoring peace, but led to a new period of Romulan isolation that would last until 2364.
When the STAR TREK episode ‘The Enterprise Incident’ was remastered in 2008, one of the Romulan battle cruisers that intercepted the U.S.S. Enterprise in the original 1968 version was replaced with a CG version of a Romulan Bird-of-Prey.

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

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

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