Kazon Raider

Type: Small Warship

In Operation: 24th C

Max Speed: Warp 6

Length: 160 Meters
Contents

P04: KAZON RAIDER

P10: DESIGNING THE SHIP

P14: CREATING THE KAZON

P18: ON SCREEN

Stand assembly:

1. Hook the stand over the back of the ship.
2. Final position.

KAZON RAIDER

OPERATED BY: THE KAZON & THE TRABE

TYPE: SMALL WARSHIP

IN OPERATION: 24TH CENTURY

LOCATION: DELTA QUADRANT

LENGTH: 160 METERS (APPROX.)

MAX SPEED: WARP 6

WEAPONRY: DIRECTED ENERGY WEAPONS, PHOTONIC CHARGES

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<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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Kazon raiders were dirigible-shaped vessels, approximately 160 meters in length, and capable of warp speed. Their hulls were made from a mixture of an electroceramic alloy, magnesite, polyduranide and a small quantity of duranium. They operated over a fairly large region of the Delta Quadrant in the 2370s.

The Kazon were a hostile warrior species, who used raiders to expand and defend their territory. They attacked any unsuspecting alien vessels that happened to wander into their space. To fully understand the Kazon, and how they operated their ships, it is necessary to know a little of their turbulent history. They were once considered an advanced race, but they were conquered by the Trabe, who were famed for their achievements in art and science.

Creating an Enemy

The Trabe kept the Kazon in slavery, and forced them to live in restricted areas on the Trabe homeworld. The Kazon were encouraged to fight among themselves, so they would be easier to control. They formed different sects, where allegiances shifted swiftly and unpredictably, creating chaos. The enslavement continued for generations, but by treating the Kazon as animals and fencing them into enclosed areas, the Trabe unwittingly turned them into a merciless enemy that eventually rose up against them.

In 2346, a Kazon called Jal Sankur united all the sects, and together they overthrew their Trabe masters. They also stole the Trabe’s technology, including their ships, which included raiders, huge Predator-class warships and small fighters.

Although the Kazon managed to escape from slavery, they were ill-prepared for self-government. Years of conditioning meant that they valued traits such as strength, cunning and ruthlessness above all others. They were so deeply ingrained in their society that they continued to value them long after they gained their freedom.

The alliance that Jal Sankur forged soon collapsed, and the sects went back to fighting amongst themselves, and anybody else who dared cross their paths.

The Kazon raiders were originally designed and built by the Trabe. The main body was shaped like an airship, and it had various fin-like structures added to its underside, including a distinctive rudder-shaped protrusion under the bow.

The Kazon operated in an area of the Delta Quadrant that was poor in natural resources. To make up for this, the Kazon employed raiders to launch attacks on other vessels, using their phasers and photonic chargers to disable them. They would then board the incapacitated ship and ransack it of any items deemed of value.

The Kazon were really a collection of semi-independent sects and there was no overall leader or government. There appeared to be at least 18 different sects of various size and power.
Many Kazon ships had a crew that included young boys. These children were trained to become warriors to their elders, and they soon became bloodthirsty killers who were devoted to their sect. Upon reaching puberty, Kazon boys would earn their warrior name by killing an enemy of their sect.

The years of infighting diverted the Kazon’s energies away from developing a progressive society, or increasing their technological skills. This meant that although they could operate, and to an extent repair, the ships they stole from the Trabe, they were unable to build new ships of their own. The vessels that the Kazon did operate appeared to be enough for their needs. Raiders provided more or less permanent living quarters for Kazon war parties. The ships were fairly well armed with energy weapons and photonic charges, which were powerful enough to disable most vessels that wandered into their territory. They were then steed cargo or valuable technology from these ships.

The tactical ability of a single raider posed little threat to a Starfleet Intrepid-class vessel, such as the U.S.S. Voyager NCC-74656. In fact, the technology used aboard raiders was markedly inferior to that found on Voyager. Raiders were not equipped with transporters or replicators, and their sensors were relatively primitive. They did, however, possess tractor beams.

Inferior Technology

Kazon raiders had several weaknesses: they were less maneuverable at sublight speeds than at warp speed, their computer systems worked at approximately half the speed of Voyager’s; and their sensors could not detect a shuttle if its engines were not running and it was operating on thrusters, even when it was within meters of the raider.

The interior of a Kazon raider was spartan and inferior to that found on Voyager. Raiders were not much more powerful than the raiders.

A Each Kazon sect was headed by a leader known as first maje. He had to be strong and ruthless if he was to remain in charge of their sect for long. The Kazon headdress was led by First Maje Jal Oel rich and he became obsessed with being control of Voyager. He realized that the power of the Starfleet ship would help him dominate the other sects.

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Amid the sparks, a Kazon armored shuttle managed to punch a hole in the side of Voyager’s hull. Several Kazon warriors then leapt out of the shuttle and stole a transporter module from Voyager.

It was not uncommon on Kazon ships to find a room filled with ‘trophies’ or items from vessels the Kazon had destroyed. They also took clothing from the bodies of their enemies and displayed them in these rooms.

In the early 2370s, there were at least 18 different Kazon sects. The two most powerful were the Ogla and the Relora, and they possessed the most ships. The Nistrim were once one of the most influential sects, but by 2372 their power had diminished, and they only had five raiders at their disposal.

The Kazon lacked transporter technology, so in order to board and ransack other ships they used a modified shuttle. Once they had disabled a targeted ship, they would launch a small ship with an armored nose on it. This would pierce the hull of the targeted ship, literally ramming a hole large enough for a small raiding party to gain entry into it.

It was a crude, but effective tactic as long as it was done quickly. The small dimensions of the armored shuttle meant that it could carry only a few Kazon warriors, but if they struck quickly enough, they could overpower any resistance and take control of the ship. To be effective, the armored shuttle needed to breach a hole only 72 cm in diameter.

A Kazon raider could become cloaked and invisible to enemy ships’ sensors by employing a type of masking circuitry that was unfamiliar to Starfleet. Raiders were also known to carry a small complement of fighter-type craft. These could be operated by a single occupant, and they shared a very similar design to the raiders, only on a much smaller scale.

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The Kazon were known to the Borg as Species 329. According to Seven of Nine, the Kazon were unremarkable and unworthy of assimilation because they would detract from perfection.

KAZON SECTS
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TROPHY ROOM
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When STAR TREK: VOYAGER was first gearing up to launch back in 1994, the behind the scenes staff were incredibly busy. The motion picture STAR TREK GENERATIONS, the final THE NEXT GENERATION episode All Good Things… and the second season of DEEP SPACE NINE were all in various stages of production. To say the production crew was stretched thinly would be an understatement.

Senior illustrator Rick Sternbach, who normally took care of most of the starship designs featured in the franchise, was preoccupied with finishing the details of the U.S.S. Voyager NCC-74656 and the Caretaker’s array, plus a million other little things. Luckily, visual effects producer Dan Curry was able to help out, and he took on the task of designing the Kazon ships.

EXPERIENCED HAND
Curry had been working as a visual effects supervisor for the franchise since the first season of THE NEXT GENERATION, and he had turned his hand to designing a few props before, such as the Klingon bat’leth and the D’Arsay archive seen in THE NEXT GENERATION episode Masks. Curry was therefore well versed in the STAR TREK aesthetic and knew what was required.

Curry began by sketching out a few designs for the Kazon ships, knowing that he wanted to capture a “low-tech retro” look. “Their ships were inspired by the bizarre architecture of Lebbeus Woods,” said Curry. “The Kazon culture was intended to be based on an autocratic society with little regard for the arts and social niceties. I thought that it might be appropriate to reflect this in their ships, with odd proportions.”

Visual effects producer Dan Curry designed the Kazon ships, using the work of architect and artist Lebbeus Woods for inspiration.
In addition to the Kazon raider, Curry also devised the look for the much larger Kazon warship. It was clear that its shape and lines came from the same school of thinking as the raider.

Lebbeus Woods (1940-2012) was an American architect and artist, who was renowned for his unconventional, often futuristic designs. His work was challenging, and he certainly did not project an optimistic future with utopian architecture. It is clear how some of his work, such as Zagreb Free Zone or Inhabiting the Quake, Quake City, inspired the shape of the Kazon ships.

The structures Woods drew and had made into models featured abstract angular shapes that, with a little imagination, could easily be seen as starships. The brutal structures seemed to hover over these troubled cities, as if they were threatening or attacking the existing buildings.

The usual STAR TREK model makers were also very busy with the other titles in production, and Curry’s designs for the Kazon ships were sent to another vendor - WonderWorks Inc. There, Oliver Ray ‘Brick’ Price and his crew constructed the filming miniature as per Curry’s instructions.

CUSTOM PAINT JOB
When the model was delivered, Curry decided to distress the paintwork, as he wanted to give it more of a worn look to reflect the Kazon’s ‘mend and make do’ attitude towards technology. After the first shots came back from the motion control photography that was filmed at Image-G, the producers decided that they wanted to make some changes to the model. The length of the nose blade was trimmed a bit, and visual effects supervisor David Stipes added some fins, which were made of cardboard, to the underside of the body.

Once these changes had been approved, Tony Meininger’s Brazil-Fabrication & Design modeling shop made the modifications permanent. It was at this point that the decision was taken to use this one model to depict two distinct Kazon ships. The model was originally conceived as a small fighter craft, but by altering the cockpit area, it was also used to portray the larger Kazon raider.

The model had an enclosed cockpit canopy when it was filmed as the fighter shuttle, but this was replaced by a two-tier section with numerous windows when it was being used as the raider. In other words, the same model was used to depict two separate Kazon ships of differing size by swapping out the cockpit/bridge section.

No CG version of the Kazon ship was ever produced, as this predated the time when the wholesale shift to CG models took place. The physical studio model of the Kazon ship, in its cockpit fighter mode rather than as a raider, was sold in 2006 at Christie’s 40 Years of STAR TREK: The Collection auction for $6,000.
During developmental meetings prior to the launch of STAR TREK: VOYAGER, co-creators Rick Berman, Michael Piller and Jeri Taylor discussed what kind of new antagonists the crew of the U.S.S. Voyager NCC-74656 would face in the Delta Quadrant. As ever with STAR TREK, it was not enough to merely create two-dimensional villains, who were evil for no reason, but adversaries who represented a troubling aspect of society. When the creators reflected on the early 1990s society of the time, one problem that was garnering countless headlines was the rise of street gangs. The creators therefore came up with a new foe that was loosely based on these violent crews. At first, they referred to them as the ‘Crips and Bloods’ after the infamous L.A. street gangs. Originally, these aliens were split into just two factions, and it was proposed that they were constantly at each other’s throats as they fought over the scarce resources in their region of space. It was also suggested that anyone crossing their territory would be seen as ‘fair game’ by both factions. Piller then named them the ‘Gazon,’ and wrote the following description of them: “They are a lean, scrappy people who dress in an assortment of unkempt clothing. Some are in nothing more than rags. Their skin is parched and desiccated; the sun has produced blisters and sores on some. This appears to be a camp of people barely able to survive, bereft of creature comforts and living a harsh, hardscrabble life. They are the Gazon, whom we will come to know, over the course of the series, as a lethal, deadly sect who subject themselves to these dire conditions in return for the possible acquisition of power.”

CHANGE OF NAME

The producers later decided to change the name to Kazon, as they feared Gazon sounded too similar to Gaza, and they wanted to avoid the suggestion that they were making any comment on the conflict in the Palestinian territory. Piller said, “The Kazon were originally created – and this was my idea – to be a futuristic version of an urban blight ruled by youthful street gangs. The idea was that all of these aliens were young; they were all essentially teenage to very young adults, because they were living in anarchy and killed each other before they had a chance to get old. But I was only involved in the day-to-day operations of the first 12 episodes of the first season of STAR TREK: VOYAGER, and so they were always young. All of the Kazon-Nistrim were in their early teens, and Jal Culluh, the First Maje of the Kazon-Nistrim sect, became the primary Kazon character, and he repeatedly tried to steal advanced technology from Captain Janeway and her crew. Despite their primitive ways, the Kazon-Nistrim proved a constant thorn in the lives of the Voyager crew.

CREATING THE KAZON

The creators of STAR TREK: VOYAGER devised new adversaries for the show in the shape of the Kazon – a species inspired by L.A. gangs. The Kazon were inspired by the increase in the numbers of people joining street gangs in the early 1990s. At first, it was proposed that the Kazon parts would be played entirely by adolescents or very young men, but problems with casting meant that adults ended up being used. Dressed in the shape of the Kazon - a species inspired by L.A. gangs.

The Kazon had a wild, savage look in keeping with their threatening behavior, but some of the audience felt that they were too similar to the Klingons in both attitude and appearance. Jal Culluh, the First Maje of the Kazon-Nistrim sect, became the primary Kazon character, and he repeatedly tried to steal advanced technology from Captain Janeway and her crew. Despite their primitive ways, the Kazon-Nistrim proved a constant thorn in the lives of the Voyager crew.
They both escaped. Kar turned on him, and of the Kazon-Ogla, but death by Razik, the leader were both sentenced to to go through with it. They tried to earn his warrior name by killing Chakotay, and made them different from the Klingons. From that, Biller wrote an elaborate sociological backstory for the Kazon, which included their history and customs. He hoped that this would provide a clearer picture of what drove the Kazon, and make them more well known to STAR TREK fans for playing the Kazon. Dissatisfied with the first draft, Piller felt that the Kazon were coming across “as kind of warmed-over Klingons.” Biller was reminded that the Kazon were intended to reflect the in-fighting between street gangs in Los Angeles, and he was urged to do some research into gang members. Biller gained some valuable insight by reading “Monster: The Autobiography of an 1-A Gang Member” written by Sanjuk “Monster” Shakur. From that, Biller wrote an elaborate sociological backstory for the Kazon, which included their history and customs. He hoped that this would provide a clearer picture of what drove the Kazon, and make them different from the Klingons.

That document came out of the research that Ken did for Initiations. “When we set out to make Voyager, we were still kind of discovering what it was, and unfortunately I think it took the show a couple of years to discover itself. But we finally got there,” said Braga. “The Kazon never quite caught on, despite some strong shows that culminated in Maje Culluh and Seska capturing the ship. ‘You know, creating a new alien villain that everyone loved was hard. You could count them on one hand. But there weren’t a lot of STAR TREK villains that hit. The phage aliens (the Vidiians) were cool, and the Hirogen were kind of cool, but they weren’t aliens that people grabbed on to like they did with the Romulans or the Klingons. But I thought we did some great work with the Borg, and they became really, really popular.’

STRETCHING PLAUSIBILITY
The Kazon went on to appear in several of season two’s ‘big’ episodes. But, the Kazon never really captured the imagination of the audience. Many felt that these primitive, savage aliens were outshining the cultural, intelligent Starfleet crew too often, and this was straining credibility. There was also the feeling that Voyager was not getting any nearer to home as they continued to bump into the Kazon.

By this point, Jeri Taylor had taken over the running of the show, supported the idea that the Kazon was a mystery sect that was given a different feature in the last episode of season two. Michael Westmore to create their appearance. Behind the Kazon, it was left to makeup supervisor "I was very vocal in saying ‘let’s get rid of these guys,’” said Piller. "Ideally you would have thought that the Kazon could pursue the ship throughout the series and that would be our running alien conflict. But it just didn’t seem to gel, and I do not know why. It’s again one of those mysterious chemistries that either happens or it doesn’t. I thought we did some great work with the Borg, and they became really, really popular.’
ON SCREEN

TRIVIA

It took seven hours for makeup artists and hairstylists to complete their work on Symba Smith, who played the dancer seen in the Sobras bar in the STAR TREK: VOYAGER episode Alliances. Her scenes were shot on 30 October 1995, and Smith revealed that she wished it could have been a day later as it would have provided her with a great Halloween costume.

Inside your magazine

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