CARDASSIAN FREIGHTER
GROUMALL

TYPE: FREIGHTER
LAUNCHED: 24th C
LENGTH: 256 METERS
WEAPONS: PHASERS
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Stand assembly:

Slide the stand over the back of the ship

Final position
CARDASSIAN FREIGHTER
GROUMALL
SPECIFICATION

OPERATED BY: CARDASSIAN UNION
TYPE: MILITARY FREIGHTER
IN OPERATION: 24th CENTURY
LOCATION: ALPHA QUADRANT
LENGTH: 256 METERS (APPROX.)
PROPULSION: WARP ENGINES
WEAPONRY: PHASERS, HIDDEN DISRUPTOR

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Commanded by a disgraced Cardassian, the *Groumall* was a freighter that took on an empire...
As with most operations across the Cardassian Union, movement of supplies and freight fell under the purview of the military. Cargo freighters such as the Groumall were common in the 24th century, carrying out a variety of tasks and resupply missions across Cardassian territory. Possessing few armaments and only rudimentary shields, these freighters were seldom expected to enter combat. By 2372, the Groumall was under the command of the disgraced Gul Dukat, former prefect of Bajor and disgraced Chief Military Adviser to the Detapa Council. His assignment as commander of the Groumall was a direct censure due to revelations of his private life and the arrival of his illegitimate Cardassian/Bajoran daughter, Tora Ziyal, on Cardassia Prime.

FUNCTIONAL DESIGN
Displaying traits common to Cardassian ship design, such as a forked bow section, the Groumall’s configuration was geared towards function, lacking the grace of the more powerful warships in the fleet. Approximately 256 meters in length, the majority of the freighter class’ narrow primary hull was dominated by regularly arranged stacks of modular cargo holds. These were ranged at intervals to both port and starboard, and along the dorsal and ventral hulls. This narrow but tall configuration allowed the transport of high volumes of freight with much flexibility for docking and unloading at different facilities across the Union via the external cargo bay doors.

The small bridge was located on the top level of the Groumall’s aft section, where cargo movement could be supervised more efficiently by the command crew via the main viewscreen. Propulsion systems comprised warp engines, with four impulse engines arranged to the aft of the vessel. The two larger impulse engines – arranged vertically – were marked out by their orange exhaust signatures, with the smaller port and starboard impulse engines identifiable by their yellow exhaust signature.

POORLY ARMED
The Groumall’s basic armaments were typical for a freighter, amounting to a small number of low-

DATA FEED
The incident involving the death of Cardassian and Bajoran representatives on Korma took place during the Klingon-Cardassian war of 2372-73.
powered phaser banks. Their offensive capability was limited, unable to penetrate the unshielded hull plating of a Klingon bird-of-prey and were likely intended only as a deterrent to pirates rather than an effective combat weapon. Shield generation was similarly low powered.

The interior of the Groumall was as functional as the exterior, the crew areas located in the aft section to maximise cargo efficiency. Quarters were basic but generous, with bunks accommodating two crewmembers for extended periods, or single guests being transported aboard the ship.

The bridge was manned by five members of the command crew. The Groumall’s senior officer took the central command chair, while four control stations were arranged around the bridge in support positions. Helm, navigation and weaponry were operated from two forward bridge stations directly before the main viewscreen. Support functions were operated from twin stations at the rear, curved display screens set into wall-plating for the standing crewmembers to interact with.

DUKAT’S DESPERATE MISSION

In 2372, the Groumall was assigned to transport Major Kira Nerys of Deep Space 9 to a conference on the Cardassian outpost Korma between Bajoran and Cardassian representatives. On their arrival at Korma, it was found the delegates had been slaughtered by an attacking Klingon bird-of-prey. Dukat ordered his crew to attack the decloaked and unshielded Klingon ship, but its phasers barely dented the hull.
Anticipating the Klingon commander's next move, the Groumall travelled to Loval, a Cardassian outpost possessing a hidden weapons installation.

Dukat's tactics paid off, and the Klingon bird-of-prey moved to engage the Groumall in orbit of Loval. The Cardassian freighter used a false dilithium signal to convince the Klingons their cargo was worth taking for themselves.

Transporting aboard the damaged Bird-of-Prey, Dukat and Major Kira overcame resistance and took control of the enemy ship's transporter systems. Beaming the Klingon crew to the Groumall and transporting his own people to the Bird-of-Prey, Gul Dukat wasted no time in destroying the Groumall and taking command of the captured Klingon ship.

Waiting until the last possible moment, Dukat unleashed the Groumall's secret weapon – a system-5 disruptor installed in one of the ship's cargo holds. With shields down, the bird-of-prey was vulnerable, the disruptor fire causing major damage to the vessel, allowing Dukat and Major Kira to board.

DATA FEED

When Major Kira came aboard the Groumall, she was surprised to discover that one of the ship's crew was Tora Ziyal, daughter of Gul Dukat and the reason for his disgrace. Kira's time on the Groumall saw her friendship with Ziyal grow. Eventually, Kira was able to persuade Dukat that life on the run in a bird-of-prey was no existence for the daughter he loved.

Major Kira hatched a plan to help Dukat go after the aggressors, retro-fitting one of the freighter's cargo bays with a system-5 disruptor salvaged from Korma. Tracking the bird-of-prey and luring the Klingons' attention with a false dilithium signal, the Groumall inflicted major damage with disruptor fire directly from the cargo bay.

The Klingon commander engaged a counter-attack, but after transporting aboard the Bird-of-Prey, Kira and Dukat beamed all 36 members of the Klingon crew to the Groumall, bringing the Cardassian crew aboard the captured battleship. Dukat turned the Bird-of-Prey's weapons on the Groumall, destroying the ship that he had commanded in disgrace. With crucial Klingon intelligence recovered, Dukat planned his triumphant return to glory...
After hauling freight as punishment for his indiscretions, Gul Dukat found new reason to fight after taking on the Kingons. Major Kira was a key part of the battle, but she chose not join his new crusade.

**DATA FEED**

The task of mounting a system-5 disruptor in one of the Groumall's cargo holds was not easy. The salvaged disruptor required repair to make it operational again. Accommodating the hidden weapon needed all cargo to be jettisoned - along with the loss of Dukat's financial cut. Finally, the tractor beam had to be disabled and power rerouted accordingly to bring the disruptor online.

**DUKAT'S CRUSADE**

Although disgraced and humiliated by his own people, Dukat took his duties aboard the Groumall seriously, operating the freighter as a military vessel and running regular combat drills. The Cardassian maintained that his lowly status was temporary and he would soon be restored to his former glory.

Dukat saw the capture of the Klingon bird-of-prey as the opportunity he had been seeking, and although he regained his title as Chief Military Adviser the Cardassians were not seeking to engage in hostilities against the Kingons.

Angered and ashamed by the Cardassians' refusal to fight, Dukat chose to take the bird-of-prey and wage his own war against the Kingons, inviting Major Kira to join his crusade. The Bajoran officer declined the offer, not willing to live as a freedom fighter again. She returned to Deep Space 9 with Ziyal.
Before boarding the Groumall, Major Kira underwent multiple innoculations, as the Klingon invasion had obliterated the Cardassian health system, leading to outbreaks of disease.

Ahead of battle with the Klingons, Kira gave Ziyal a lesson in phaser rifle operations. Cardassian phase disruptors had two beam settings and a three millisecond recharge, while the Federation equivalent rifle had 16 beam settings, fully autonomous recharge and multiple target acquisition.
The Cardassian freighter Groumall was the first ship designed by concept illustrator John Eaves for STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE.

John Eaves’ professional relationship with STAR TREK dates back to STAR TREK V: THE FINAL FRONTIER, and as a contractor for various companies included work on THE NEXT GENERATION. He was hired to work as an illustrator on 1994’s STAR TREK: GENERATIONS and shortly after found himself hired as concept illustrator in the art department for the fourth season of STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE.

One of Eaves' first assignments for the show was to produce concept designs for the Cardassian military freighter Groumall. The brief given to Eaves was to produce a cargo freighter that could conceal a large disruptor cannon within one of the ship’s cargo holds.

The concept designer’s starting point was to take some familiar elements from the Cardassians' major vessel, the Golar-class warship, which was originally designed by Rick Sternbach for STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION. "I took the front end of a Golar-class Cardassian ship," says Eaves,
"and tried to fan off from that – using the front end, kind of sculpting it a little bit differently, and putting all these cargo bays in a row."

SECOND DRAWING
This first concept pass on the Groumall was put forward for consideration, and it was decided to modify the design from this initial drawing.

"The producers felt it was a little bit too Cardassian looking," recalls Eaves, "more a warship as opposed to a freighter. So between them and (executive producer Rick) Berman they wanted to see more of a ‘storage unit’ design. That’s where the next drawing came in. It was just a series of boxes, all stacked on top of each other in series of sixes, with a big engine detail on the back and the familiar Cardassian fork on the front. They wanted it very ‘freighterish,’ so I put the bridge on the back, like it is on an oil tanker of today."

"That’s where this design had come from," continues Eaves. "It’s a bunch of huge, huge engines on the back which take it wherever you need to go. They wanted this more than the other one because it is very industrial looking."

At this point in DEEP SPACE NINE’s history, almost all new ships were made as physical models rather than computer-generated images. This normally involved producing fewer drawings.

"Most of the time with models all you need is a three-quarter view, and a couple of three-quarter angles on different parts of the ship. I did plans just to show length and size."

REDRESSED, REVAMPED, REUSED
As was common across STAR TREK shows in the pre-CGI era, physical studio models were regularly reused in other episodes, often appearing as completely different ships, sometimes with alterations.

Following its first appearance in ‘Return to Grace’, the Cardassian freighter design next appeared in DEEP SPACE NINE just four episodes later in ‘Rules of Engagement’. Here, as a Cardassian freighter in DEEP SPACE NINE: ‘Rules of Engagement’.


Another Cardassian ship in DEEP SPACE NINE: ‘For the Uniform’.

Becoming Klingon freighters in DEEP SPACE NINE: ‘Sons and Daughters’.

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A more refined concept sketch of the final design, moving the look towards the required freighter aesthetic. Eaves’ notes established that the bridge was at the rear of the ship, and indicated where the disruptor cannon would be placed.
the model was seen without modifications as part of a Cardassian convoy being escorted by the U.S.S. Defiant.

The freighter design’s next assignment was far removed from Deep Space 9, appearing light years away in a third season episode of VOYAGER, “Fair Trade”. At this point the model was given a new green colour scheme as a ship encountered by Neelix in the Nekrit expanse.

In DEEP SPACE NINE: “For the Uniform”, the design is back to its more familiar role as a Cardassian freighter, albeit displaying the light green colouring seen in “Fair Trade”. Finally, Eaves’ design switched sides in DEEP SPACE NINE: “Sons and Daughters” as much larger Klingon freighters. Modifications were made, adding nacelles to the rear wing sections and filling in the fork, hiding its Cardassian origins.
Casey Biggs made his début as Damar in ‘Return to Grace’ and went on to play the Cardassian in 23 episodes of DEEP SPACE NINE over four seasons. ‘Return to Grace’ was a notable episode of STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE, marking the very first appearance of actor Casey Biggs as the Cardassian Damar. Damar’s low-key début as a bridge officer under Gul Dukat aboard the Groumall provided little hint of the arc ahead for the character; by DEEP SPACE NINE’s finalé, Damar had become one of the series’ most complex supporting characters.

A classically trained actor at the Juilliard School, Casey Biggs moved from stage work in New York to taking television roles in Los Angeles throughout the 1980s. “I was always the hero on stage,” he told Trek Core in 2010, “always cast as the hero, the leading man. When you’re out here, unless it’s your show, you’re always the bad guy. What was neat about DS9 was that I started out as a bad guy and ended up as a hero.”

In 1988, Biggs starred in the Imax film ‘Alamo: The Price of Freedom’, playing the historical figure William Barret Travis. A few years later, this role would have an influence on not only his being hired to play Damar, but the character’s ultimate fate in DEEP SPACE NINE.

FIRST AUDITION
On first reading for Damar, Biggs was nonplussed by the character, feeling anybody could say the
routine dialogue relating to phaser drills and shields. He was surprised to then receive a call back for a second audition and to be told he had given a very intelligent reading for the role. A year later, Biggs learned that executive producer Ira Steven Behr was an afficionado of the historical period surrounding the Alamo, and had been delighted to see the actor who played Travis in ‘The Price of Freedom’ walk into the audition room.

Despite any future plans for Damar being unformed at this early stage, ‘Return to Grace’ director (and DEEP SPACE NINE’s overall director of photography) Jonathan West was delighted that Biggs accepted the part, having seen potential for the character to become important. West recalled in the ‘STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE Companion’: “I gave him close-ups and took the time to get reactions from him almost as if, from the audience’s point of view, he was registering the value judgments of what was going on.”

Although he was an experienced stage and television actor by the time he was cast in DEEP SPACE NINE, shooting ‘Return to Grace’ was Biggs’ first taste of science-fiction acting. “I’d never done anything like it before. I had no idea who these Cardassians were,” Biggs related in an interview for StarTrek.com in 2012. Fortunately he met the voice of Cardassian experience. “My first day I met Marc Alaimo (Gul Dukat), and thank God. He’s the quintessential Cardassian. He is Cardassian. He said, ‘Arrrggh, don’t worry about it. I’ll tell you what you need to know.’”

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT
Damar’s rise through the ranks and his increasing significance to the ongoing plot of DEEP SPACE NINE was a slow burn. After that first appearance in ‘Return to Grace’, the character returned for two episodes bookending the fifth season, seeing Damar as a key part of the Dominion/Cardassian alliance. Throughout seasons six and seven, Damar became an increasingly important element of the war and constantly evolving allegiances. As a fierce Cardassian nationalist, Damar initially supported any initiative that would restore his people as a major galactic force, but those actions would come at a great price.
DOMINION COLLABORATOR

Following the departure of his one-time commander and mentor, Gul Dukat, Damar was installed as the de facto leader of Cardassia Prime, acting on behalf of the Dominion but becoming little more than a puppet. His continued actions took a great toll on the Cardassian as he turned to a bottle of kanar to dull a guilty conscience. This particular character trait led to some discomfort for Biggs, who found himself consuming large quantities of Karo syrup doubling for the Cardassian beverage.

“I hated the stuff they made me drink,” he recalled in the ‘STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE Companion’. “The Karo was just disgusting. They changed to a sugar free pancake syrup, which wasn’t quite as bad, but after you do a number of takes, it’s still pretty disgusting. One time we did so many takes that I got quite sick by the end of the day. I’m very happy that Damar stopped drinking.”

This moment – seen in ‘Strange Bedfellows’ – was a major turning point for Damar. No longer dulled by drink, his conscience was freed and he finally realised his destiny, instigating a resistance movement against the Dominion on Cardassia.

There were further prices to pay, including the murder of his family, but Damar had risen from a lowly bridge officer to a hero and martyr of the Cardassians in the space of four seasons.

In conceiving the rebellion instigated by Damar in DEEP SPACE NINE’s final arc, Damar’s creator Hans Beimler remarked that he looked upon Damar as a Spartacus figure, the Roman Gladiator who led an uprising against the Roman Republic. Beimler’s fellow writers Ronald D Moore and René Echevarria hooked into this as Damar’s rebellion geared up, inciting the Cardassian people to the edge of full rebellion.

Damar’s heroic death in ‘What You Leave Behind’ was a stand-out moment, bringing the character – and the actor – full circle. But as originally written, the death scene was more low-key and not what Biggs had in mind for a character he played across 23 episodes. Biggs told StarTrek.com how he wanted his Cardassian alter-ego to meet his end: “If you’re going to die, that’s the way to go. I went to Allan Kroeker, the director. He’d become a friend by then, and I
Damar’s final moments in the DEEP SPACE NINE finale ‘What You Leave Behind’. After a heroic last stand against the Jem’Hadar, he died in the arms of Garak, ordering the resistance to continue fighting.

Damar continued to doubt his part in the ongoing conflict. In ‘Strange Bedfellows’ he arrives in Worf and Dax’s cell – is he executioner or saviour?

In ‘Strange Befellows’, Damar confronted hard truths about his life, his conscience finally getting the better of him.

In the 20 years since the end of DEEP SPACE NINE, Casey Biggs has maintained strong links with STAR TREK. He returned to the franchise in 2004, donning more prosthetics to play the Illirian Captain in the ENTERPRISE episode ‘Damage’. He is a regular face at STAR TREK conventions around the world – even wearing Damar’s original Cardassian prosthetics for a convention photoshoot in 2012. He is a member of The Enterprise Blues band and continues to be a familiar face on television and directs and acts in a wide range of stage productions.

Damar remains one of DEEP SPACE NINE’s most complex and intriguing supporting characters.

LEAVING DAMAR BEHIND
Speaking to Trek Core, Biggs looked back on his time in STAR TREK with great satisfaction: “Did I know the role was going to go this way? No I didn’t, and neither did the writers. I remember talking to Hans Beimler, René Echevarria, all the guys who were writing the show, around the last episode we were doing, and they didn’t even know where it was going to go. They liked me, and they liked what I was doing with the character, and it just kept getting bigger and bigger and bigger. For those of you who really know about the Alamo, you can really pick out all these Alamo references through to the end, and the way I die in DEEP SPACE NINE was the way my character died in the Alamo.”

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said, “Allen, I’ve gotta die, but it says I die by some nondescript alien,” I said, “Come on, I can’t die by some nondescript alien.” He said, ‘Well, how do you want to die?’ I said, ‘I want to go out taking 15 people out. I want my chest to explode and I want to die in somebody’s arms.’

Biggs’ request was taken on board, and Damar made his final exit from DEEP SPACE NINE after a last stand against the Dominion, dying in the arms of fellow Cardassian Garak, played by Andrew Robinson.

Leaving Damar Behind
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APPEARANCES | THE GROUMALL

ON SCREEN

TRIVIA

‘Return to Grace’ featured the very first appearance of Casey Biggs as Damar in DEEP SPACE NINE. Although the Cardassian was only a minor role in this first episode, Biggs would go on to make 23 appearances in total as the character. “I don’t want to make you nervous or anything, but they have big plans for this character,” the actor recalled being told by director Jonathan West directly before shooting his first scene in ‘Return to Grace’.

‘Return to Grace’ was the second and final appearance by actress Cyia Batten as Tora Ziyal. Batten played two further roles in STAR TREK series. In VOYAGER she appeared as Irina in the seventh season episode ‘Drive’, and in ENTERPRISE, Batten played the Orion slave Navaar in season four’s ‘Bound’.

When Ziyal returned later in DEEP SPACE NINE’s fourth season episode ‘For the Cause’ she was portrayed by Tracy Middendorf for a single episode only. For all subsequent appearances of Ziyal throughout seasons five and six of DEEP SPACE NINE, the character was played by Melanie Smith, who clocked up six episodes, the most of the three actresses to take on the part.

KEY APPEARANCES

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE
‘Return to Grace’

Major Kira Nerys has been persuaded by the Bajoran First Minister to attend a conference on the Cardassian outpost of Korma. Kira is surprised to discover she will be escorted to Korma by the disgraced Gul Dukat aboard his new command – the freighter Groumall.

Kira is delighted to find Ziyal, Dukat’s daughter, is aboard. The mission turns to tragedy when it is discovered Korma has been attacked by a Klingon bird-of-prey, all delegates killed. Following a disastrous attack against the Klingons in the ill-equipped Groumall, Kira and Dukat devise a plan to install a powerful disruptor in one of the ship’s cargo bays and go after the Klingon aggressors. Luring the Klingons to their position with a fake dilithium signature, the Groumall fires on the unsuspecting bird-of-prey when its shields are down. Badly damaged, Kira and Dukat beam aboard the enemy ship, using its transporters to remove the crew and bring the Groumall’s personnel aboard. With vital military intelligence gained, Dukat’s return to grace on Cardassia Prime is short-lived. Angry, he chooses to take the bird-of-prey and wage his own war against the Klingons. Kira persuades him that this is no life for his daughter, and the Major returns to Deep Space 9 along with Ziyal.

FIRST APPEARANCE:
‘RETURN TO GRACE’ (DS9)

TV APPEARANCE:
STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

DESIGNED BY:
John Eaves
COMING IN ISSUE 158

U.S.S. EXCELSIOR
NILO RODIS CONCEPT I

Inside your magazine

- A detailed examination of another of Nilo Rodis-Jamero's original concepts for the U.S.S. Excelsior, which he designed for STAR TREK III: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK
- Rare art of an unused design for the U.S.S. Excelsior

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