

AKULA

CLASS HEAVY DESTROYER



Intended to rectify one of the most glaring procurement blunders of the 23rd Century, the *Akula* (DH 4700) class emerged onto an already crowded field. It was shepherded there by a Starfleet still incapable of escaping its own bureaucratic malaise and one which was caught one to two steps behind its principal adversary, the Imperial Klingon Defense Force. Only through the strident efforts of engineers within its Advanced Starship Design Bureau (ASDB) were technological advances able to be leveraged, carving out a niche that *Akula* eagerly grew into.

With the inception of the Class I project in 2215, the *Saladin* (DD 500) class was positioned as an all-encompassing fleet picket, intended to provide a credible offensive/defensive challenge to all comers. However well-intentioned the ASDB and the Admiralty were during the class' design and construction, a distinct lack of knowledge and experience with warp field engineering (as it related to single vs. dual-nacelle starship designs) resulted in severely hampered FTL maneuverability. This was counterbalanced somewhat by decent sublight maneuverability and large weapons stores, but even still, Starfleet would eventually press forward in many different directions—upgrading older classes that were needlessly complex and had poor range (*Detroyat*, *Marklin*), inducting new classes in an attempt to find a solid replacement (*Larson*, *Loknar*) and even upgrading *Saladin* herself (to the *Bonhomme Richard*-equivalent 'Siva' standard in 2245).

Not only was there this to contend with, but *Saladin* had also spawned a variant that traded weapons for sensors. *Hermes* (ST 585) started out as a platform from which fleet operations could be coordinated, equipping both longer-range sensors, more sophisticated communications equipment and C3 facilities. As the basic nature of these operations evolved, *Hermes* was utilized more and more for long-range reconnaissance missions. Unfortunately, *Saladin*'s basic weaknesses were compounded by the

comparatively weak armament suite and deflector shield system. These scouts therefore became easy targets for their Klingon adversaries.

It could be argued that with the advances in technology, there was no need for a specialized Scout like this and that solving *Saladin*'s basic problems conclusively was the only problem the ASDB should concern itself with. However, Starfleet's construction history and deployment doctrine left much to be desired. A unifying force was sorely needed, yet in the eyes of the general public, it remained to be seen if it could be delivered.

The ASDB was not so pessimistic. With *Larson* (DD 4300), they successfully imitated a two-lobed warp field by inverting *Saladin*'s original field configuration and flattening it somewhat. What was taking shape in their labs was comparatively simpler. They took the basic *Saladin* configuration and rather than subject it to the same kind of exotic modifications, they simply added a second nacelle atop the saucer.

More substantive changes occurred inside the saucer. Aside from enlarging the engineering section, the science labs of *Saladin* (added to satisfy political pressures) were eliminated. The compliment was slightly larger than *Larson*—305 officers and crew—accounting for the attributes that would truly set *Akula* apart.

One of the main priorities in the class' development was electronic warfare. A novel concept involving the use of the electromagnetic spectrum and/or directed energy to control the spectrum, the attack of an enemy or to impede enemy assaults, a basic ECM package was incorporated into the defensive suite of every Class I starship. Klingon cloaking technology, though in limited Defense Force service during the Four Years War, spurred the development of more offensively-focused ECCM

systems. Such systems were tested on and in limited use aboard *Surya* (FF 1850) and *Coventry* (FH 1230) class Frigates. In-field performance and reliability data were used to make further refinements over a series of months before installation on *Akula*.

These systems were paired with enhanced long-range sensors able to scan out to a maximum range of 4.3 light years--handily besting *Constitution* (3.27LY) and *Pyotr Velikiy* (3.85LY) and making it an ideal replacement for *Hermes*. Ensuring survivability and by extension, the ability to operate independently, *Akula* received the same deflector shield system slated for inclusion on the *Kiaga* (DD 820) class, rated for a maximum capacity of 236,288 terajoules. Armament however, remained strictly Destroyer-standard--3 Type VI Phaser Banks and 2 2nd Class Torpedo Launchers, all tied into the DX-7 fire control system.

Akula entered service in 2248, too late to have prevented several notable losses, such as at the Battles of Andromeda and GR-1 but did join *Kiaga* on the upswing as the fortunes of war shifted back towards the Federation and Starfleet. It didn't build up serious quantity until early 2250 by which time the Klingon war effort had begun to seriously falter.

In their first deployment, *Oppenheimer* (DH 4701), *Columbia* (DH 4705) and *Coronado* (DH 4713) were assigned to the assault flotilla assembled to attack Karag. Situated over 140 light years behind the lines in the Klingon hinterland, the planet was a primary trans-shipment point for supplies and personnel. As long as it remained active, the IKDF could continue fighting. Taking no chances, Starfleet hurriedly refitted 10 colonial transports, loaded them with the SFMC's entire IV Corps and sent them off on their 3-month journey. Given the world's remote location and the distance to be covered from their launch point at Cestus, the operation was ideal for giving the new Heavy Destroyers some operational experience.

Taking the state of IKDF forces into account along with the location, the flotilla faced comparatively little resistance in orbit. Once the IV Corps was landed, *Oppenheimer*, *Columbia* and *Coronado* worked to continually provide a complete and accurate depiction of the situation on the surface, a task made all the more difficult by Karag's volatile atmosphere. When conditions improved enough, they aggregated and relayed targeting data to ships in orbit and starfighters planetside, allowing them to target the Klingon forces and 'mop up' nicely.

With the battle won, the flotilla headed for home, encountering a larger Starfleet force on their way to Grank, where the remainder of the IKDF's front line forces (excluding those assigned to Kolm-An or the core worlds) were based. Though they were low on supplies and quite combat weary, they joined up with their comrades and engaged in what could only be described as a 'turkey shoot', handily outnumbering the Klingons and enjoying the advantages of both their more powerful phasers and their electronic warfare systems. Staying somewhat removed (or trying to), *Oppenheimer*, *Columbia* and *Coronado* coordinated fleet movements, relaying positional and targeting data to

ships and fighters, keeping their comrades two steps ahead of their opponents and making the battle both a quick and decisive one.

If the Battle of Grank was a turkey shoot, then the penultimate and final Battle at Kolm-An (**Operation Argus Redoubt**) was even more so. Starfleet deployed 80% of its active forces, including all available *Akulas*. The mission was relatively simple and transcended any sort of formal organization or coordination--getting to the planet and inflicting as much damage as possible by any means necessary. Given that they outnumbered the IKDF forces by over 2 to 1, it didn't quite matter either which ships attacked which. The only exception involved selected classes with the heaviest torpedo armament (*Yorktown*, *Pyotr Velikiy*, *Coventry*, *Marklin*) ordered to attack the 5 Z-4 class Space Stations. Despite the presence of numerous larger D-6 and D-7 class Battlecruisers and even B-1 class Battleships, *Akula* gave a good account of itself--*Northampton* (DH 4707) and *Francis Marion* (DH 4720) accruing 7 kills each.

The post-war era saw *Akula* truly come into its own. Shortly after the Battle of Thranstor, fresh elections in the UFP saw former Starfleet Operations chief Kristof Blaque ascend to the presidency, succeeding Samuel Solomon Qasr. One of his first moves was to dismantle the archaic and wholly ineffective bureaucracy--dismissing or otherwise forcing into retirement every member of the Admiralty except one, Paula Christenson. The newest member of the admiralty and the only woman, she was promoted three grades to Star Admiral and quickly confirmed as the new Starfleet Commander-in-Chief by the Federation General Assembly. Charged with not only building up defenses, but also supporting efforts to expand the Federation's territorial holding, she saw *Akula* as a valuable, dual-use tool.

With the new neutral zone separating Federation and Klingon space undefended and that separating Federation and Romulan space lined with the increasingly aged Earth Outpost Stations, *Akula* (together with *Kiaga*) became Starfleet's principal reconnaissance and early warning platform. Production continued unabated as other assets came online to ostensibly support President Blaque's directives (notably, *Antares* in 2250 and *Federation* in 2251). Though his successor, Sukio Hirashito placed a greater emphasis on building up logistics and infrastructure during her single term in office, the basic direction he set did not change significantly and would last for decades to come.

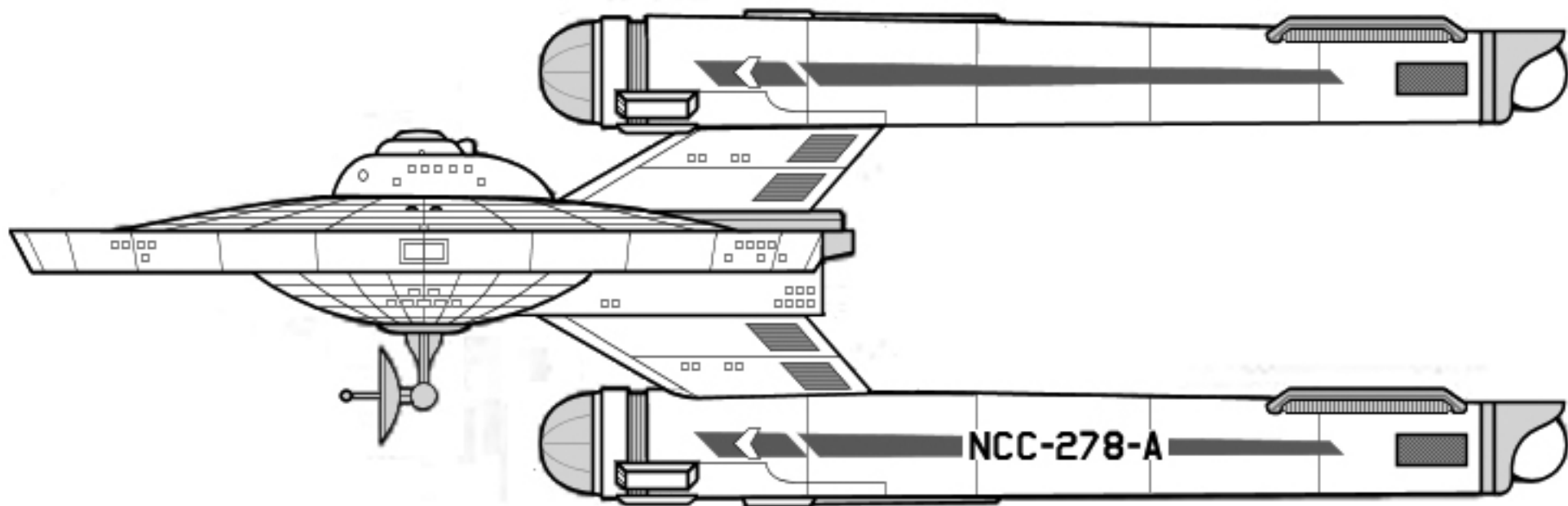
Production was temporarily halted in 2260 as the class was refit in line with *Constitution*'s 'Achernar' type specifications but was resumed in 2261 after the baseline design was updated and continued until 2265.

Following the Battle of Icarus IV in 2266 (where the *ChR Gal Gath'thong* breached the Romulan Neutral Zone and destroyed several Earth Outpost Stations), Starfleet implemented a more robust border security strategy, beginning construction of the *Foxtrot* series Outposts along the Romulan border and the *Epsilon* series Monitoring Stations along the Klingon border. This dovetailed with a marked increase in pirate activity (which truthfully, had been on the increase for several years prior) and as these Outposts and Monitoring Stations came online, *Akula* gradually found itself operating in and around hotspots such as the Triangle region in the anti-piracy role.

Following the disastrous events of **Operation Vanguard** (involving among other things, the destruction of Starbase 47), the *Sentinel* (DH 4734), *Zumwalt* (DH 4741), *Newcastle* (DH 4747) and *Ohio* (DH 4752) were deployed to the Taurus Reach as part of Carrier Battle Groups led by the *Coral Sea* (CV 2201) and *Sao Paolo* (CV 2211). Despite the operation's outcome, its lingering importance combined with the fact the Federation's footprint in that remote region had grown significantly, necessitated a continued presence. These ships and others would continue to remain on station until the completion of the second Starbase 47 in 2276.

A mysterious footnote that closed out the class' service in this era was the disappearance of the *Stephen Decatur* (DH 4738) in late 2268. Commanded by Commodore Antione Jean-Baptiste, the ship led the 19th Perimeter Action Squadron (later known simply as 'Squadron 19') and was on routine patrol near the Lembatta Cluster, when all contact was lost on stardate 4270.3. A subsequent search of the region revealed no traces at all of the squadron--no debris/wreckage, lifeboats, transponders or message buoys. Aside from the events surrounding the Delta Triangle (which wouldn't be solved until the following year), this would stand as the most mysterious disappearance of any ship on record until the 'Great White Fleet' vanished in 2297.

With the close of the Class I era and the advent of linear drive in the 2270s, the uprating roadmap established by Starfleet Command accorded high priority to *Akula* (nearly as much as *Constitution* surprisingly enough). Surviving vessels were removed from active service then beginning in late 2270 with the last example, *Valkyrie* (DH 4772), entering drydock in mid 2271.



Class Akula
Classification Heavy Destroyer

Service 2248-2276

Length 242m
Beam 127m
Height 62m
Decks 13

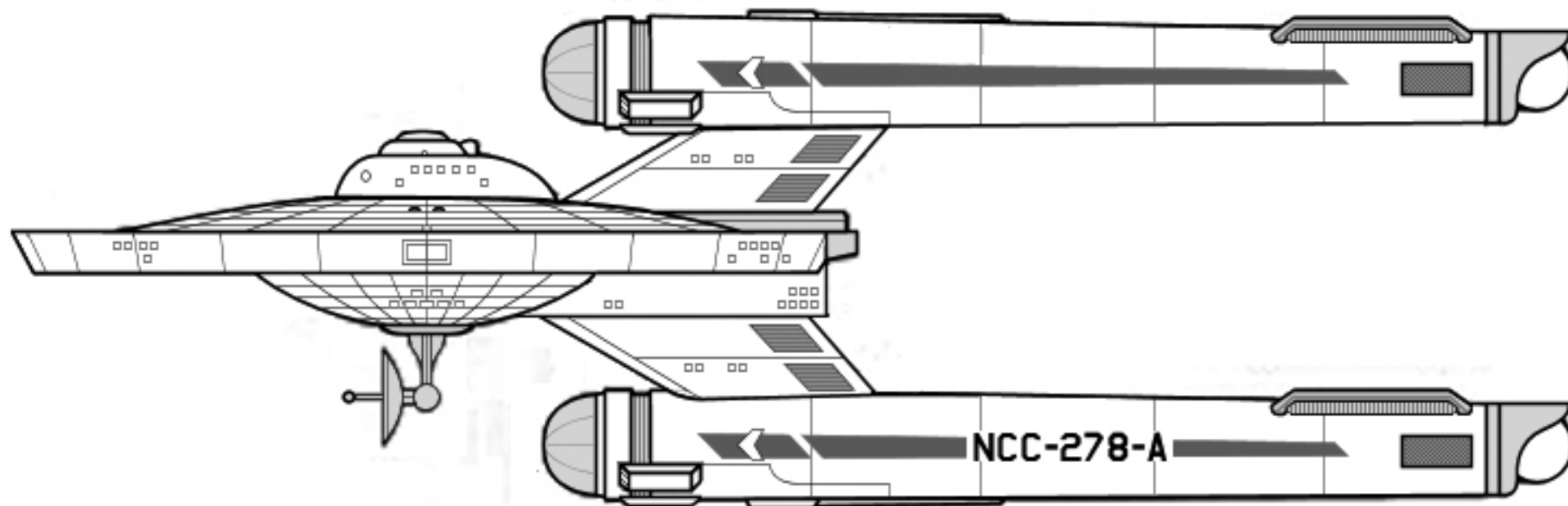
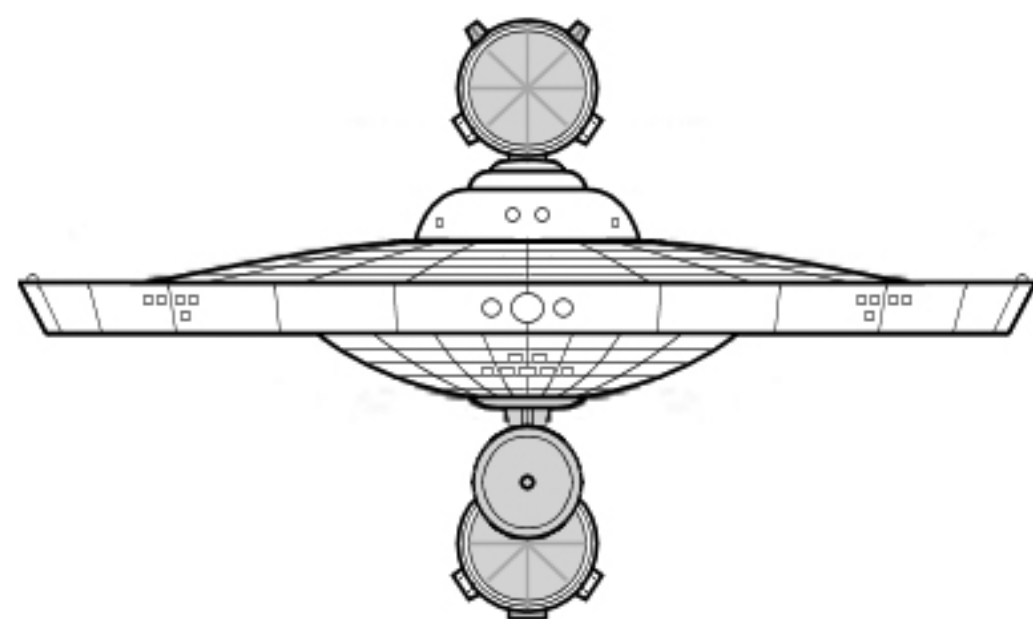
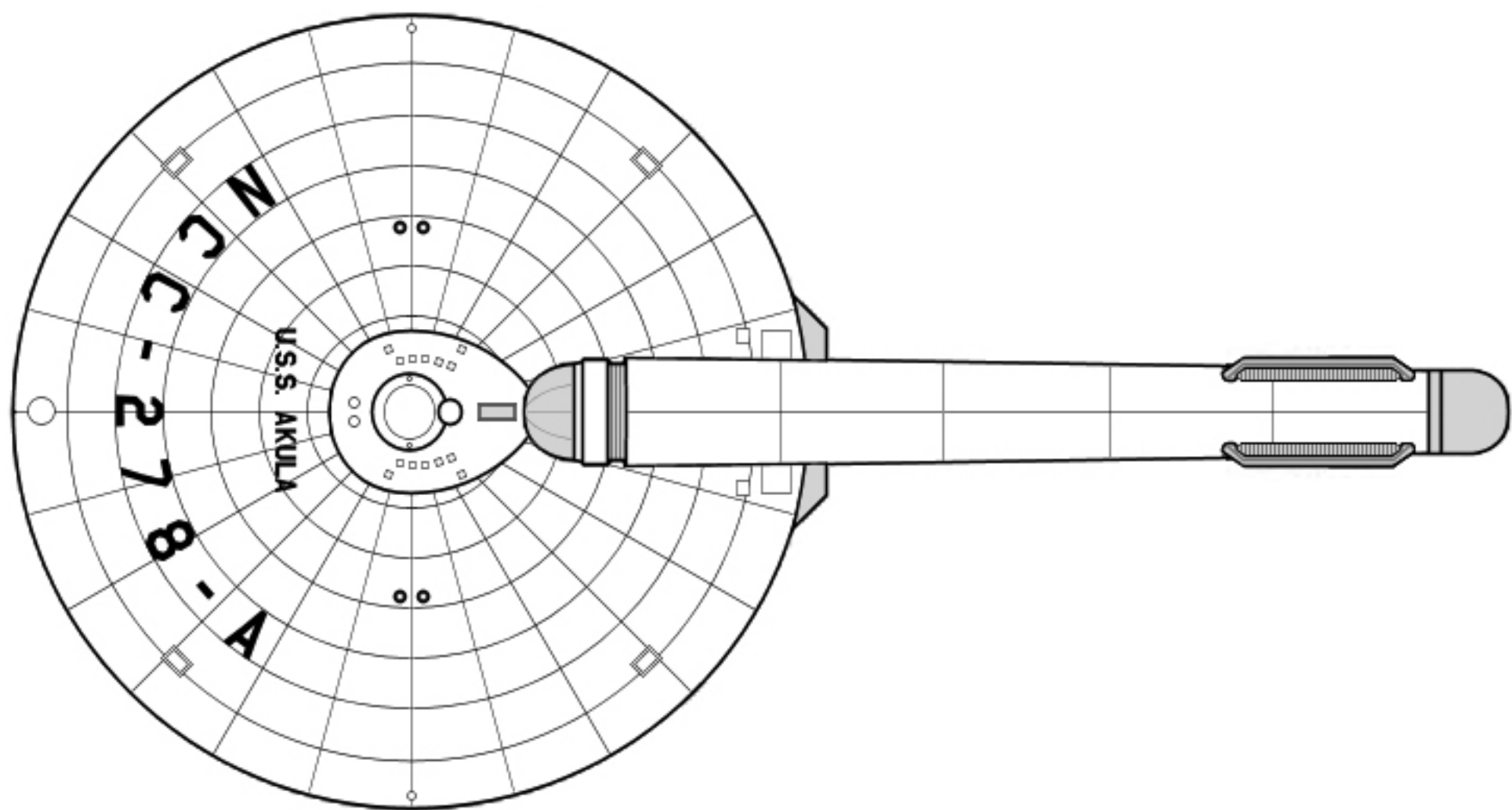
Mass 108,500 metric tons

Compliment 305

Armament 3 Type VI Phaser Banks
2 2nd Class Torpedo Launchers

Defense Systems Standard Deflector Shield System
total capacity 340,200 terajoules

Standard Monotanium Single Hull



Editor's Annotations

There's really not a whole lot to say here. My thoughts regarding *Akula* have been solidified for quite a while, it was just a matter of getting them all out and into an organized, coherent form. In my opinion, the essence of a Destroyer is personified by **DS9's** *Defiant*. Considering *Kiaga* is its **TOS** progenitor more or less, there's really little to no need to keep other classes like *Saladin* and *Larson* around. That's why, even though there wasn't really much of a problem with *Larson*, I kind of sidelined it like I did—it keeps things simple and provides a logical path forward.

About the only outstanding issue with this class is its name/classification. *Akula* as I have presented it, originally appeared in the PC title ***Starfleet Command*** as a **TMP** era ship of a different design. The class name is also used for a variant/sub-type of the *Akyazi* class Perimeter Action ship. Then there's the *Apollo* class that first appeared in either ***Starfleet Command*** or ***Klingon Academy*** – am not sure which. It looks nothing like the original **TMP** *Akula* I just mentioned, but is simpler in design and closely resembles *Akula* as presented here. A further problem with it are the registry numbers – they are almost all in the 1XXXX range, indicative of ships commissioned in the early 24th Century.

Bibliography

Logo—Kristian “Reverend” Trigwell ([Gallery @ Star Trek Minutiae](#))

Design—Activision Games/Interplay

Blueprints—Neale “Vance” Davidson ([Jaynz Technology](#))