ORION SYNDICATE

TYPE: INTERCEPTOR

LAUNCHED: 22nd C

WEAPON: PARTICLE CANNON
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Stand assembly:
Slide the stand over the back of the ship

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ORION INTERCEPTOR

SPECIFICATION

OPERATED BY: ORION SYNDICATE
TYPE: INTERCEPTOR
IN OPERATION: 22nd CENTURY
LOCATION: BORDERLAND, ALPHA QUADRANT
WEAPONRY: PARTICLE CANNON
PROPULSION: WARP ENGINES
The Orion Syndicate operated fast interceptors in the lawless region known as the Borderland.
The Borderland was a volatile area of space in the Alpha Quadrant located between the territories of the Klingon Empire and the Orion Syndicate. The region was notorious for attracting the most dangerous elements from both powers, with the Orion Syndicate deploying a fleet of fast and powerful interceptors to abduct slaves from unwary ships.

The Orion interceptors were well suited to their primary mission, able to strike at speed while at warp, forcing ships to drop out of warp where they were more vulnerable to attack. Their mode of operation made these vessels something to be feared in the Borderland.

**HAWK-LIKE CONFIGURATION**

The interceptors were constructed in a sleek, hawk-like configuration with green-hued hull plating. Although available data is inconclusive, this avian aesthetic points to a crossover in ship design with both the Klingon Empire and the Romulan Star Empire.

The forward section of an Orion interceptor was constructed in a manner to resemble the beak of a bird, tapering to a sharp, aerodynamic point. This forward section swept back into the primary hull, opening out by degrees as it moved towards the aft section and a rear-slung configuration of wide, curved wings to either side of quad engine ports. The hull plating was adorned with patterned decoration, the tips of the beak and wings marked out in red. This decoration further emphasized the bird-like design, evoking an image of blood-soaked talons and beak.

**FAST AND POWERFUL**

The configuration of an Orion interceptor made them particularly fast and maneuverable at impulse speeds. This allowed them to quickly outclass other ships passing through the Borderland, making frequent, rapid attacks. Weaponry batteries comprised front-mounted particle cannons, able to accurately target specific areas of rival ships to knock out key systems such as warp nacelles.

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**DATA FEED**

The interceptors used transporters to beam crew away from other ships. An energy surge was detectable a second before transporter activation.

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![Interceptors in action](image)
With a target ship neutralized, the interceptors activated transporter systems to abduct multiple crew members at once. With their raid successfully completed, interceptors would proceed to processing stations within the Orion Syndicate, where their recently acquired cargo would be auctioned off as slaves.

**ENTERPRISE ENCOUNTERS**
In 2154, a Klingon bird-of-prey patrolling the Borderland investigated a transport shuttle emitting human bio-signs. The humans attacked and killed the Klingon crew, taking the ship for themselves. These humans were Augments, raised by infamous geneticist Dr. Arik Soong as his "children" after he stole their embryos. Captain Jonathan Archer of the Enterprise reluctantly enlisted the help of the imprisoned Soong in tracking down his children before they could cause any further incidents.

Soong directed Archer to search the Borderland for the rogue bird-of-prey. Shortly after entering the region, the Enterprise was attacked by two Orion interceptors while travelling at warp speed. The Enterprise was forced to drop out of warp, where it was instantly engaged by the interceptors.

Outgunning the Enterprise, the interceptors deployed its transporters to snatch nine of the Earth vessel's crew, including Commander T'Pol.

**RESCUE AND ATTACK**
Soong believed the abductees would be taken to a nearby processing station on Verex III for auctioning as slaves. Archer and Soong successfully launched a covert rescue mission,
The interceptors' particle cannons were powerful enough to overcome the Enterprise, despite attempts by Captain Archer to engage the attacking Orion vessels.

Close to being overcome by the interceptors, the arrival of the rogue bird-of-prey turned the tide of battle. One interceptor was destroyed, while the second veered off and disengaged.

After rescuing abducted crew members from a processing station on Verex III, the Enterprise was pursued by two further interceptors intent on regaining Orion property.

During which Soong attempted to escape. All Enterprise crew and a recaptured Soong were successfully returned to the ship. Archer deduced that Soong's direction to search the Borderland was a ruse in the hope the Orions would provide a means for his escape.

The Enterprise continued its search of the Borderland for the Augments, where it was once again attacked by two Orion interceptors who claimed the ship had stolen Orion property. The Enterprise engaged the ships, but once again they were too powerful. Before the Enterprise was overwhelmed, the interceptors were fought off by the rogue bird-of-prey.

Led by Malik, the group of Augments overcame the Enterprise crew, freeing Soong. Reunited with his children, Soong embarked on a new mission...

DATA FEED

A brilliant 22nd-century geneticist, Dr. Arik Soong held controversial views and felt it was a mistake for humanity to abandon genetic modification after the Eugenics War. Formerly Senior Medical Director at Cold Station 12, Soong stole Augment embryos, raising them as his children. His criminal activities were brought to book and Soong was imprisoned in a San Francisco prison facility, while his children were left to fend for themselves...
VEREX III
Soong believed the abducted Enterprise officers would be taken to a processing station on Verex III, a planet he had previously visited to gain supplies while on the run. The Enterprise arrived in orbit of the Orion world, where other ships orbited, including further interceptors.

Using Soong's old authorization code to gain access to the station, Archer and Soong beamed to the planet and attempted to locate the abducted crew members. The nine officers, including T'Pol, were separated and incarcerated ahead of being auctioned off as slaves to the highest bidder.

The market was a chaotic place, overseen by a ruthless Orion slave trader. Captain Archer successfully bid for crew member Jeffrey Pierce, allowing them to beam back to Enterprise and analyse the neurolytic restraint that prevented escape.

As T'Pol was auctioned for a very high price in the market, Archer and Soong returned to the planet with the means to retrieve the crew members. In the ensuing chaos, Soong evaded Archer and made a bid to escape. The Enterprise captain saw his crew safely transported back to the ship before foiling Soong’s escape attempt.
Abductees taken by Orion interceptors as slaves were considered Orion property. The Syndicate would fiercely protect this claim, pursuing any slaves that escaped a processing station such as Verex III.

If a slave did not achieve a price to cover processing at auction, they would be sold as food. Commander T'Pol was auctioned to a Tellarite for a high price, but was able to escape when her restraint was deactivated. She inflicted payback on the cruel Orion slaver before returning to Enterprise.

Slaves were prevented from escaping the Syndicate by neurolytic restraints. The restraints inflicted seizures on the slave if they travelled a certain distance from their processing station.
John Eaves is one of the STAR TREK franchise’s most prolific and long-serving members of design staff, contributing to both TV series and movies dating back to STAR TREK V: THE FINAL FRONTIER in 1989. After working for four seasons as production illustrator on DEEP SPACE NINE, Eaves contributed designs to STAR TREK NEMESIS, before joining the staff of ENTERPRISE in 2001 for the entire run of the series. For the 2004 episode ‘Borderland’, Eaves was tasked with designing new ships belonging to the Orion Syndicate, bringing the Orions back to STAR TREK for the first time in 30 years. However, early drafts of the script by Ken Lazebnik featured a different alien race from THE ORIGINAL SERIES.

During development of ‘Borderland’, the reptilian Gorn, as featured in ‘Arena’ and an episode of the 1970s STAR TREK animated series, ‘The Time Trap’, were intended as the script’s central antagonists. With this in mind, Eaves first turned to a ship design he had put forward for consideration several times in the past. “This was actually a ship that came
and went at least seven times during the course of ENTERPRISE,” he says, looking back to early pre-production meetings for ‘Borderland’. “It would never make it, but they always wanted to see it again. We had a very quick meeting when we got the ‘beat sheet’ (for ‘Borderland’), so I just threw that together real quick. I went into the meeting with it, and they said, ‘Oh… we like that one, but not for this particular production!’

The earlier iteration of that first design goes way, way back to the first season of ENTERPRISE. And it would come up again.”

**GORN DESIGNS**

With that first design given a positive response, but again rejected by ENTERPRISE’s production team, Eaves quickly provided two alternative designs, once more with Gorn as the intended crew. These concepts were smaller in scale than the first interceptor design, envisioned as faster, lighter fighter craft. “There wasn’t an awful lot of information on it,” Eaves explains, “and so my thinking with the Gorn was that it was a small crew and a small ship, and that’s where it came from. We were experimenting – well I was – with that multiple triangulated design.” This experimentation in design also gave rise to the earlier vessels of another ENTERPRISE antagonist. “That’s where the Xindi started from too, that multiple triangulated design. The first of those designs, you’ve got that three-point structure and the engines wrapped all around it, and the bridge was a little diamond in the centre.” The second of this pair of designs saw
a first move towards taking inspiration from nature. “We did more of a shark fighter. I liked these a lot,” adds Eaves.

“We then had to do a color sketch,” Eaves continues. “We started playing with the painting on the outside. They wanted to have a marking, not nose art, but some kind of exterior marking.” At this stage, Eaves looked into military history, taking the external markings of the World War II Curtis P-40 Warhawk fighter plane as inspiration for the Gorn ship’s exterior adornment. “Teeth are always a good thing to start off with. And these were still Gorn ideas. At some point in development it changed to Orion, so the whole Gorn fighter thing went away.”

ENTER THE ORIONS

With ‘Borderland’ now featuring the return of the Orion Syndicate, Eaves took a fresh approach for the next stage in the design process for the new ship. “This was very organic and kind of pickle-in-a-jar-ish,” he describes this next design. “That was the idea behind it, that it was just these multiple layers of stuff. Nothing segmented, but all just

△ Eaves adopted a more segmented, heavily armed design concept after the Gorn were replaced by the Orions for ‘Borderland’.

△ Color stage. Eaves was inspired by ships in the film ‘Laputa: Castle in the Sky’ for this stage.
tied together and in a globular form with battle
guns all over it.”

Eaves’ influences as a film fan informed his
direction for this stage of the design, taking the
1986 Studio Ghibli animated movie ‘Laputa: Castle
in the Sky’, as a starting point. “It’s one of Studio
Ghibli’s very first films,” explains Eaves, “and they
had these zeppelins, that I just thought were the
coolest things, with all these battle guns and stuff
all over them. And that was the inspiration for this
because I had just picked up the Laserdisc of that
movie. I thought it was the coolest thing, the way
they made these flying battle ships with these guns
all over this kind of curvy, round zeppelin shape.”
The script for ‘Borderland’ contained little in the
way of description of the Orion interceptors. “They
said in the beat sheet that is was heavily armed,
and that was about all the description there was.
That can mean just about anything,” Eaves laughs.

“On ENTERPRISE, we were going for that retro look.
So this stage might be super retro, but it’s still fun to
put turret guns all over the place.”

After producing the sketch concept of this more
globular design, Eaves proceeded to add color as
before. Here, the process covers two different
versions, highlighting the continuing evolution of
the design – a first, clean variety, followed by a
second color sketch incorporating the exterior
teeth image of earlier designs. “I was just carrying it
on, because they still liked that exterior artwork
on the ship.”

LESS BULBOUS
Exterior decoration would remain a constant
through to the final design of the Orion interceptor,
but the more bulbous, compact version was further
refined, first as a black-and-white sketch. Eaves
outlines the thought process behind this stage:
“Let’s see something a little more compact. They
liked the bulbous look, but less bulbs. This had a
little bit more of an aggressive shape to it, it still has
all the guns and the battle weary stuff going on,
and then we went to another color version of it.
These were all presented at around the same time,
maybe a couple of days apart.”

In adding more exterior decoration to the ship’s
hull on both these later designs, Eaves happened
upon a way to add unusual detail by accident.
“I was just learning Photoshop back then,” he says.
“I had just picked up a David Bowie album, where
Bowie has tattoos on the cover. I thought it would
be cool to tattoo a ship, and that’s where that
weird marking comes from. So we created this
Bowie-esque/Deborah Harry tattoo thing on the
outside. I hit something in Photoshop that outlined
the text, and I couldn’t figure out how I did it! But
luckily I did it on both of them, and it did this weird
outline. It preselected the color and it sampled off
A third version of
this stage added teeth
decoration, brought
forward from earlier
design concepts.
what I had there. I thought, holy smokes! I hope I can figure out what I did! I didn’t for years! But that’s how that started and how that whole tattoo look was primeval and kind of cool."

NEW DIRECTION
The design concept for the Orion interceptors was quite far advanced when a sudden change of direction was taken, influenced by a production meeting for the episode. “I think it was the writer (Ken Lazebnik), who at the meeting said, ‘I found a picture of something that I think could be even better than these two ideas.’ So he brought out a picture of this bizarre battle axe…”

This moment was pivotal in quickly moving to the final design, with Eaves working up two fresh
John Eaves further refined these two advanced designs, adding more dynamic detail in Photoshop to make the Orion ships even more fearsome. As the above design sketches show, they would later be put forward by Eaves as potential designs for Harrad-Sar’s Orion cruiser in the later ENTERPRISE season four episode, “Bound.”
concepts that were larger and even more aggressive than earlier designs. The increased scale was crucial. "There was another issue, when you’re having a space battle in a STAR TREK show, the bad guy usually is at least the same size as the Enterprise, or bigger, unless it’s a scout ship or something else. You’ll never see anything that’s smaller in scale at that time. It always had to be equal in scale, and it didn’t matter what the firepower was, there just had to be a visual comparison."

"The design with the six blades was first," outlines Eaves. "The battle axe had two blades, so I just extrapolated that and took it to six. I didn’t care for that sketch, so I thought we’d just go back to the two blades. They really gravitated towards that two-blade version, so we went full color on it.”

Getting very close to the final, locked design, the color stage of this advanced version incorporated elements of hull decoration as in earlier stages of the design process, once again adopting the teeth motif across the wing section. “They said, ‘why don’t you take the teeth and put those on it, and the tips of the wings, dip them in blood’. We wanted it to be aggressive not only in nature but also in appearance, so it was just a giant flying bully threat!”

The design process was lengthier than usual for a new STAR TREK ship, demonstrating the ongoing visual evolution of a technical, fast-moving weekly television drama. However, few designs are ever wasted, and the earlier, more globular design concepts for the Orion inceptor were ultimately looked to as the basis for Harrad-Sar’s Orion pirate ship in ENTERPRISE: ‘Bound’, later in season four.

“This one is a full gambit of different ideas that went all the way up to the end,” Eaves sums up work on one of his favorite design assignments for ENTERPRISE. “It’s a good example, too, of how the scripts change as you go. You draw from one element to the other based on just a couple of words changing.”

△ After experimenting with a six-bladed configuration (see opposite), Eaves ultimately settled on a more bird-like design with two wide, sweeping wings. Note the interceptors larger scale in relation to the Enterprise, which has been added to the sketch at this stage.
With a new direction suggested by writer Ken Lazebnik, Eaves produced a dramatically different design concept that incorporated a complex six-blade configuration. Ultimately the designer decided to reduce the number of wing blades.

Eaves’ final colour design sketches of the locked design. On direction from ENTERPRISE’s producers, the teeth were added once more, with a blood motif on the wings and nose section.

‘Borderland’ marked the final STAR TREK appearance to date of J.G. Hertzler, playing the Klingon Captain in the opening sequence. Hertzler first appeared as a Vulcan Captain in the first episode of DEEP SPACE NINE, before appearing in over 20 further episodes as General Martok. He also played a Hirogen Fighter in VOYAGER: ‘Tsunkatse’ and Kolos in ENTERPRISE: ‘Judgment’.

The Orion Syndicate reappeared in ENTERPRISE season four in ‘Bound’. However, ‘Borderland’ was their first appearance in over 30 years, having last featured in ‘The Pirates of Orion’, an episode of the STAR TREK: THE ANIMATED SERIES.
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