



WARHAMMER

# AERONAUTICA IMPERIALIS

AERIAL COMBAT IN THE 41ST MILLENNIUM



GAME RULEBOOK



The Warhammer Vault exists to preserve the rich lore and background of Warhammer 40,000 and Warhammer Age of Sigmar. As such, outdated game scenarios and unit rules have been removed from this publication.

# AERONAUTICA IMPERIALIS

THE GAME OF AERIAL COMBAT  
IN THE 41ST MILLENNIUM



BY WARWICK KINRADE

**GAMES  
WORKSHOP**

**Forge World**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Imperial Navy Aircraft

Thunderbolt .....	6
Lightning .....	14
Valkyrie .....	18
Vulture .....	24
Aquila .....	28
Arvus .....	30
Marauder .....	34
Marauder Destroyer .....	38

## Space Marine Aircraft

Thunderhawk Gunship .....	42
Thunderhawk Transporter .....	48

## Ork Aircraft

Fighta .....	54
Fighta-Bommer .....	59

## Tau Aircraft

Barracuda .....	66
Tiger Shark .....	72
Tiger Shark AX-1-0 .....	78
Orca .....	82
Manta .....	86

## Eldar Aircraft

Nightwing .....	90
Phoenix .....	96
Vampire Raider .....	102
Vampire Hunter .....	106

## Chaos Aircraft

Hell Blade .....	110
Hell Talon .....	114

## Appendices

Appendix – The Aeronautica Imperialis Hobby .....	119
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## PREFACE

by Rick Priestley

Welcome to Aeronautica Imperialis – the game of aerial combat in the Warhammer 40,000 universe. It might come as a surprise to discover a new game from the folks at Forge World - indeed it is the very first complete game from the Forge World design stable – but I must say I find it all the more welcome for being a surprise and a very exciting one at that. The Aeronautica Imperialis game combines all the features of high-speed aerial combat including intercepts, bombing missions, reconnaissance, ground support and dog-fights. Most of the principal antagonists of the Warhammer 40,000 universe are represented: from the well-armed and armoured aircraft of the Imperial Navy, the ramshackle but deadly Ork flying machines, the sleek and nimble aircraft of the Eldar, and not to mention the awesomely aerodynamic ships of the Tau.

It is especially satisfying to be presented with this game, because it fulfils a long-held desire of mine to see the Warhammer 40,000 universe represented by a series of games of all kinds – from the most detailed urban conflicts of the Underhive to wars in the cold depths of interstellar space. Some of those ambitions were met years ago with games such as Necromunda, Gorkamorka and Battlefleet Gothic, but for every game realised in this way, there were hundreds that never quite made it into production. Necromunda – a highly detailed game of individual combat in the underhives of the Imperium – was always intended to expand into a series of games set on worlds every bit as unusual and characterful as the Hives of Necromunda: Machine Worlds of the Adeptus Mechanicus, Death Worlds such as Catachan, the Craftworlds of the Eldar and the labyrinthine warp-tunnels of their Dark Eldar kin. At the other end of the scale, Battlefleet Gothic introduced spacecraft and battles in the depths of space. The vast gulf between these two gaming genres suggests something of the scope for further exploration – a canvas of endless war painted across a galaxy of planets.

Now at last, part of that scope has been addressed with the creation of Aeronautica Imperialis – introducing a fast paced yet highly detailed rules system for aerial warfare in the skies of the far future. The game has been built upon the existing range of ‘epic’ scale aircraft from the Forge World range, with the introduction of a rather clever base that both poses the models in flight whilst recording height and speed by means of handy dials inset into the bases themselves. The Forge World team – and especially designer Warwick Kinrade – are to be congratulated for a fine job of work that bodes well for future developments. The opportunities for further additions of aircraft as well as craft for new races or factions are both obvious and enticing. I hope the initial range of aircraft models will be joined by many new models, sculpted and manufactured to the uncompromisingly high standards that have become synonymous with the Forge World name. The waiting is over – let the skies blaze with the fire of battle!

### PRODUCED BY FORGE WORLD

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# IMPERIAL NAVY AIRCRAFT



# THUNDERBOLT



## BACKGROUND

The Thunderbolt is the Imperium's frontline, single-seater, heavy fighter. It is the main-stay of Imperial Navy Fighter wings, a very tough, well-armed, versatile aircraft, with good top speed and manoeuvrability, powerful nose mounted armaments and wing hard points for additional missiles or bombs. It is well liked by its pilots, and has provided good service to the Imperial Navy for many centuries.

Durable and dependable in a fight, the Thunderbolt's main role is as an air superiority fighter, to seek and engage enemy aircraft in dogfights or hunting down enemy bombers to establish air superiority over the battlefield. One of the Thunderbolt's greatest strength is its versatility, with good performance as a high altitude escort fighter or a low level fighter bomber, as a night fighter or even as a reconnaissance aircraft. It is commonly used in all these roles.

The Thunderbolt's wing hard points can carry up to four bombs, air-to-surface Hellstrike missiles or, for intercepting enemy aircraft, Skystrike air to air missiles. A Thunderbolt can also be equipped with under-wing fuel tanks to increase the aircraft's range, but as the Thunderbolt already has a long range for a single-seater fighter this modification is not often required.

Quad nose-mounted autocannons and twin-linked lascannons give the Thunderbolt a reputation for ferocious firepower. The lascannons are mainly used in a ground attack role to engage

enemy vehicles, whilst the autocannons are the weapons of choice for dog fighting and strafing enemy infantry.

As well as its twin jet engines, the Thunderbolt is also equipped with a rocket booster. This can be engaged to give the fighter limited operational capability in space. This is only used for transport and deployment, not for combat, and Thunderbolts are not true 'star-fighters', this role is left to Imperial Furies. The rocket engine allows a Thunderbolt to deploy from a spaceship in low planetary orbit into the atmosphere, and can be engaged once the aircraft has reached its atmospheric ceiling to boost the fighter back to the waiting mothership.

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Type:** Multi-role heavy fighter/interceptor.

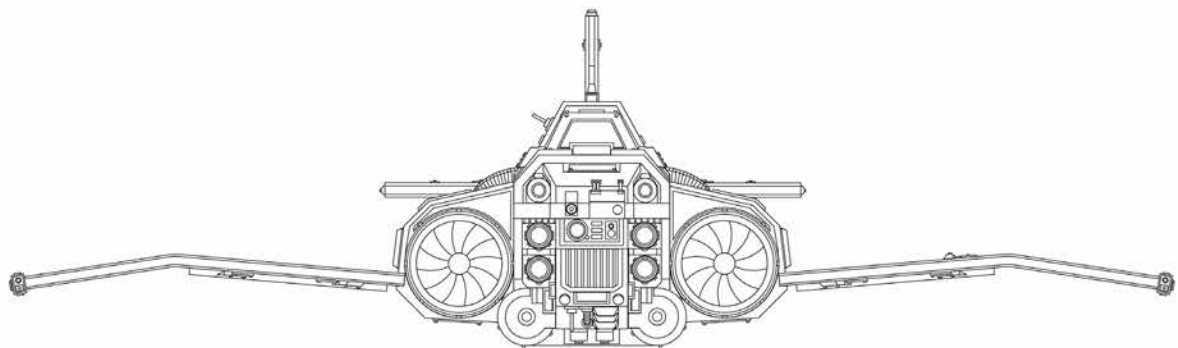
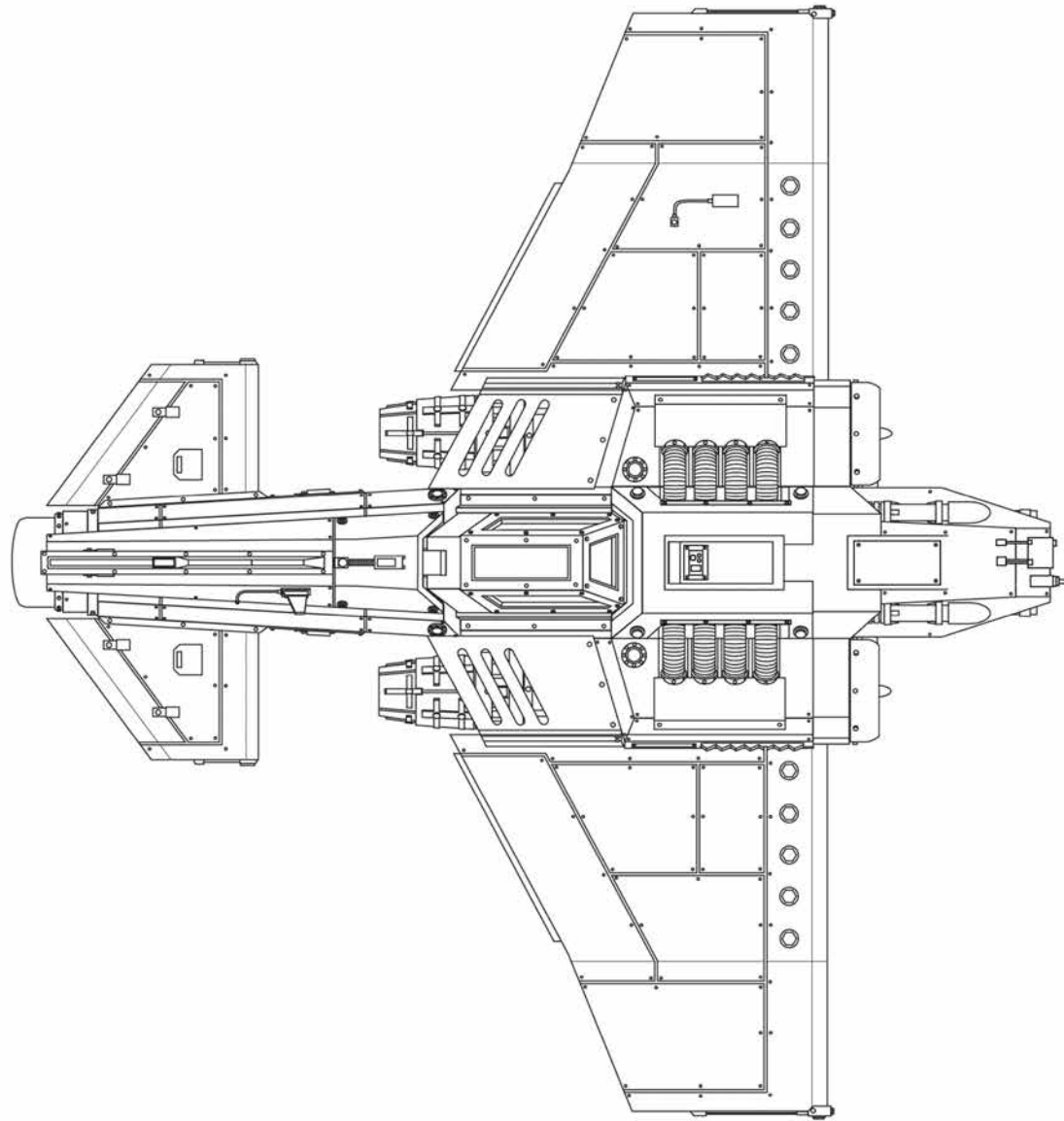
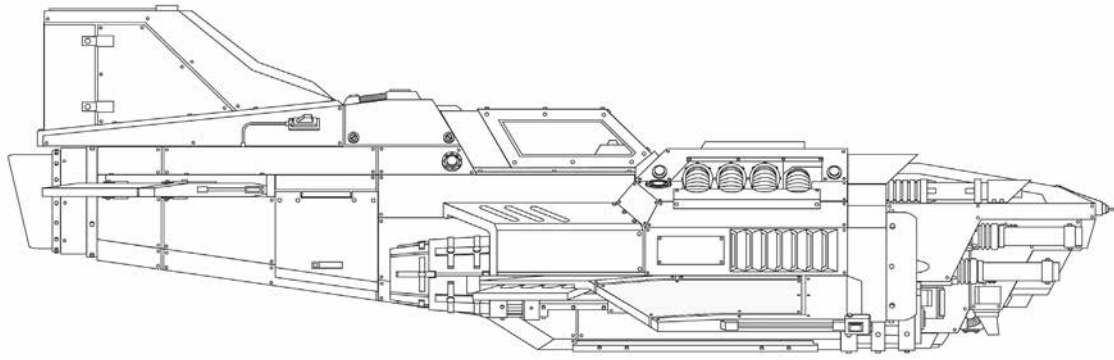
**Powerplant:** Twin F122v afterburning turbofans.

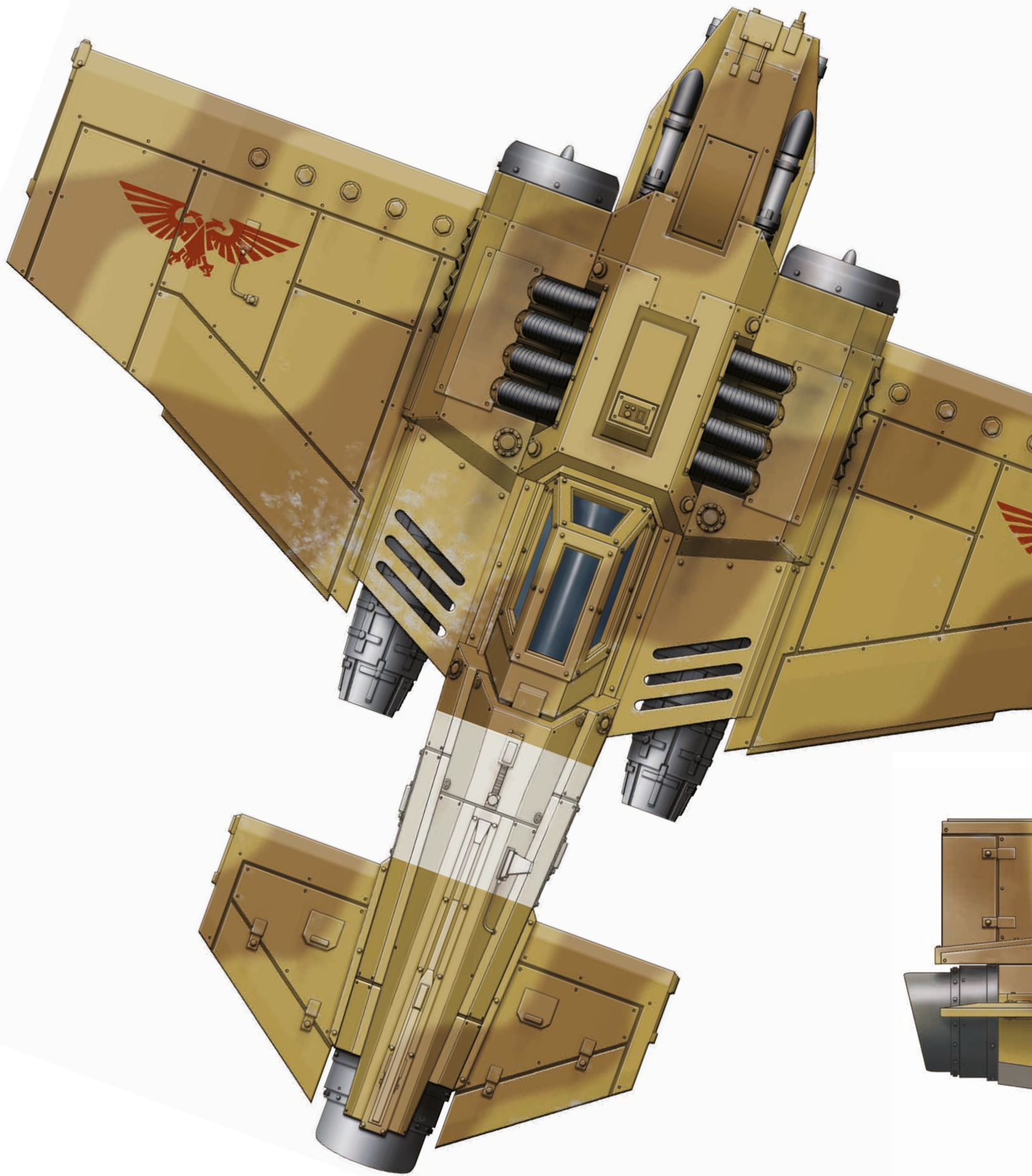
**Performance:** Maximum speed 2200kph (1375mph) at 5,000 feet; cruising speed 1200kph (750 mph); range 12,000km approx.

**Weight:** 14 tonnes (empty).

**Dimensions:** Wingspan 16.06m; length 14.2m; height 3.5m (with landing gear down).

**Armament:** Four nose-mounted autocannons, two nose-mounted lascannons, four under-wing hardpoints.





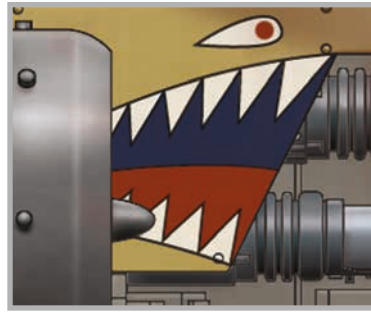
# THUNDERBOLT FIGHTER

The standard equipment of most Imperial Navy fighter wings, the Thunderbolt is a rugged, versatile and brutal fighting machine, well suited to warfare in a wide variety of different environments.

It carries massive firepower in its nose, which can be augmented with more weapons on the under-wing hardpoints, usually a bomb load or missiles, depending on the mission. Additional fuel tanks can also be mounted for increased range on escort missions.

It is capable of being deployed for a variety of missions; as a fighter-interceptor, as an escort fighter, as a ground attack fighter-bomber or even on long-range reconnaissance missions, the Thunderbolt can handle just about anything the enemy can throw at it.

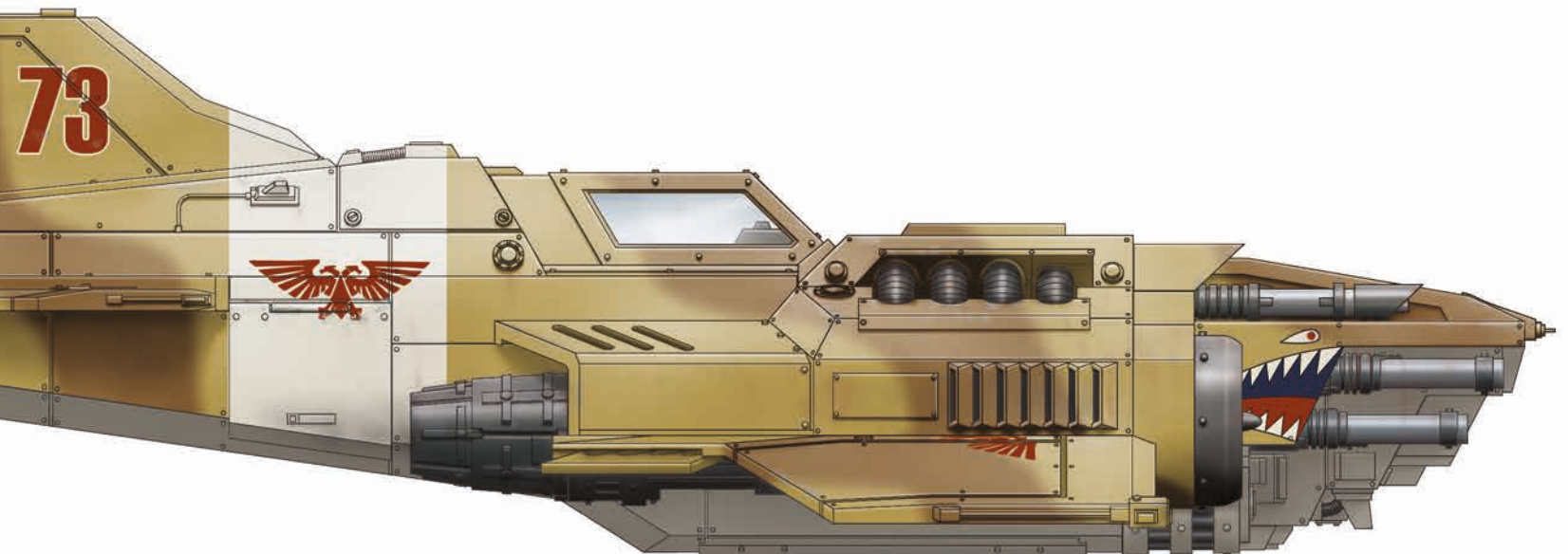
The aircraft shown here is a Cypra-Mundi pattern Thunderbolt allocated to 18th Fighter Group, 477th Fighter Wing on Ceres IV, seen here during fighting against rebel forces in the planet's arid lowlands. This is the 7th aircraft of the wing's 3rd squadron. The pilot has added shark's grin nose art, a non-standard addition to the officially approved Imperial eagles on the wing and fuselage. No doubt, all have been added to seek the blessing of the Emperor, and thus his protection, in battle.



Unofficial nose art, added for morale purposes and often overlooked by wing commanders.

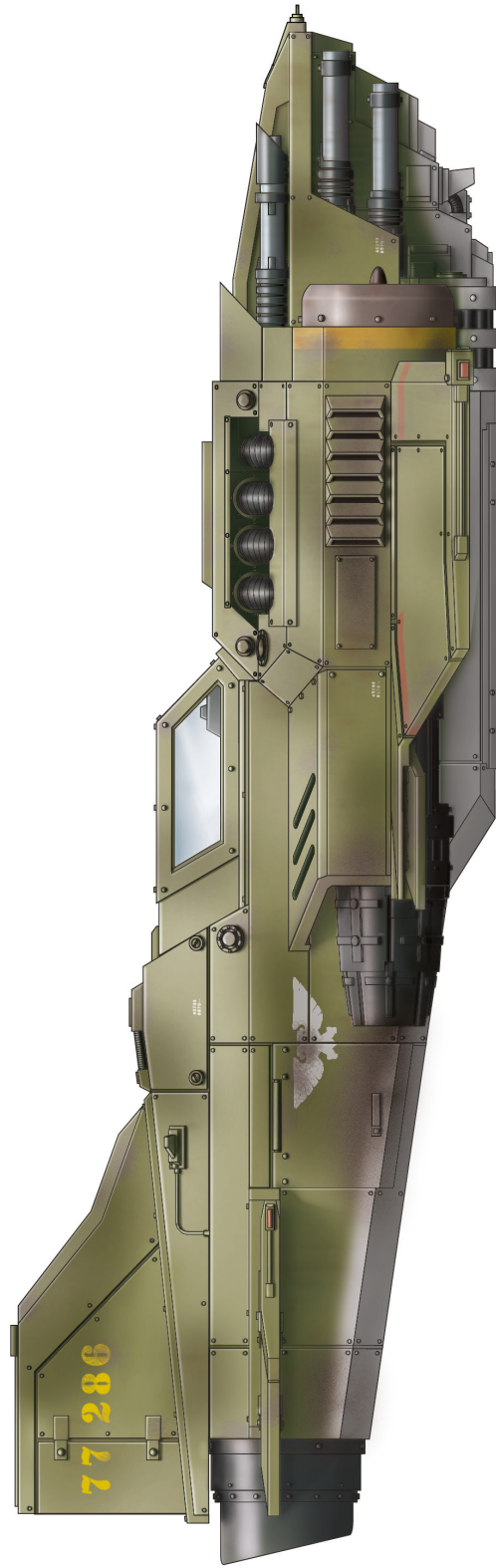


The Imperial eagle pronounces loyalty and faith in the Emperor. In this case it is stenciled onto a white identification stripe.





Thunderbolt of 442nd Imperial Navy Fighter Wing. 7th aircraft of G squadron, supporting the Galan V Expedition Force.



Thunderbolt of 2188th Imperial Navy Fighter Wing. Deployed as part of the defence of Hamman's World against the Tyrants of Hivefleet Kraken.



Thunderbolt of 83rd Imperial Navy Fighter Wing. 201 is the aircraft of the squadron's second-in-command, shown here in the colours of Bellis XII campaign.



Thunderbolt of 680th Imperial Navy Fighter Wing. Part of the garrison force on Denkari Minoris against the Orks of the Great Tyrant of Jagga.

# IMPERIAL NAVY THUNDERBOLT PILOT

*This is Wing-Sergeant Olic Koroman, second in command of 83rd Imperial Navy Fighter wing, 'Eagle' squadron. A veteran of seven campaigns, Koroman became an ace during the Balle Prime deployment where he scored six confirmed kills against the Orks of Waaagh! Ugskraga during the defence of Balle Alpha.*



## 1. HELMET

The pilot's helmet is a Ryza pattern type IV flight helmet, with a photo-chromatic anti-flash visor and tactical display. The helmet is always worn with a leather inner helmet, which contains the helmet's secure comms receiver.

The helmet leads plug into the aircraft system controls for life support, tactical and targeting readouts for all the aircraft's weapons, as well as the aircraft's damage diagnosis system, all of which can be easily read on the inside of the visor. The aircraft also contains back-ups to these vital controls, should the helmet malfunction.

The helmet also contains internal pressure protection, to help negate the effects of high Gs when turning or accelerating hard, and helps prevent pilot black out.

Wing Sergeant Koroman has personalized his helmet with the addition of a hand painted Imperial Eagle, a common motif amongst pilots, worn as a symbol of faith and loyalty to the Emperor.

## 2. EQUIPMENT

The pilot carries a variety of equipment about his uniform. He has an oxygen mask, which affixes to the helmet and plugs into the aircraft's internal oxygen supply. The mask also contains his communications mike, so he can talk to other pilots in his squadron as well as ground controllers.

He wears a pressure gauge on the right side of his chest. This is part of the pressure suit and indicates how much pressure the pilot is experiencing (it is often difficult for a pilot to tell as the pressure vest compensates). Manipulating the gauge allows the pilot to change the settings of his pressure vest for different atmospheric conditions on different planets.

He is armed with a las pistol, a standard side arm issued to all pilots should they be shot down over enemy territory. Many prefer not to carry this bulky weapon inside the cramped confines of the cockpit.

## 3. PRESSURE VEST

The pilot's pressure vest is worn to help alleviate the effects of high Gs whilst airborne. The vest contains pockets which self inflate when subjected to centrifugal forces. The additional pressure restricts the blood flow. Blood would naturally be pushed to the extremities of the body, so the vest helps force the blood to remain close to vital organs, such as the lungs and heart.

The vest is also a floatation aid. Should the pilot crash land or eject into water, it will keep him from sinking. It also adds another layer of thermal protection against the extreme cold of high altitude flying, or should the Thunderbolt be required to exit an atmosphere, where its rocket engines allows for limited manoeuvrability.

The vest bears the pilot's insignia. On his left breast he bears the Aeronautica Imperialis badge, which marks him as a pilot of the Imperial Navy. On his right shoulder he wears an embroidered Imperial Eagle, this shows he is a veteran pilot and ace. The left shoulder bears the 83rd fighter wing's badge.

The pressure vest also doubles as a survival vest with the front pouch containing a ration pack. The vest's durable construction means that it offers some protection against enemy fire.

## 4. FLIGHT SUIT

Underneath the pressure vest is the flight suit. It is made of flame retardant material with a thick, self-heating thermal lining. Flight suits are provided in a variety of colours, and there is little standardization amongst pilots. The suit has additional self-inflating pockets to assist the pressure vest. Its pockets contain other survival equipment, a compass, communicator and signal flares are standard issue.

A tactical map is carried in the right leg's map pocket, for easy reference when seated in the cockpit.

The flying boots are fur lined, and some advanced types also have small heating elements inside to prevent a pilot's toes from freezing during long high altitude flights.

## 5. LIFE SUPPORT UNIT

Wing Sergeant Koroman is carrying a replacement life support unit. This equipment box will fit behind the pilot's seat inside the cockpit. It is part of the Thunderbolt's oxygen supply system and is used for recycling the air. It contains an oxygen regulator and CO<sup>2</sup> scrubbers, used when the aircraft is operating outside of the atmosphere.



Pilot's standard issue side arm. Accatran pattern, MkII heavy laspistol.



Karl Kopinski

# LIGHTNING



## BACKGROUND

Following the Saint-Saen Crusade, which liberated twelve worlds in the Segmentum Obscurus, the STC patterns for the Lightning were recovered on Karnak II by Adeptus Mechanicus exploration teams. The plans were immediately placed in the hands of the Adeptus Mechanicus lords of Cypra Mundi. These ancient lords then sat in judgement, took readings of the Emperor's Tarot and the advice of their oldest and wisest technicians. The plans were cross referenced with the archives of Mars before deciding that the omens were favourable, and they could begin work on the fighter with the Machine God's favour. It took over half a millennia of research, trials, testing and devotions to the Machine God before the first Lightning saw service with Battlefleet Obscurus. After initial problems with the swept wing design were corrected, the fighter was given approved status and went into full production, supplying the fleet carriers and cruisers.

Slowly, the STC technology has been disseminated to two other major Naval centres at Bakka and Hydraphur, and Lightnings are now in service alongside the more common Thunderbolts in the fleets of Segmentum Tempestus and Segmentum Pacificus as well.

The fighter's main role is engaging enemy aircraft and establishing air superiority over the battlefield. Based on orbiting spaceships or on rapidly established forward air bases, squadrons of Lightnings fly patrols, intercept missions and supply fighter cover to Marauder bomber missions. Plummeting from orbit or

scrambling from ground airfields, Lightnings are given licence to engage targets of opportunity on the ground should they identify an enemy threat. Although this is not their primary function, the addition of up to four Hellstrike air to surface missiles make the Lightning an effective ground attack aircraft.

The Lightning 'Strike' variant is actually the same aircraft as a Lightning, only with a different weapons fit. The ventral-mounted autocannon is removed to save weight, and missile racks added under the fuselage. Along with the wing hardpoints, this allows a Lightning Strike to carry up to six Hellstrike missiles. This weapons fit is only used on Lightnings that are in a dedicated ground attack role, with the primary mission of targeting enemy armour.

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Type:** Fighter/interceptor.

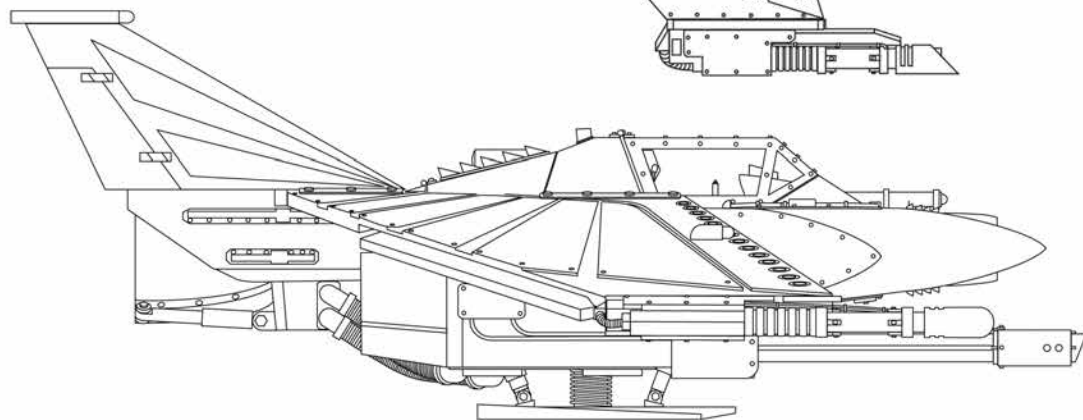
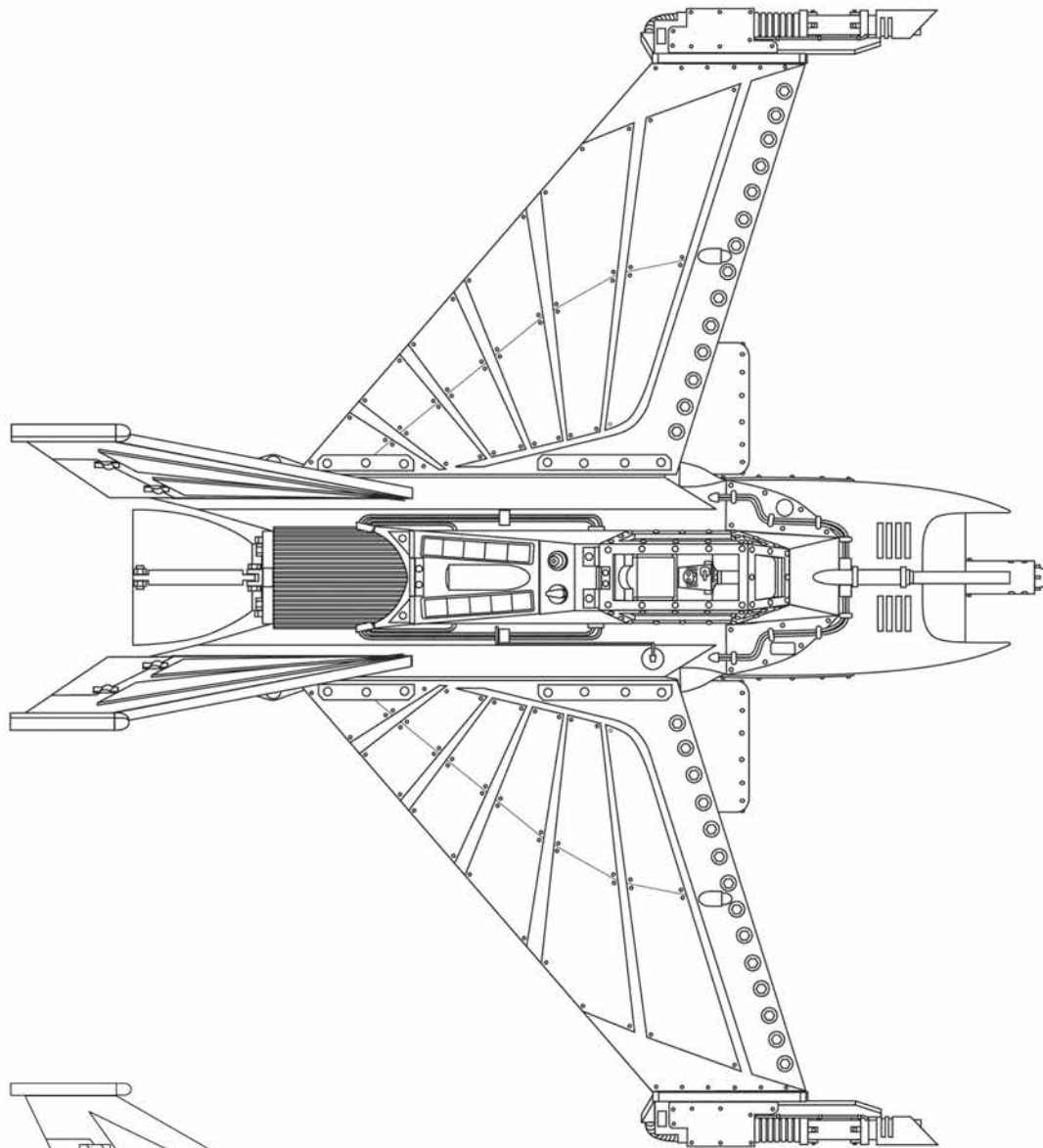
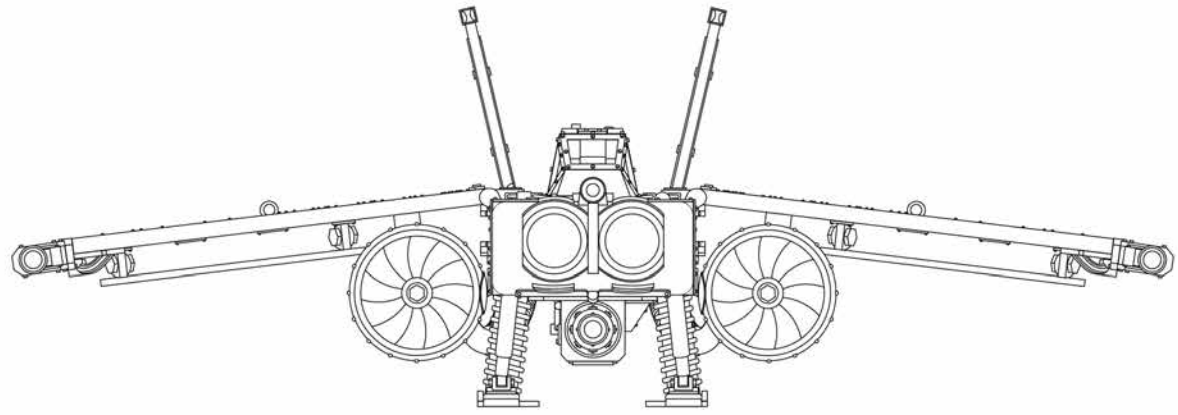
**Powerplant:** 2 x F100-XB afterburning turbofans.

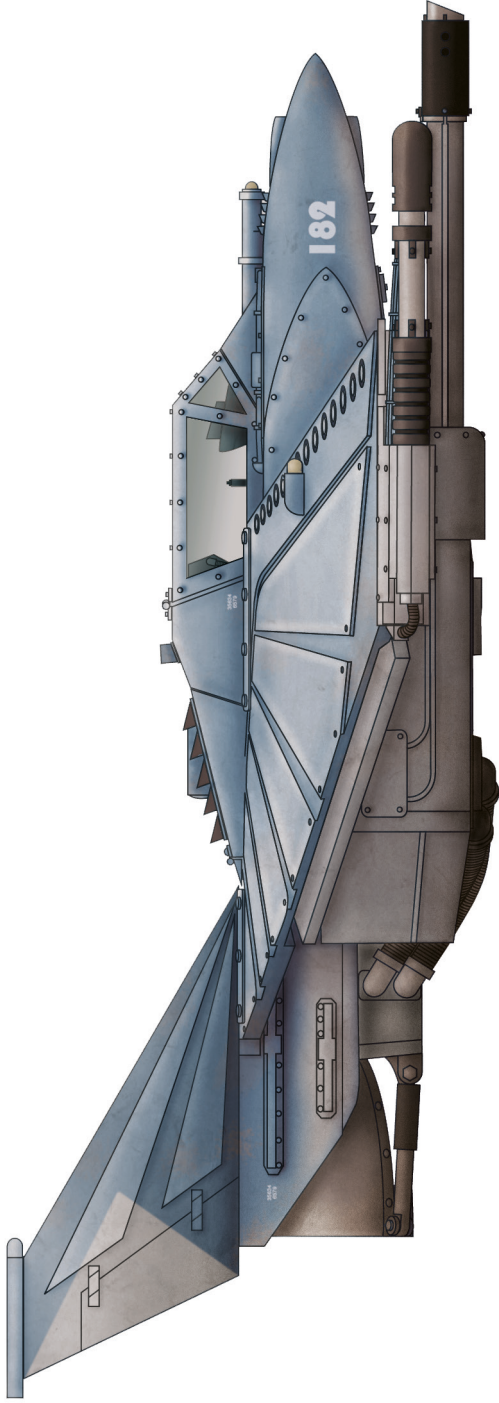
**Performance:** Maximum speed 2400kph (1500mph) at 5,000 feet, cruising speed 1100kph (690mph); range 8,000 km approx.

**Weight:** 9.8 tonnes (empty).

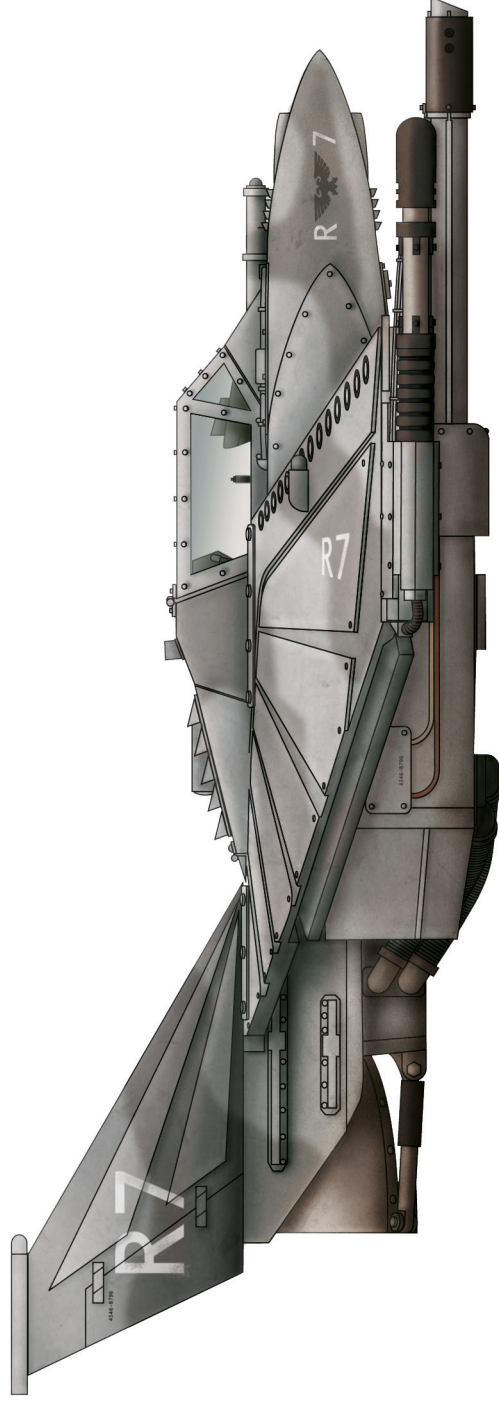
**Dimensions:** Wingspan 13.75m; length 10.8m; height 3.4m (landing gear down).

**Armament:** Single ventral mounted autocannon, two wing tip mounted lascannons, four under-wing hardpoints.

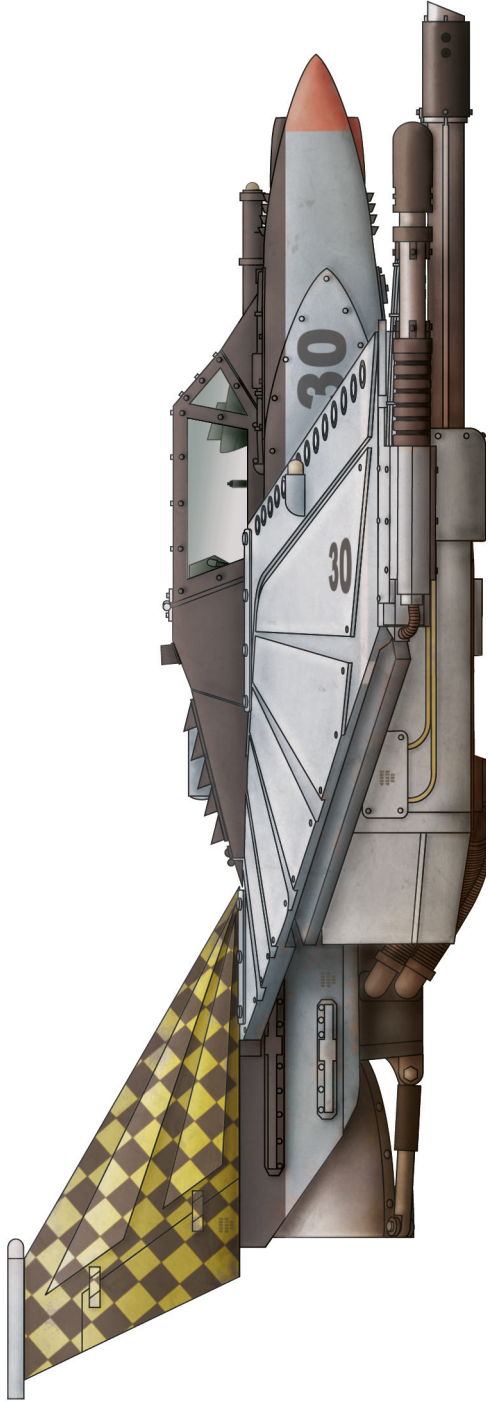




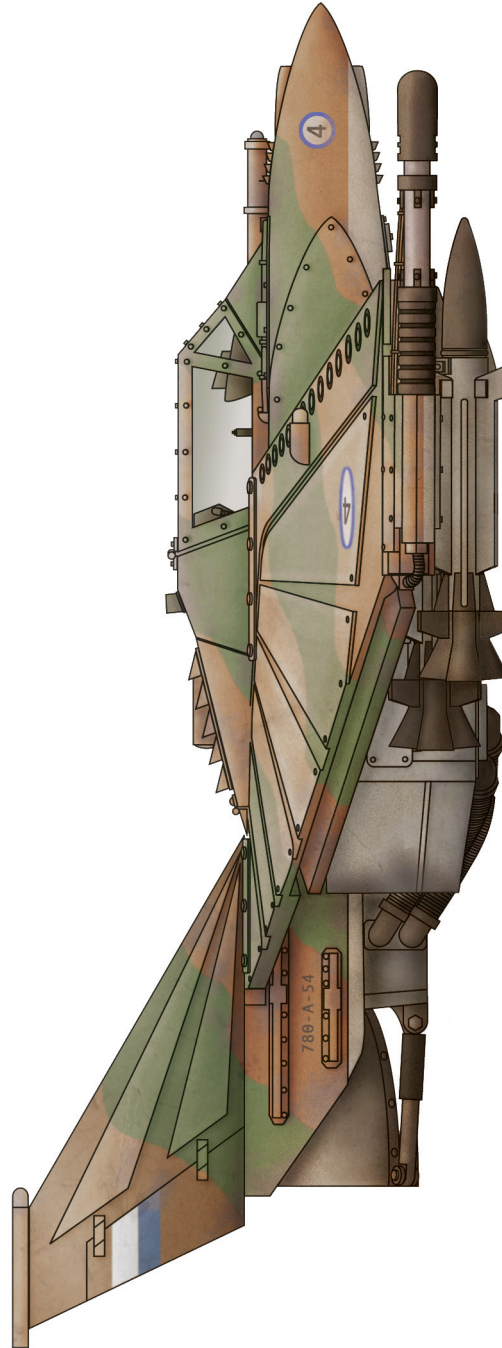
Lightning of the 3206th Fighter Wing. Stationed on the cruiser *Cardinal Demus*, part of Battlefleet Cadia.



Lightning of the 787th Fighter Wing in disruptive camouflage pattern during the Zhai-Khan Uprising.



Lightning of the 955th Fighter Wing. The distinctive pattern on the tail fin identifies this aircraft as belonging to wing commander and ace pilot, Erdich Zyko.



Lightning Strike variant of the 2872nd Fighter Wing. This aircraft provided ground attack support for the 8th Palladius Regiment during their Atria Wilderness campaign.

# VALKYRIE



## BACKGROUND

The Valkyrie airborne assault carrier is the aircraft issued to Imperial Navy tactical wings and airmobile Imperial Guard 'drop' infantry regiments. The Valkyrie provides rapid transport and support fire for a squad of up to 11 Storm Trooper or Drop Troops.

The Valkyrie utilises advanced vector engines for vertical take off and landings, giving it very high manoeuvrability and the ability to hover by directing the engine thrust through its wing exhausts. It is an atmospheric aircraft and cannot operate in the vacuum of space, although it can be sealed against hostile environments. The Valkyrie lacks the high top-speed of a true fighter aircraft, but its ability to hover means troops can land with great accuracy at their drop zone or on their objective. This can be done by a variety of methods. At low level, troops use rappel lines to slide down to the ground. From higher altitudes, drop troops jump using grav-chutes.

The Valkyrie is an advanced piece of hardware, containing many systems comparable with those found in Space Marine vehicles. Only a few Forge worlds can manufacture them, and all the Valkyries that are built are supplied to the Storm Troopers or 'Drop Troop' Imperial Guard regiments, such as those recruited from Elysia and Harakon.

As well as carrying troops, a Valkyrie can also be used to transport support equipment, such as Drop sentinels, Cyclops

demolition vehicles and Tarantula sentry guns. When carrying heavy loads or travelling long distances, the Valkyrie must be equipped with additional fuel tanks. These replace the under-wing Hellstrike missiles but give the aircraft extra versatility and range as a heavy lifter.

Only the very best Imperial Navy pilots fly the Valkyrie. These pilots consider themselves an elite force in their own right. They are trained for dangerous insertion missions behind enemy lines, night flying and manoeuvring the aircraft in close confines and at very low altitudes. Each Valkyrie has a crew of four; a pilot, a co-pilot (who is also the weapons operator) and two door gunners to fire the heavy bolters, which provide valuable close support fire as the troops deploy.

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Type:** Airborne assault carrier.

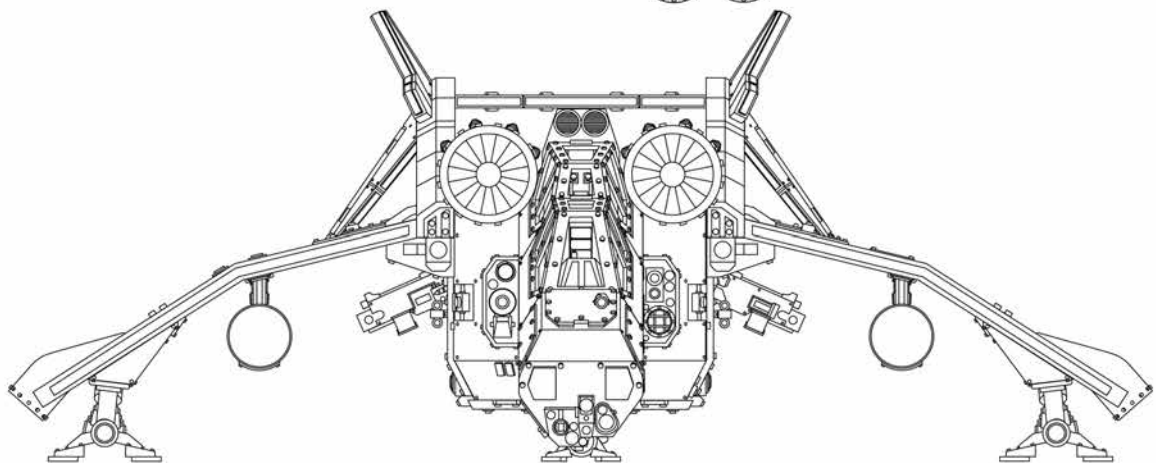
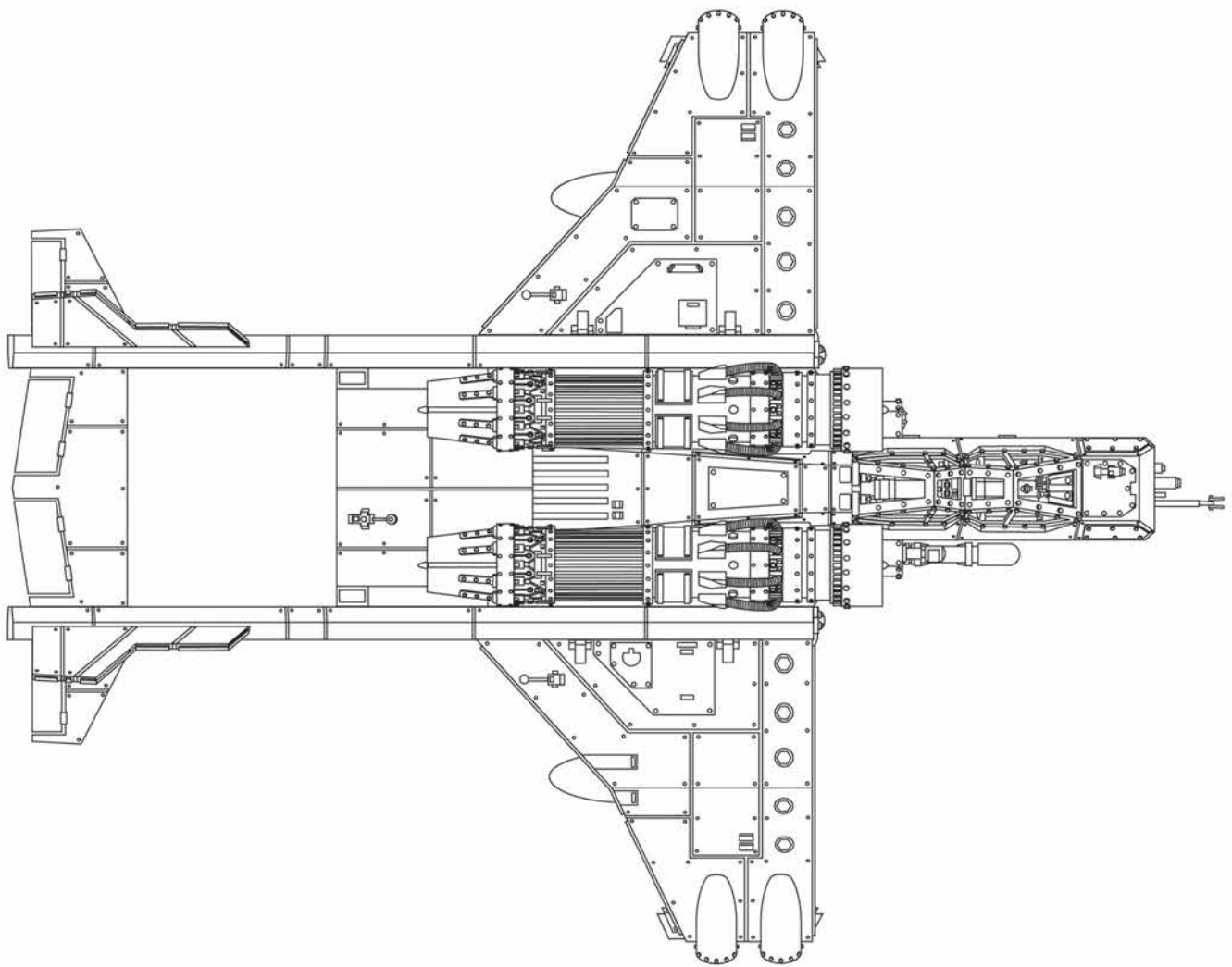
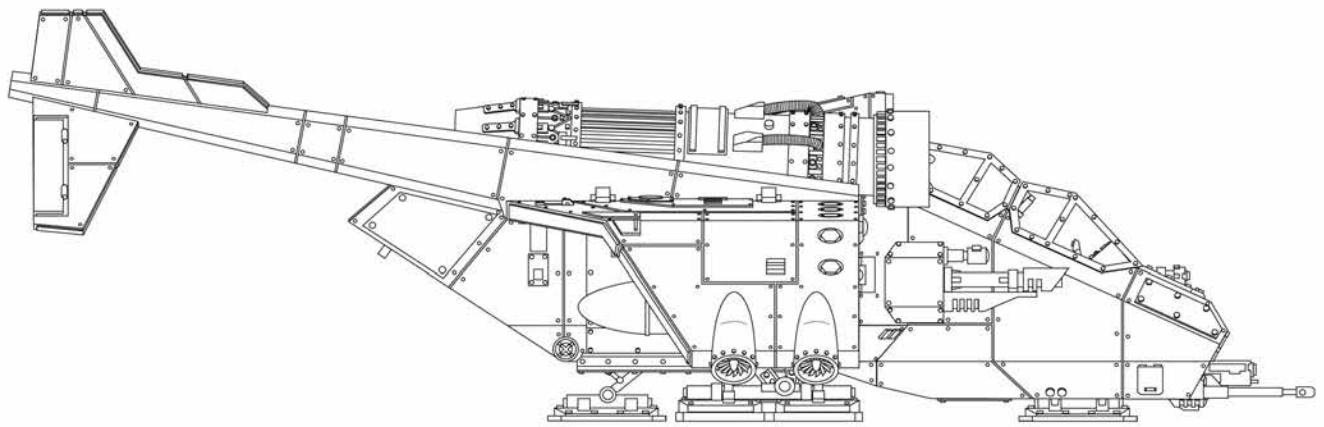
**Powerplant:** Twin F75-MV afterburning vector-turbojets.

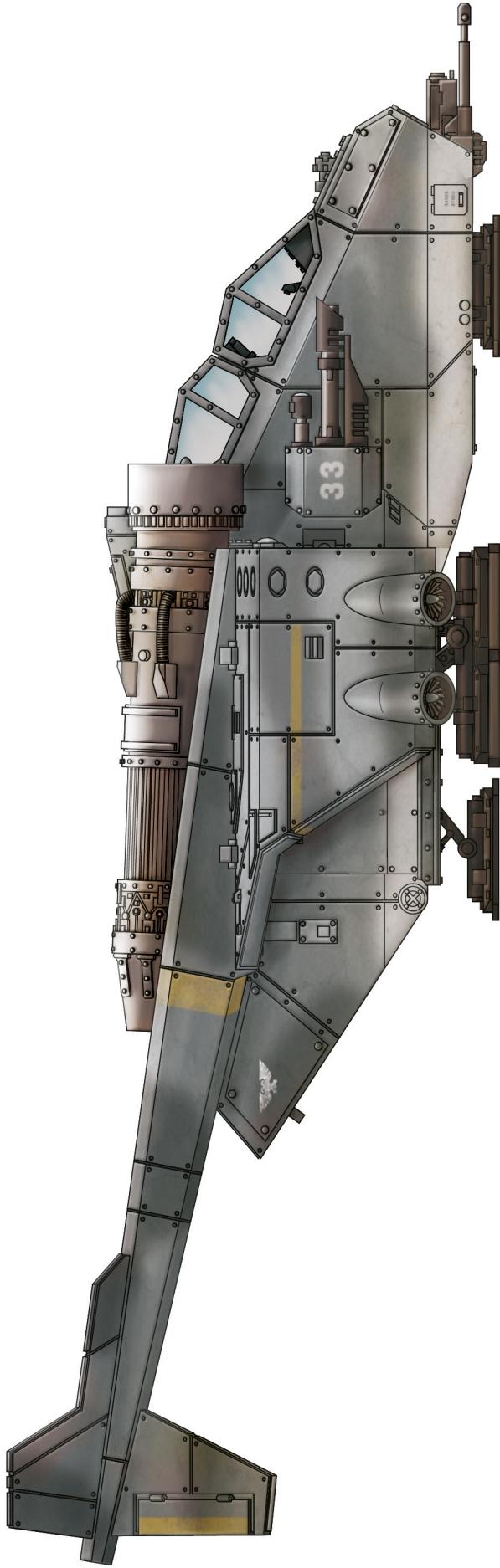
**Performance:** Maximum speed 1100kph (690mph) at 5,000 feet; cruising speed 800kph (500 mph); range 2,000km approx.

**Weight:** 13 tonnes (empty).

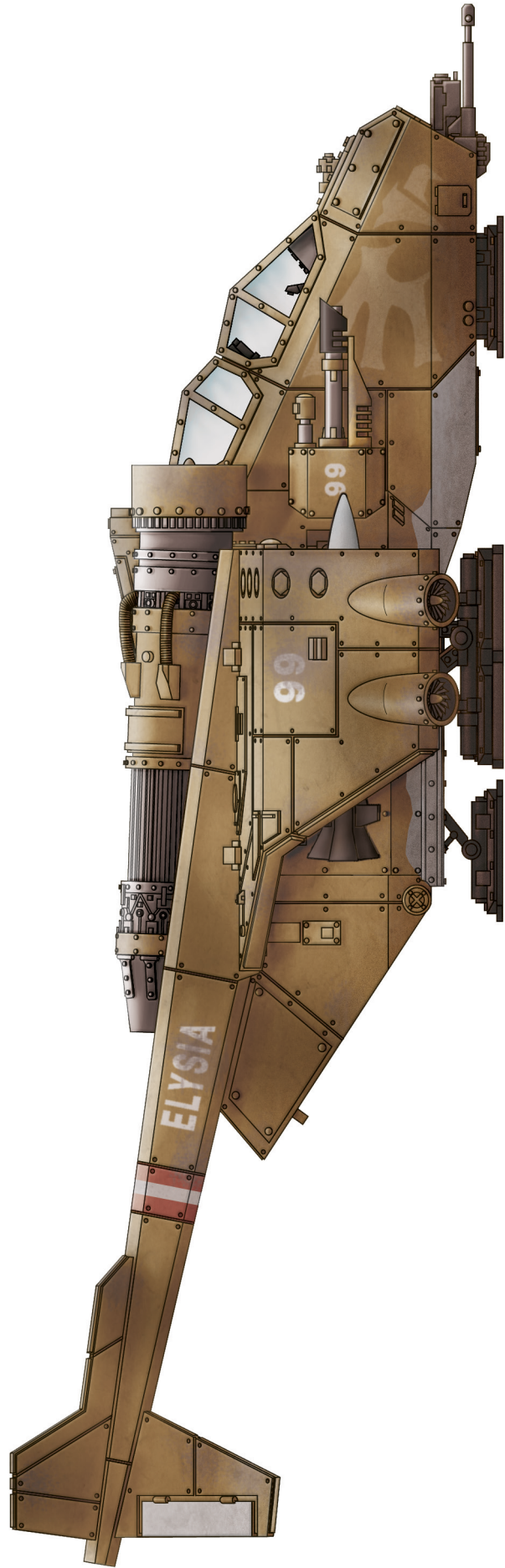
**Dimensions:** Wingspan 16.9m; length 18.5m; height 4.8m.

**Armament:** Hull mounted lascannon (or multi-laser), two door-mounted heavy bolters, two under-wing hardpoints.

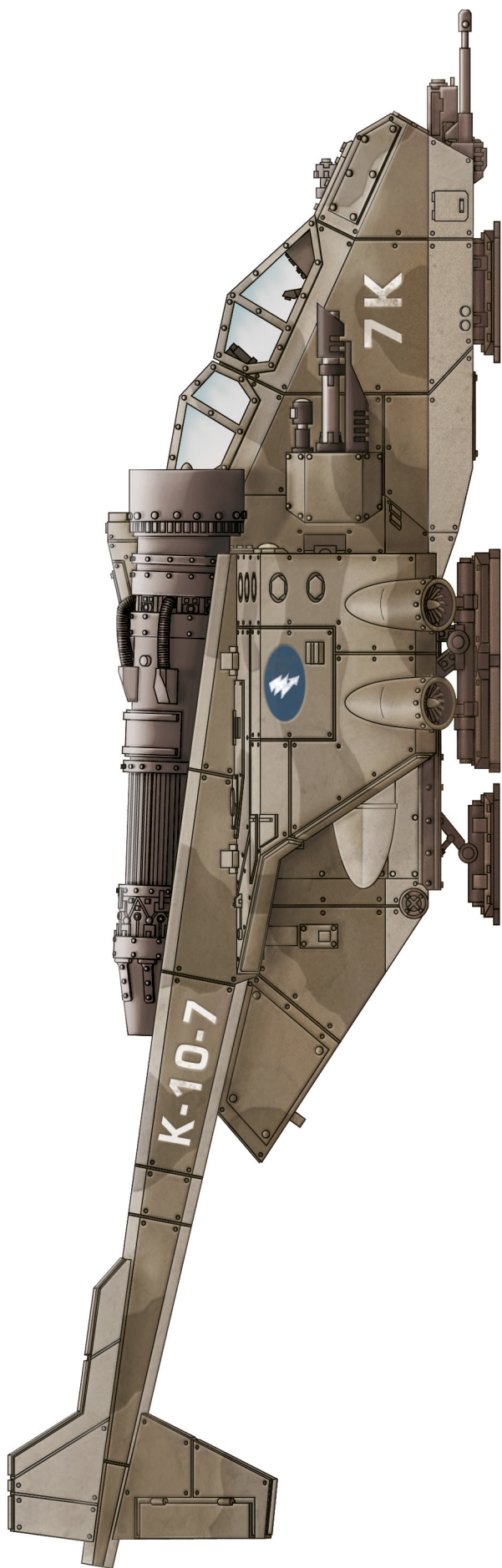




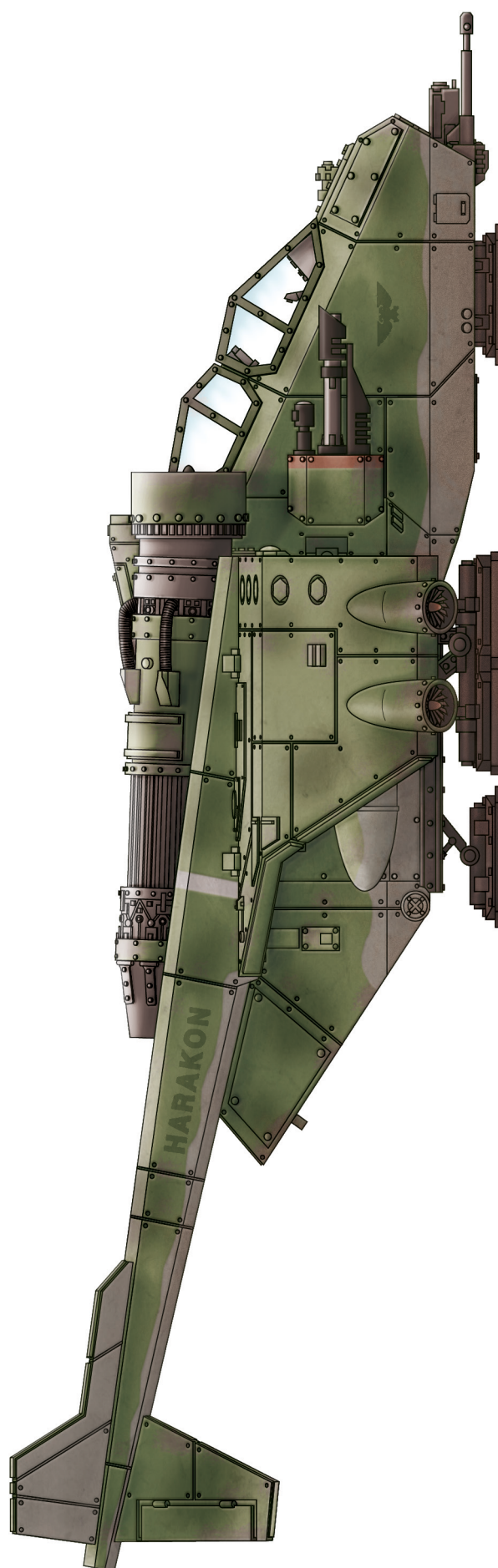
Valkyrie of 2nd Imperial Navy Tactical Wing. Operating on Cadia during the 13th Black Crusade.



Valkyrie of 23rd Elysian drop troop regiment, fighting Tau forces in the deserts of Taros.



Valkyrie of the 205th Imperial Navy Tactical Wing. Tartarus extraction force, Armageddon Prime.

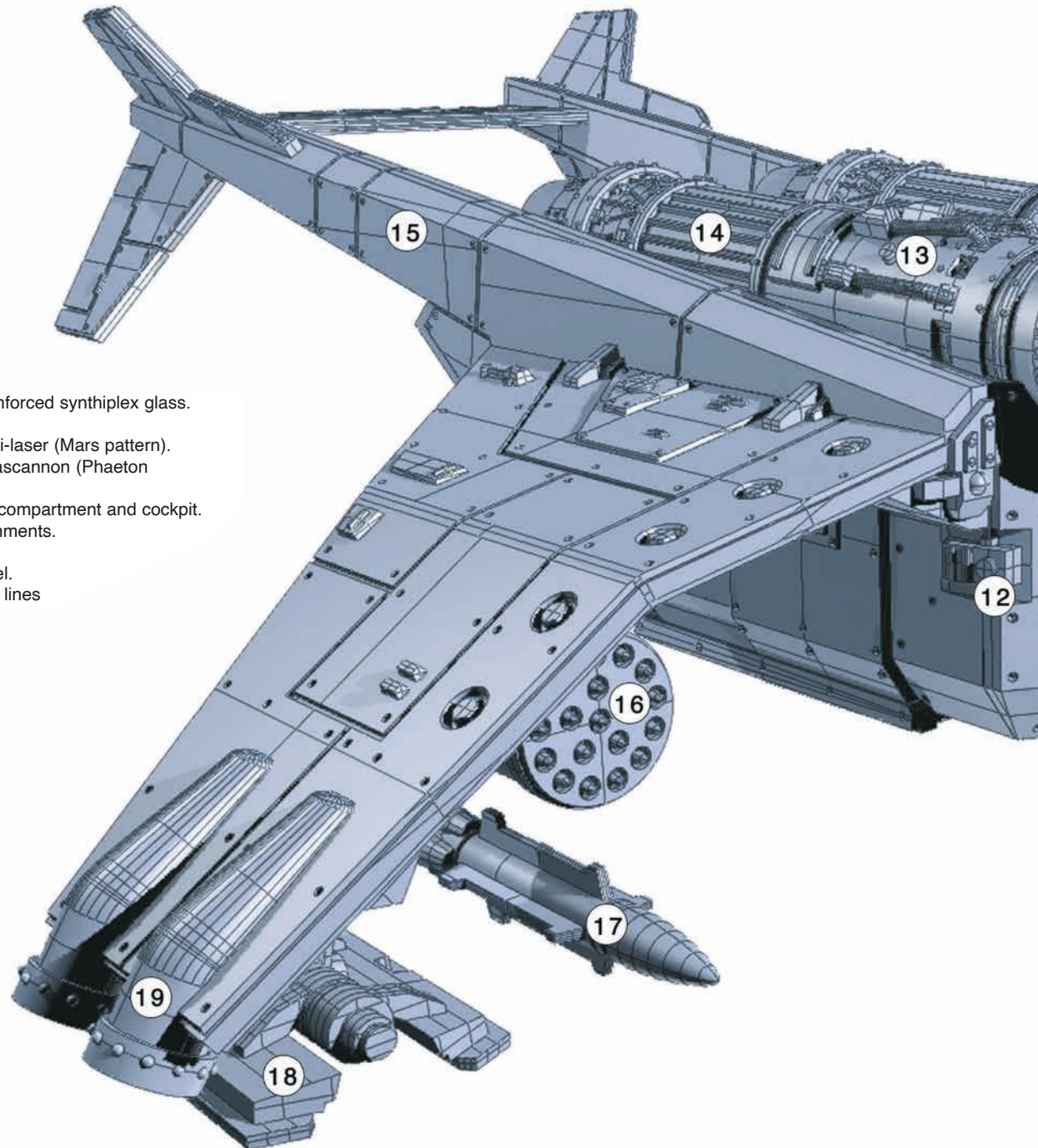


Valkyrie of 31st Harakonian Warhawks regiment, fighting Orks of Krugazz Ironbuttz' warband on Batur Secundus.

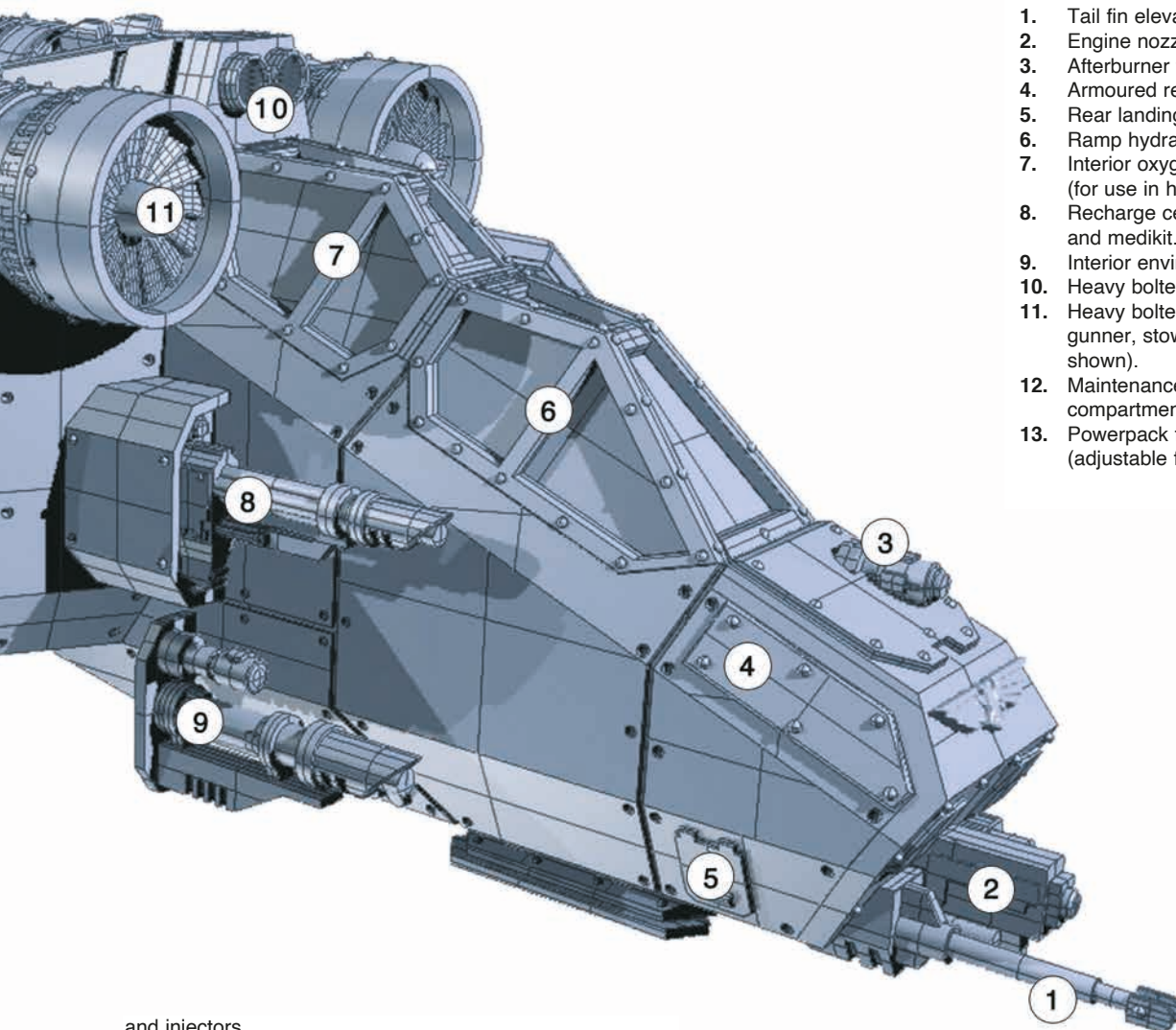
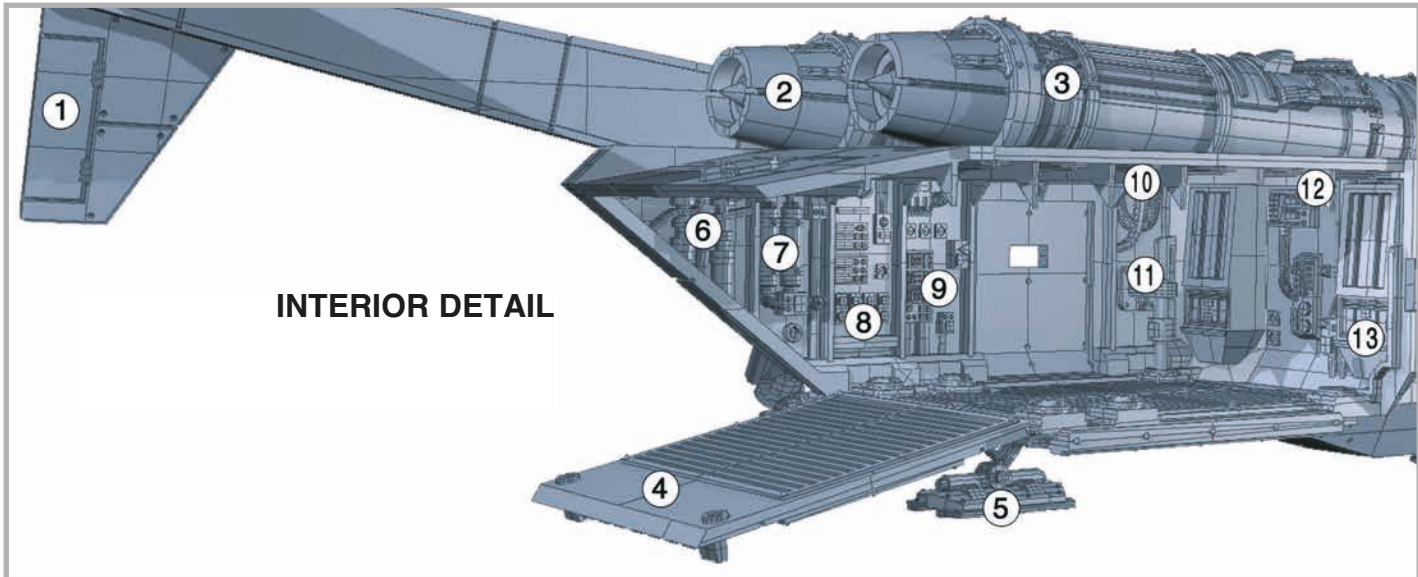
# VALKYRIE AIRBORNE ASSAULT CARRIER

## VOSS PATTERN

1. Navigational antenna.
2. Main weapons sensor, multimode search and weapons guidance control. Also contains the IFF transponder.
3. Primary secure communications receiver and transmitter.
4. Extra armour plate protecting flight controls within.
5. Maintenance access hatch to flight control systems and sensor equipment.



6. Pilot's cockpit canopy, reinforced synthplex glass.
7. Co-pilot's cockpit canopy.
8. Hull weapons mount, multi-laser (Mars pattern).
9. Alternative hull weapon, lascannon (Phaeton pattern).
10. Air intakes for passenger compartment and cockpit. Sealable in hostile environments.
11. Engine air intake fan.
12. External door control panel.
13. Engine compressor, fuel lines



**Interior**

1. Tail fin elevator.
2. Engine nozzle.
3. Afterburner fuel lines.
4. Armoured rear ramp.
5. Rear landing foot (retractable).
6. Ramp hydraulics.
7. Interior oxygen supply bottles (for use in hostile environments).
8. Recharge cells for lasgun powerpacks and medikit.
9. Interior environment controls.
10. Heavy bolter ammunition feeds.
11. Heavy bolter on swivel mount for door gunner, stowage area (weapon not shown).
12. Maintenance control panel for avionics compartment.
13. Powerpack for hull weapon (adjustable for lascannon or multi-laser).

and injectors.

14. Engine combustion chamber and turbines.
15. Tail boom, contains avionics for tail fin control.
16. Under wing hard point weapons mount. Rocket pod (Voss Pattern).
17. Alternative weapon, Hellstrike missile (Mars Pattern).
18. Landing foot.
19. Engine vector nozzle for VTOL flight.

# VULTURE



## BACKGROUND

The Vulture is closely related to the Valkyrie. Whilst the Valkyrie is a transport aircraft for carrying troops and equipment into the battle zone, the Vulture is a multi-role gunship, sacrificing the troop transport compartment in favour of a large weapons load.

Like the Valkyrie, it is far slower than a Lightning or Thunderbolt, but carries a far larger weapons payload for its size. Its ability to hover over the battlefield means it is always close to the action and in direct support of a ground battle.

Vultures usually fly in support of Valkyrie operations, providing heavy firepower as the airborne troops go in. A flight of Valkyries will generally be supported by a single Vulture. Its task is to engage the enemy with maximum firepower at the moment of insertion, when the infantry are at their most vulnerable.

Vultures also provide hard hitting firepower for lightly equipped drop troops regiments, who lack tank and artillery support. The Vulture's highly variable weapons configuration means it can fulfil any role the drop troops need it to, from anti-tank fire with its Hellstrike missiles, to strafing infantry with cannons and fragmentation rockets, to attacking a strongpoint with bombs and krak missiles.

A Vulture has two Imperial Navy crewmen, a pilot and a weapons operator, who aims and fires all the various weapon systems. What combination of weapons the Vulture actually carries depends upon what its mission is and the enemy it is likely to encounter.

For increased range, a Vulture can be fitted with external fuel tanks, and although this reduces the weapons payload, it does allow the Vulture to accompany Valkyries on long-range insertion operations.

Like the Valkyrie, the Vulture can hover in place, and is mobile enough to squeeze into small spaces, such as between buildings, for low level attack runs. It is flown as part of Imperial Navy Tactical wings just like its transport partner. The Vulture is an atmospheric aircraft, and cannot operate in the vacuum of space.

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Type:** Ground attack gunship.

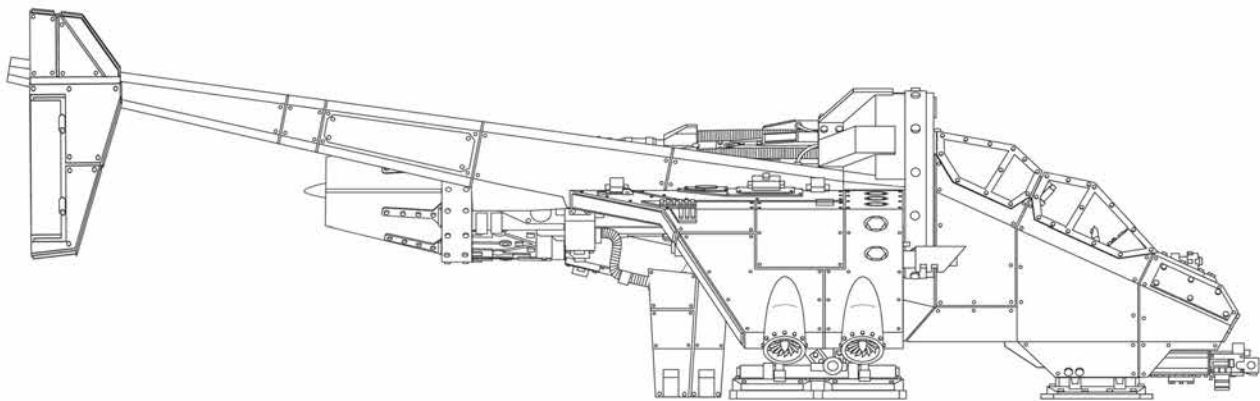
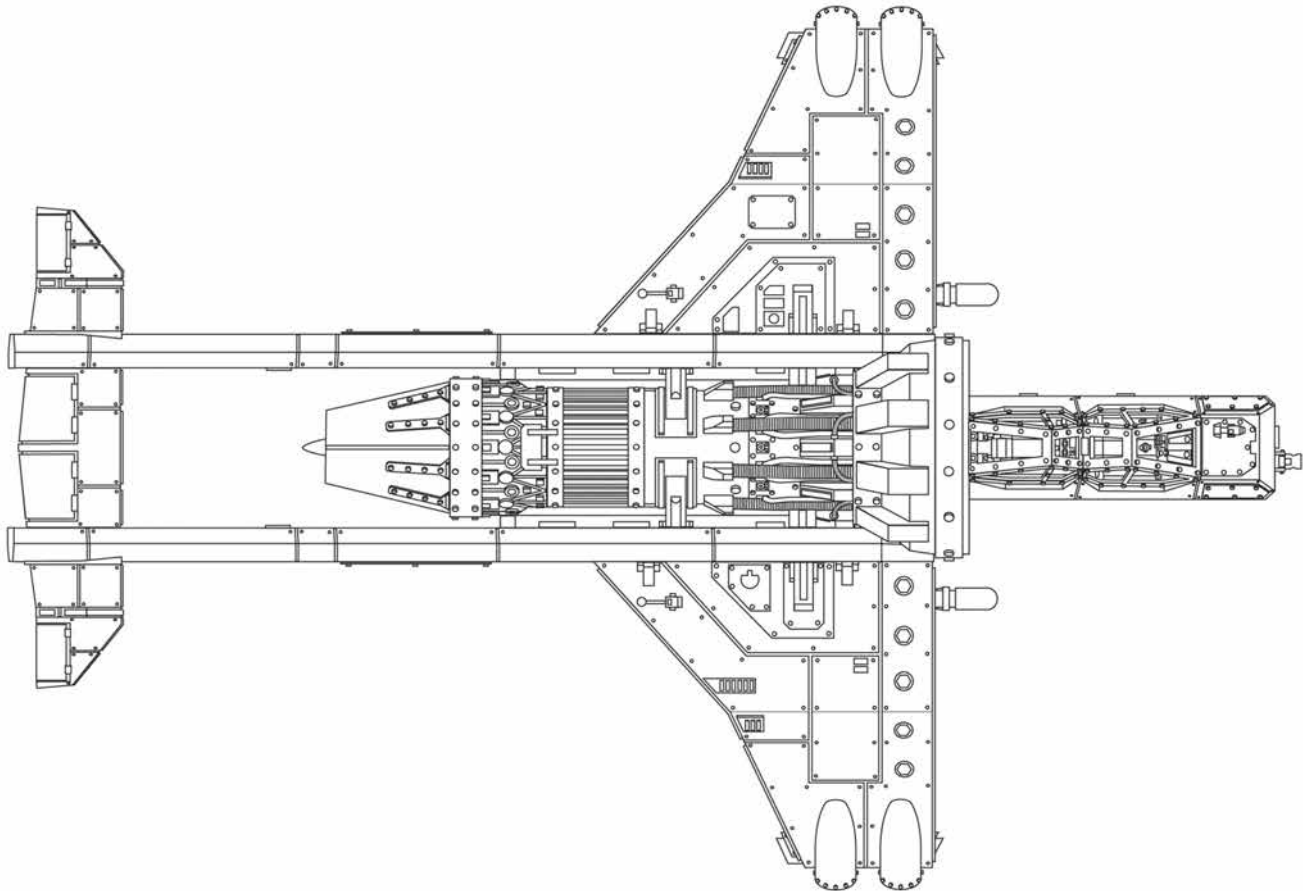
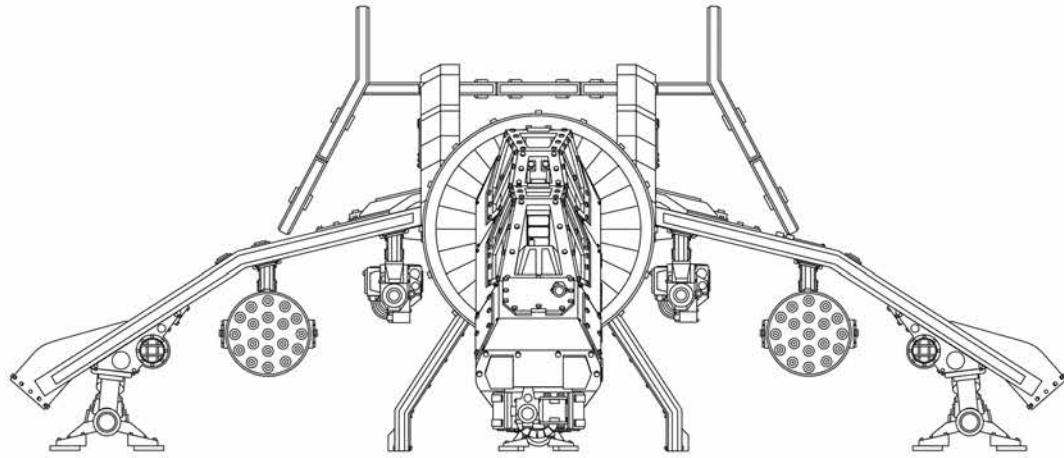
**Powerplant:** Twin F200-KW4 afterburning vector turbojets.

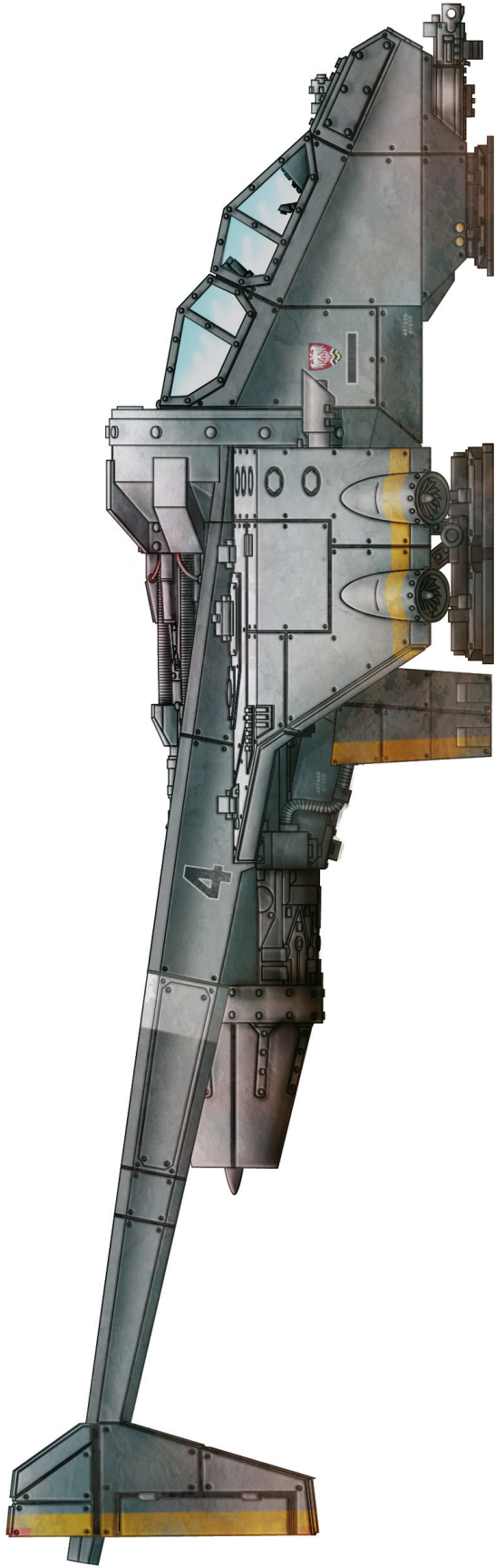
**Performance:** Maximum speed 1100kph (690mph) at 5,000 feet; cruising speed 800kph (500mph); range 2,000km approx.

**Weight:** 9 tonnes (empty).

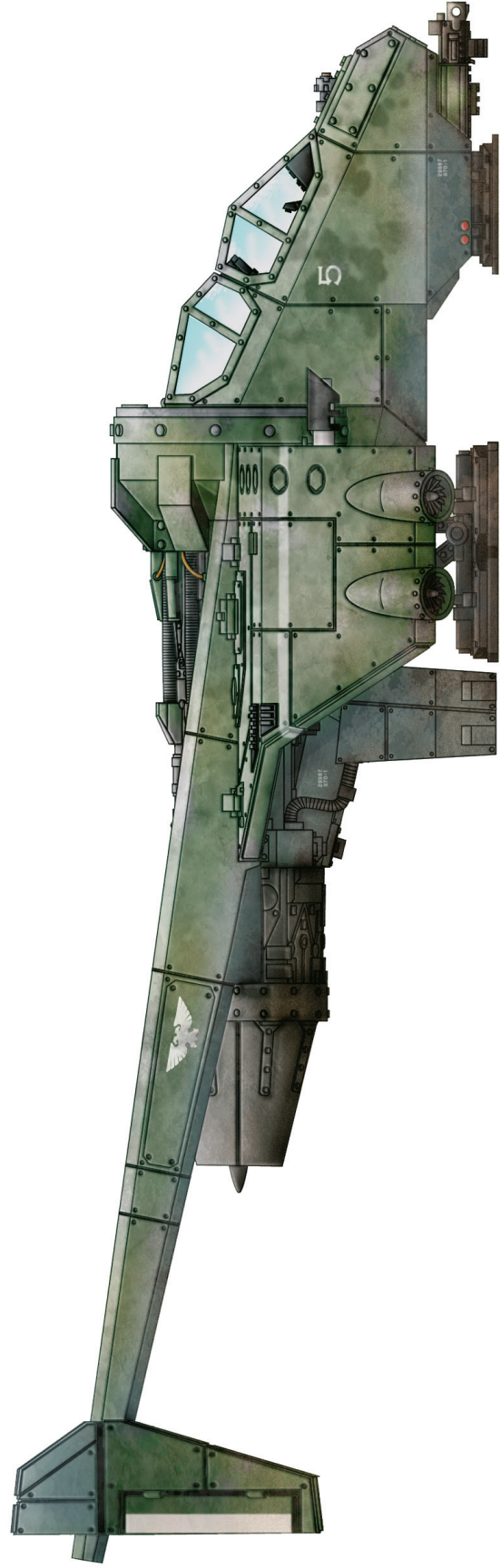
**Dimensions:** Wingspan 14.2m; length 19.2m; height 4.9m.

**Armament:** One nose-mounted heavy bolter, four under-wing hardpoints.

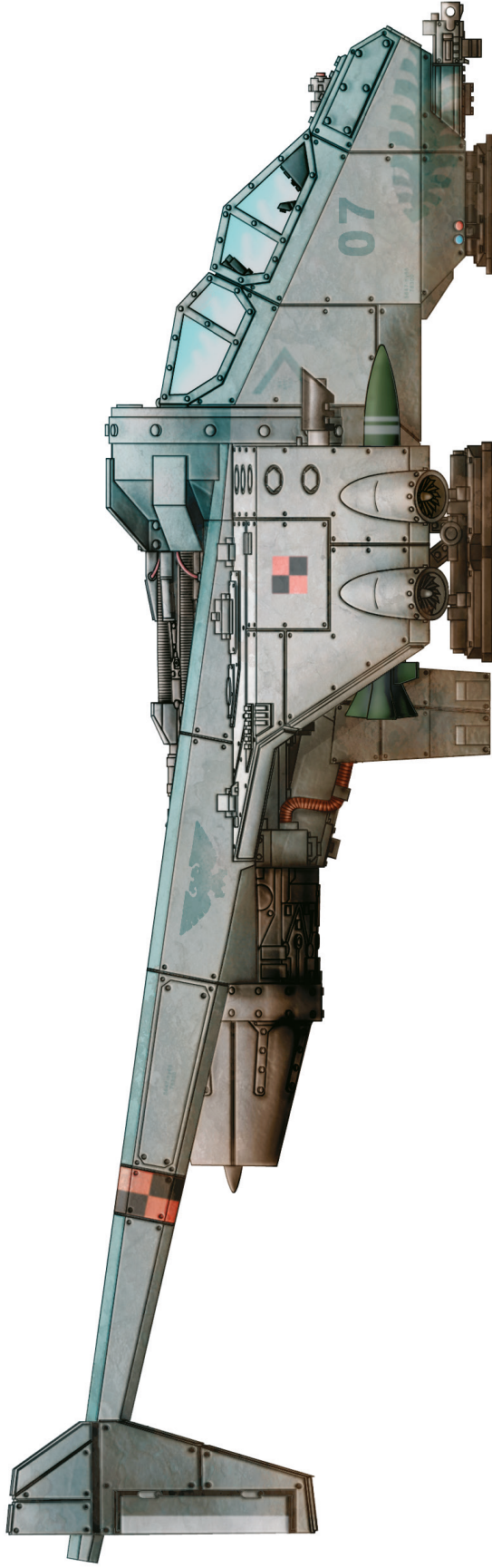




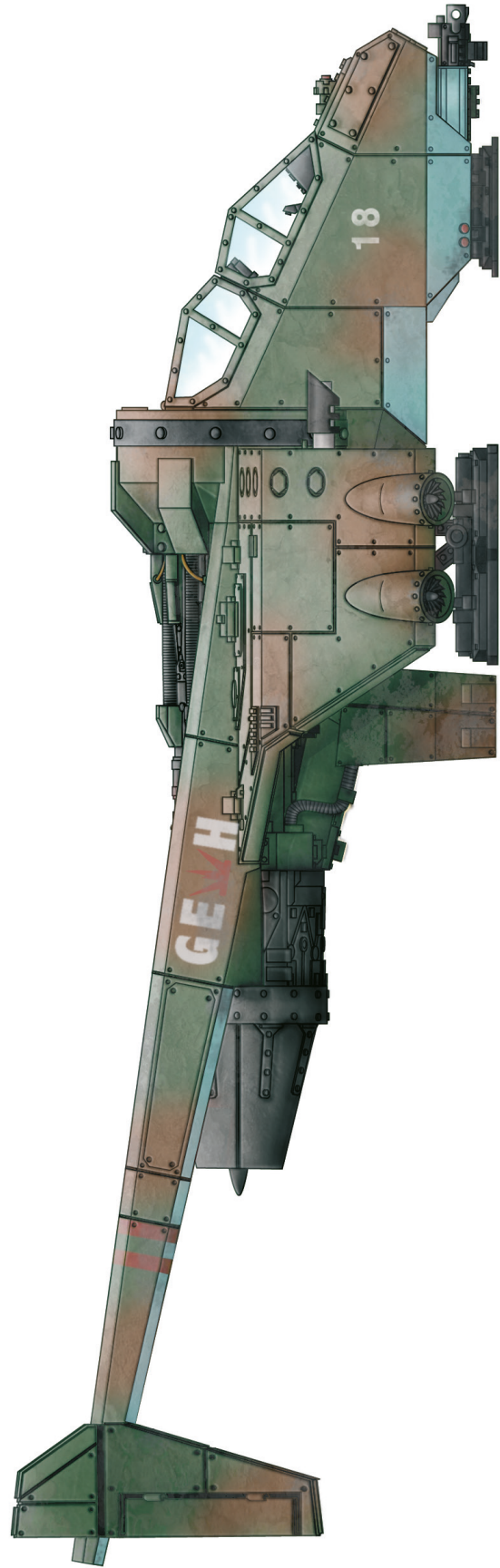
Vulture gunship of 2nd Imperial Navy Tactical Wing. Operating on Cadia during the 13th Black Crusade.



Vulture gunship of 99th Elysian Drop Troop regiment. Moran II drop force.



Vulture gunship of 544th Imperial Navy Tactical Wing. Deployed to the ocean world of Lyyr Primus.



Vulture gunship of 71st Imperial Navy Tactical Wing. Woodland camouflage scheme used during the Helion V campaign.

# AQUILA LANDER



## BACKGROUND

The Aquila Lander is a light personnel shuttle, used by the Imperial Navy to transport dignitaries, officials and other important personnel from ship-to-ship or from orbit to a planet's surface. The Aquila is a common aircraft, used in both space and inside planetary atmospheres. They are carried by many Imperial Navy warships for routine transport and liaison duties, alongside their compliment of fighters and bombers. It is crewed by just a single pilot.

The Aquila is not a combat aircraft. Each lander is only armed with a chin-mounted heavy weapon for self-defence. Usually this is an autocannon, heavy bolter or multi-laser, although some Aquilas' do mount other weapons. By comparison with most aircraft, the Aquila is well armoured, this is for the protection of its important passengers.

The Aquila uses an unusual wing design. Its multiple independent engine vents form a distinctive 'wing-feather' appearance, from which the aircraft gets its name. In an atmosphere, these vents give the aircraft very good manoeuvrability, which is the aircraft's best defence if caught in air to air combat.

The transport compartment holds six men, enough for an official and a small retinue or bodyguard. The official is also provided with a command chair, including communication equipment. There is also an observation dome for the dignitary. On landing, the entire transport compartment lowers down to ground level to allow access.

Aquilas are just one of the many different auxiliary aircraft

operated by the Imperial Navy for non-combat duties. As needed they will be used by Inquisitors, Adeptus Mechanicus, Administratum officials, Adeptus Arbites officers, Imperial Guard commanders and high ranking members of the Ecclesiarchy.

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Type:** Lander (personnel shuttle).

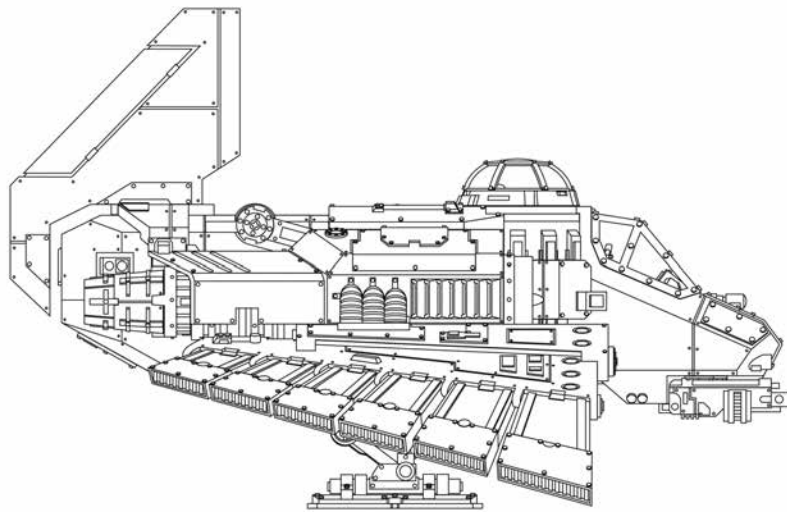
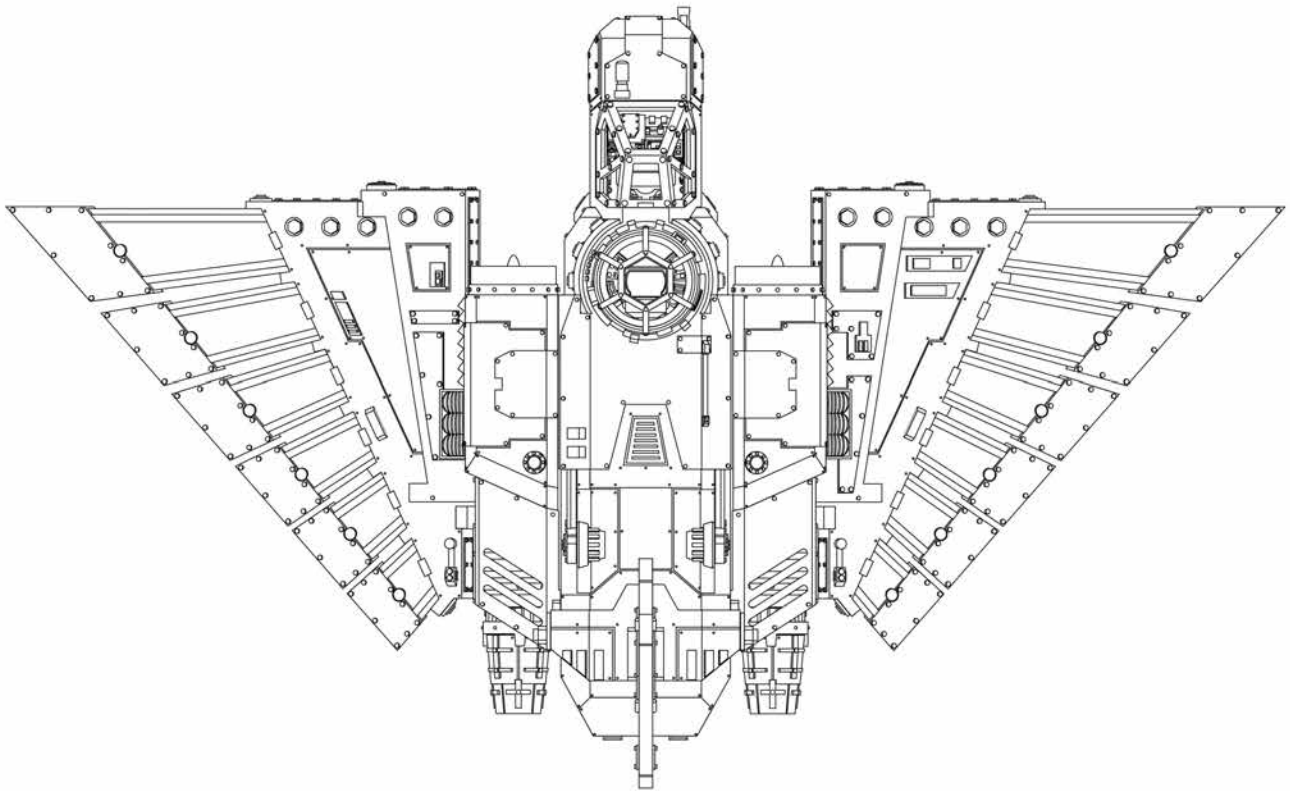
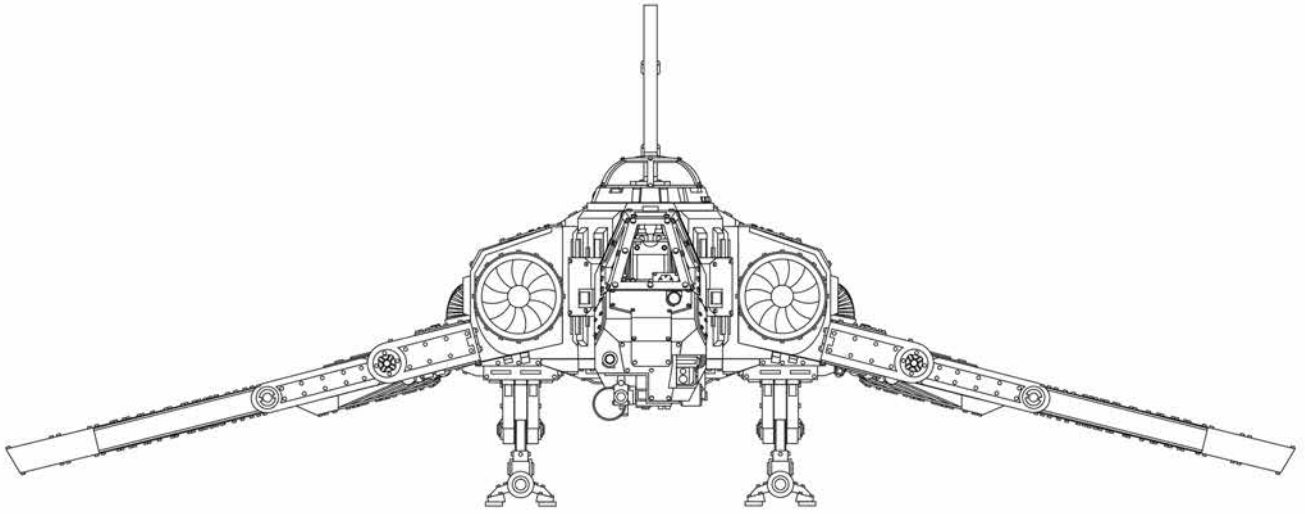
**Powerplant:** 2 x RX-40-08 rocket engines.

**Performance:** Maximum speed 1900 kph (1200 mph) at 5,000 feet, cruising speed 1100 kph (690 mph), range 24,000 km approx.

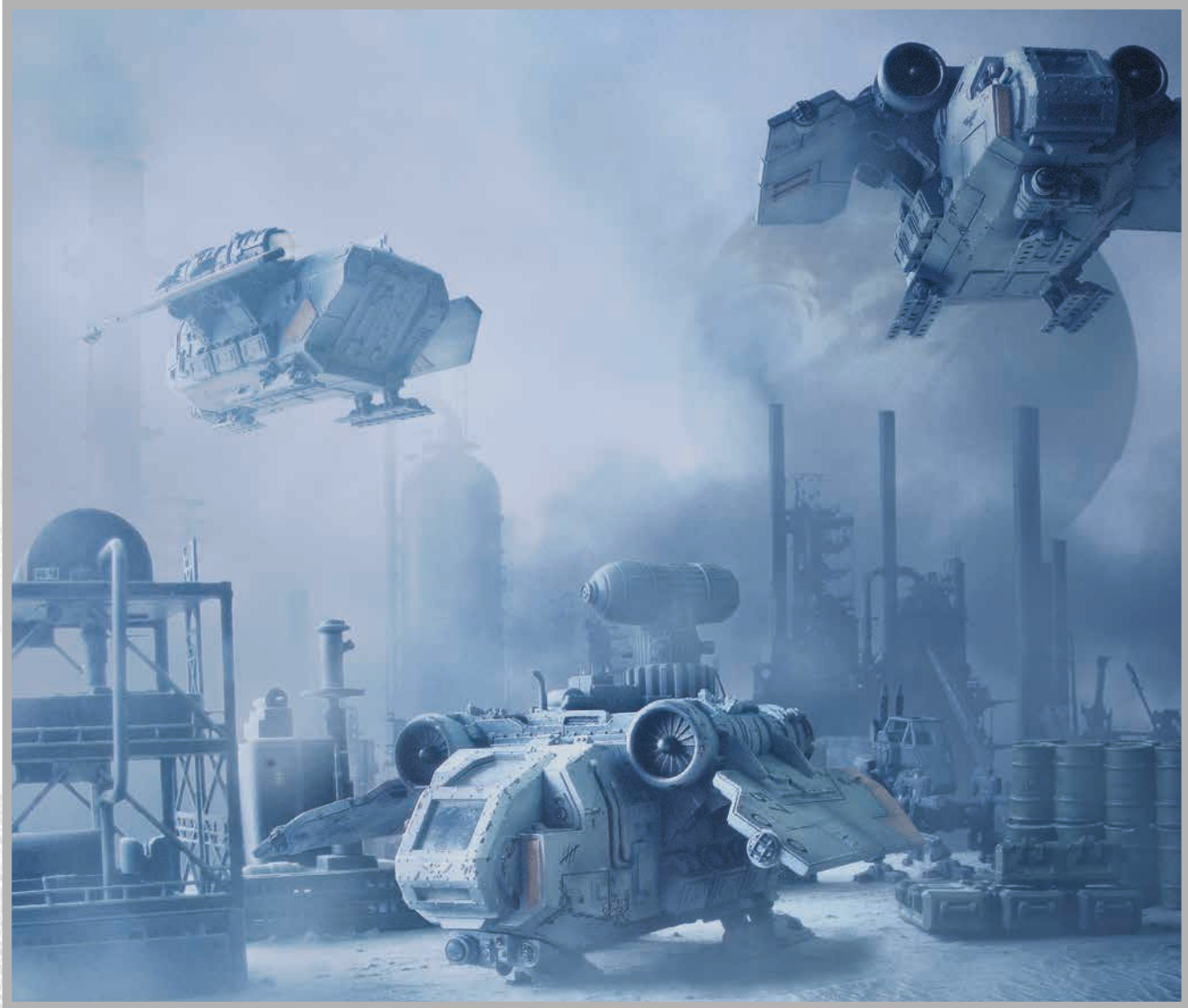
**Weight:** 42 tonnes (empty).

**Dimensions:** Wingspan 21.45 m, length 11.8m, height 8.1m.

**Armament:** Chin turret mounted autocannon, heavy bolter or multi-laser.



# ARVUS LIGHTNER



## BACKGROUND

The Imperial Navy commonly employs a wide variety of smaller craft aboard its vessels, from brigs, dories and pinnaces to couriers and lighters. One such lighter (a lightweight cargo shuttle) is the Arvus class.

The Arvus is a small utility cargo shuttle, used by the ships of the Imperial Navy for transferring supplies or small units of personnel from ship-to-ship, or ship-to-planet. Whilst the Aquila lander is a well-appointed and equipped personnel shuttle, specifically designed for transporting VIPs and their retinues, the Arvus is a solid and reliable workhorse shuttle. It is squat and durable, with two powerful engines for carrying heavy loads. As standard, the Arvus has no armament; it is not a combat vehicle and is not expected to engage the enemy. The Arvus is commonly seen on the launch decks of large Imperial Navy ships, or making repeat runs from surface to ship, transporting supplies and men.

The Arvus, itself only one of a wide variety of shuttles and lighters, can also be modified. Imperial Navy crews on long-range patrols adapt their vessels to their own requirements. Arvus lighters have been converted into fuel-carrying tanker variants, or have longer hulls for increased cargo capacity (and reduced speed and handling). Some have been armed for self-defence when operating on hostile worlds, but this is

discouraged as it tempts pilots to get involved in a fight that they should avoid.

At need, the Arvus can be employed as a stand-in assault boat, although it is not designed for this purpose. It can transport a squad of infantry or a small Imperial Navy boarding party in only basic comfort. The interior of the Arvus is very basic, and does not include many advanced systems beyond standard navigational and sensor equipment and proximity alarms. The pilot has a small cramped cockpit. The cockpit's screen swings up to allow the pilot access from the front. There is also a small hatchway to allow the pilot access to the cargo compartment should he need it.

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Type:** Lighter (small utility cargo shuttle).

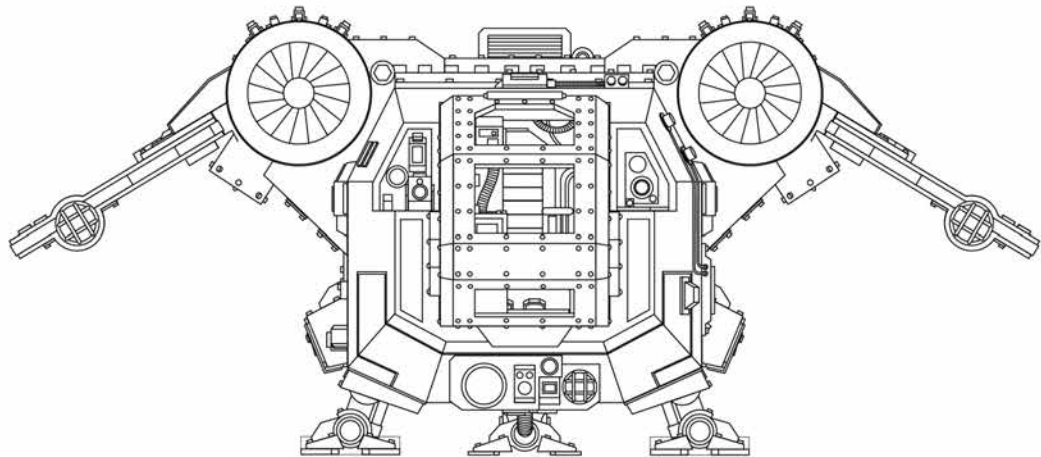
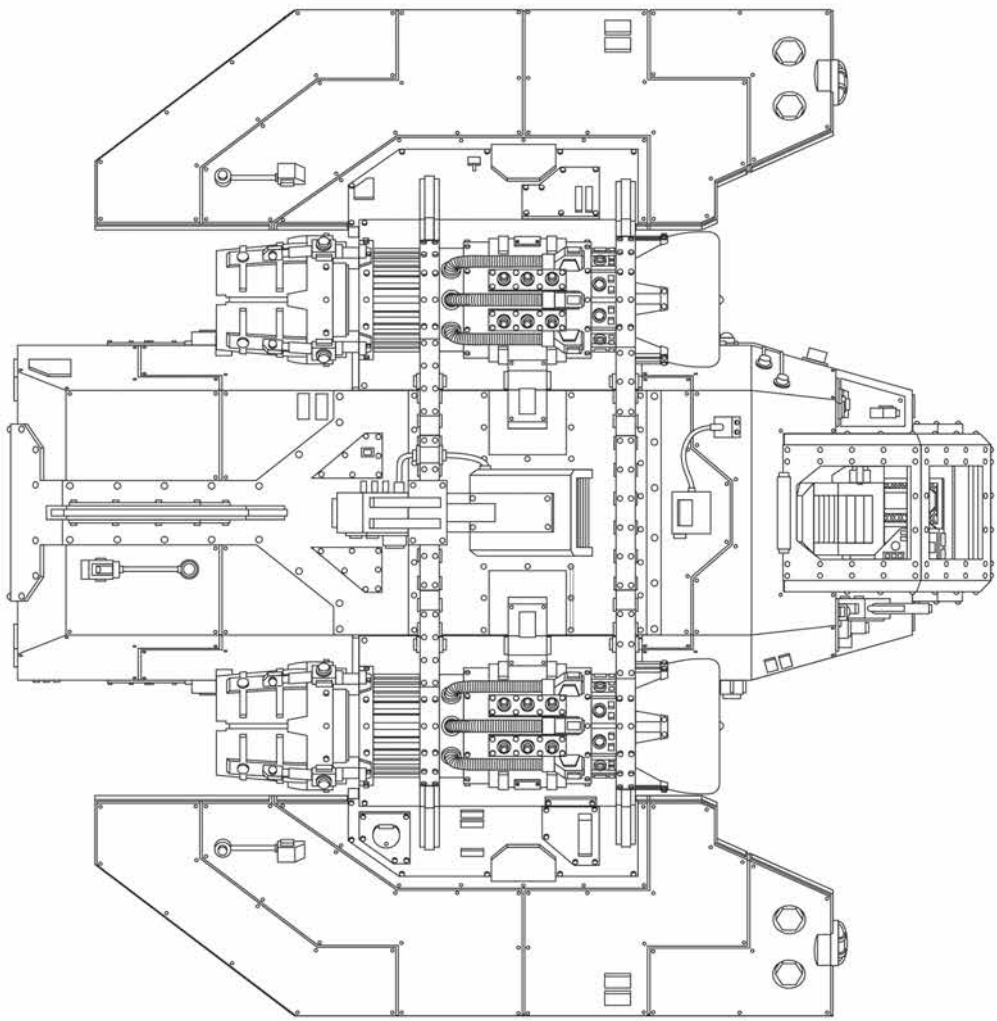
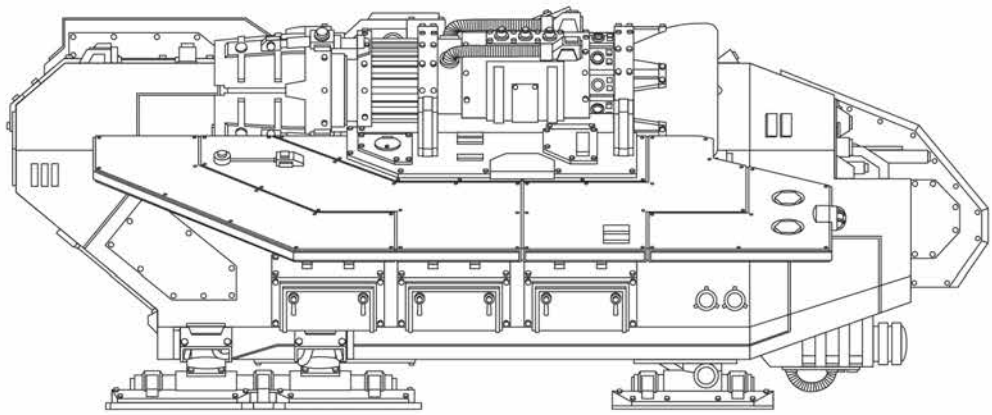
**Powerplant:** Two RX-60-22 rocket engines.

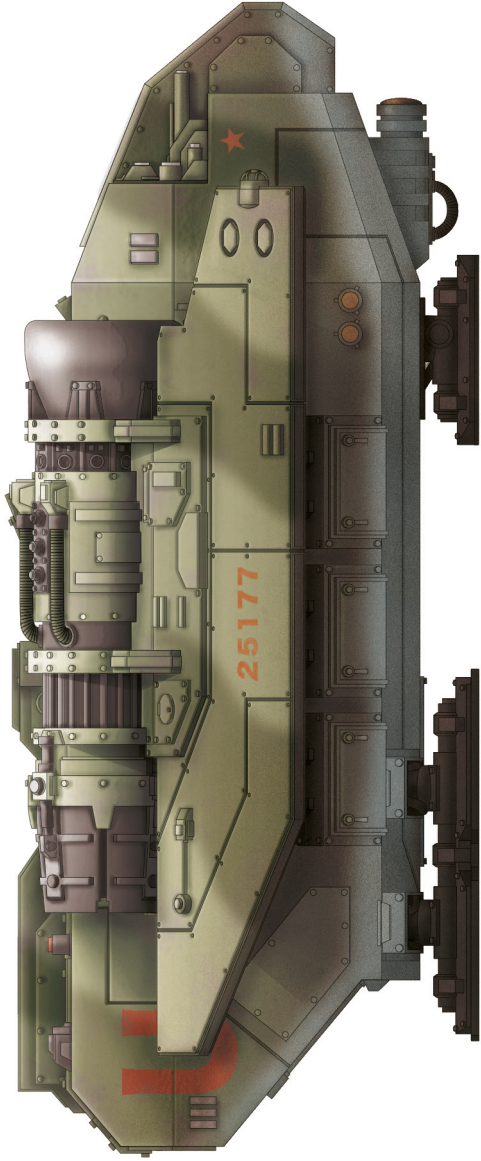
**Performance:** Maximum speed 1600kph (1000 mph) at 5,000 feet; cruising speed 700kph (440mph); range 22,000km approx.

**Weight:** 15 tonnes (empty).

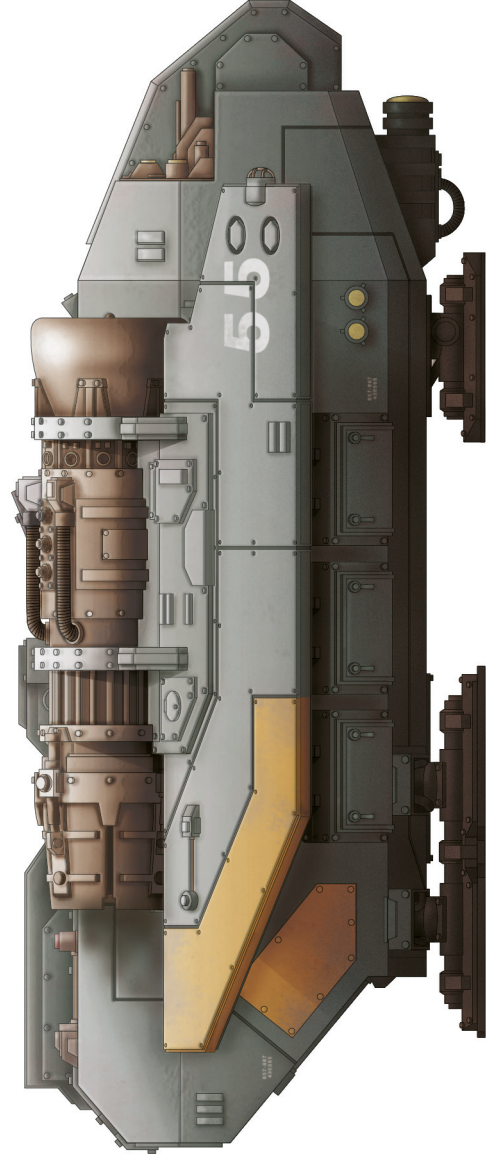
**Dimensions:** Wingspan 8.2m; length 8.52m; height 3.7m.

**Armament:** None.

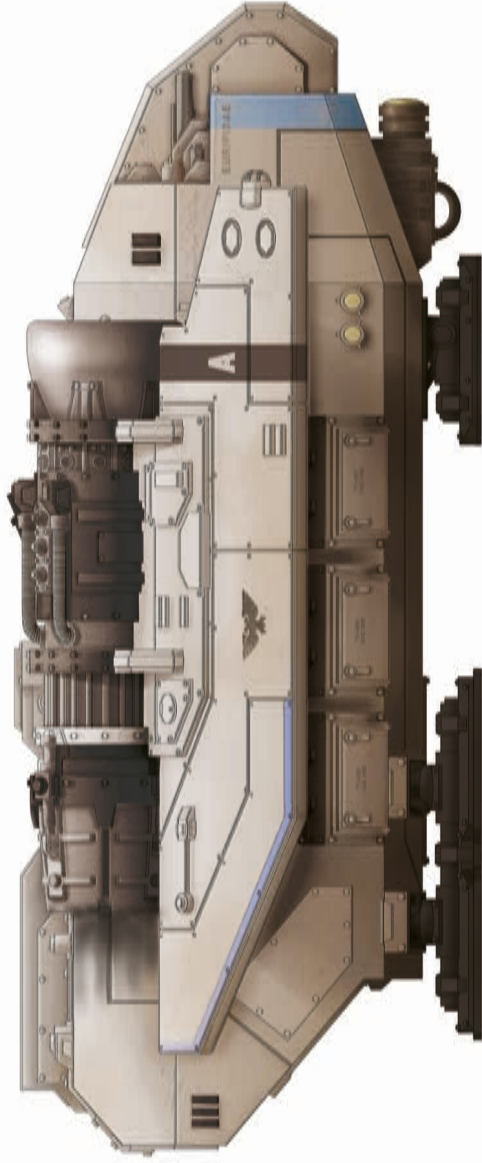




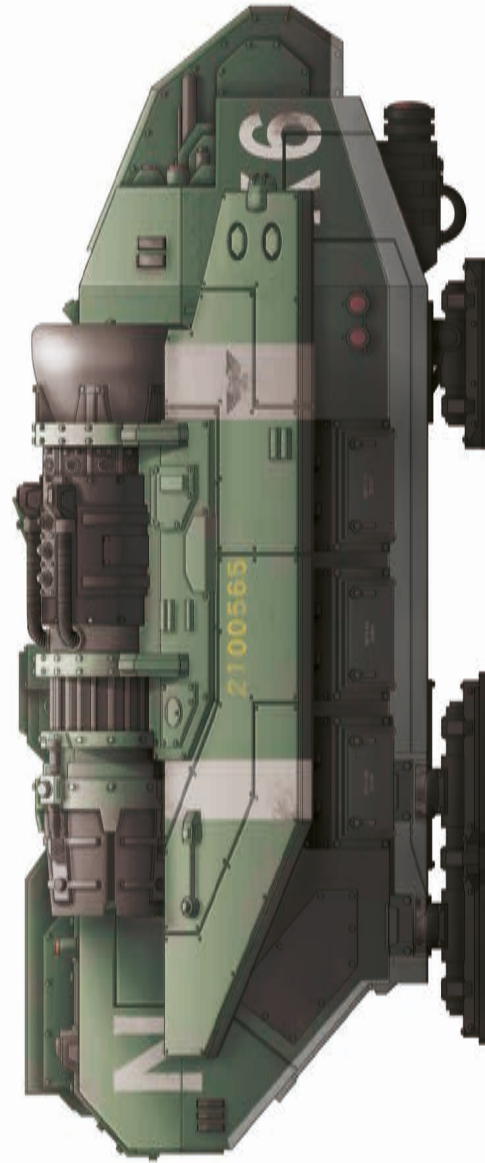
Arvus Lighter of the 273rd Cadian Regiment, part of the garrison force of Levilnor IV.



Arvus Lighter attached to a Departamento Muntiorum supply company, Stygies VIII forge world.



Arvus Lighter of the Imperial Navy Dictator class cruiser *Euripidae*. This is aircraft A of the ship's complement of 12 lighters.



Arvus Lighter supporting the 146th Catachan regiment. Denkari-Prime deathworld.

# MARAUDER



## BACKGROUND

Whilst the Thunderbolt is the mainstay of Imperial Navy Fighter wings, the Marauder is the mainstay of Imperial Navy Bomber wings. Although a completely different aircraft it has much in common with the fighter, like a reputation for ruggedness, and the versatility to operate in any environment.

Marauders have a crew of six. These are the pilot (and commander), co-pilot (and navigator), bombardier, nose turret gunner, dorsal turret gunner and rear turret gunner.

The Marauder itself is the workhorse of the Imperial Navy's heavy bombing missions. It has a very long range with good speed and a large payload of bombs. Commonly, Marauders are used in one of three roles:

Firstly, in a strategic bombing role. These are long range attacks on enemy held cities, spaceports, industrial centres and supply routes. In this strategic role, the squadron can operate at high altitude, beyond the range of most anti-aircraft weapons, with Thunderbolt fighters escorting to provide anti-fighter defence.

Secondly, in a free ranging interdiction role. Squadrons fly deep into enemy territory seeking targets of opportunity; supply convoys, fuel dumps, troops in the open, etc, to attack. These targets may have already been identified by aerial or orbital reconnaissance but the aircraft are not acting in concert with ground troops.

Thirdly, in a dedicated ground attack close support role, flying directly in support of ground troops and engaging specific targets on the frontline. These are by far the riskiest missions, being much closer to friendly forces and generally taking place at very low altitude. Close support missions are fraught with

difficulty. The problem of identifying targets and getting the information rapidly and clearly to an incoming aircraft in time, whilst the situation on the ground is constantly changing, has been tackled in various ways.

The Marauder is capable of flying all of its three mission types successfully, but it is felt that its payload is a little too small to be a truly effective strategic bomber, and it lacks the correct weaponry to be at its most efficient in a dedicated ground attack role. It is in the second, interdiction role that a Marauder is most effectively deployed.

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Type:** Tactical bomber

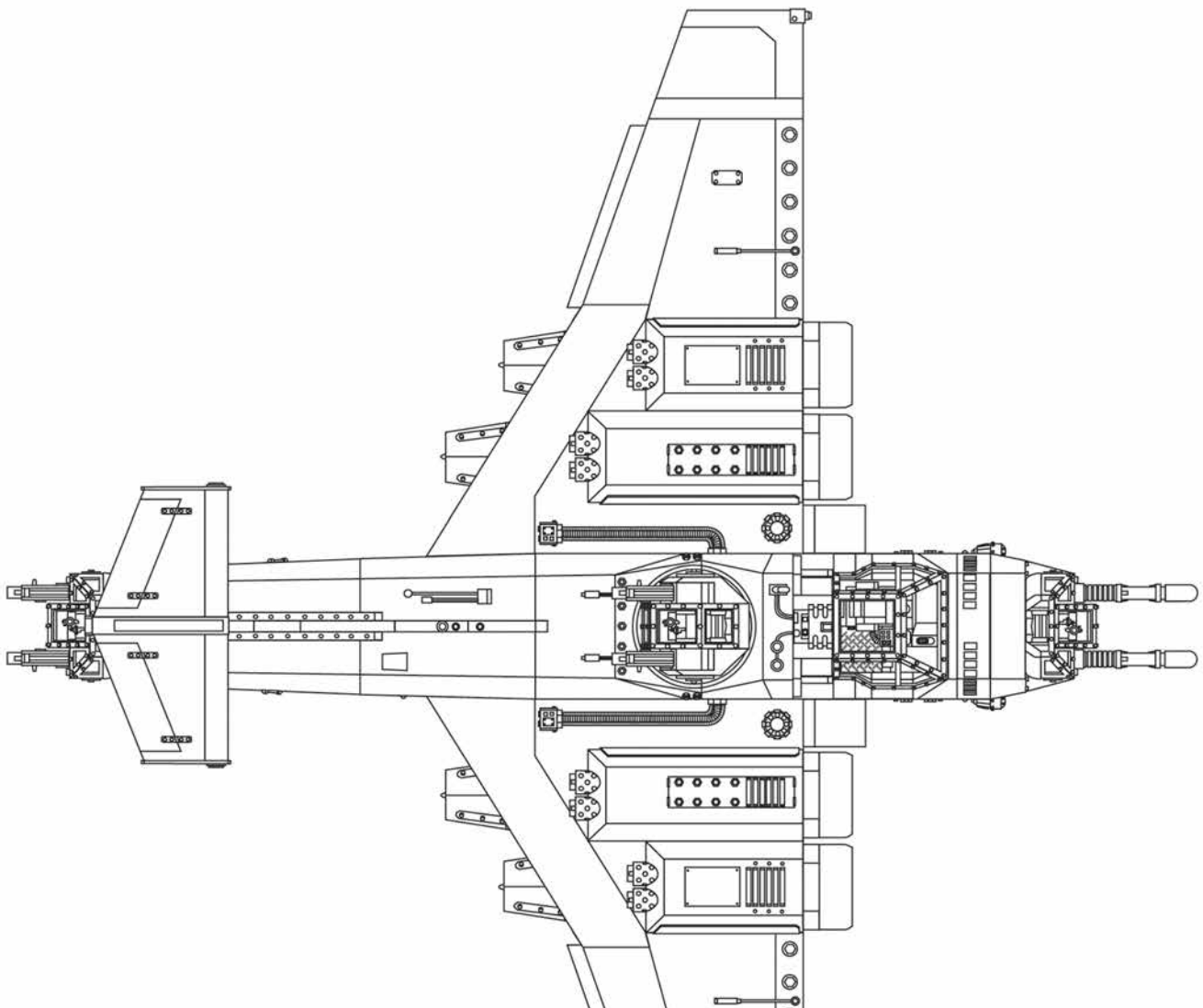
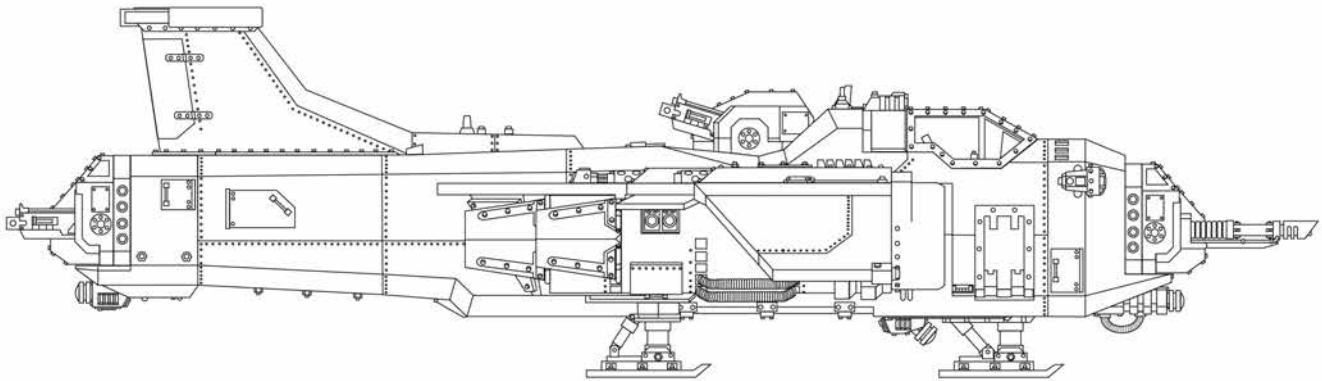
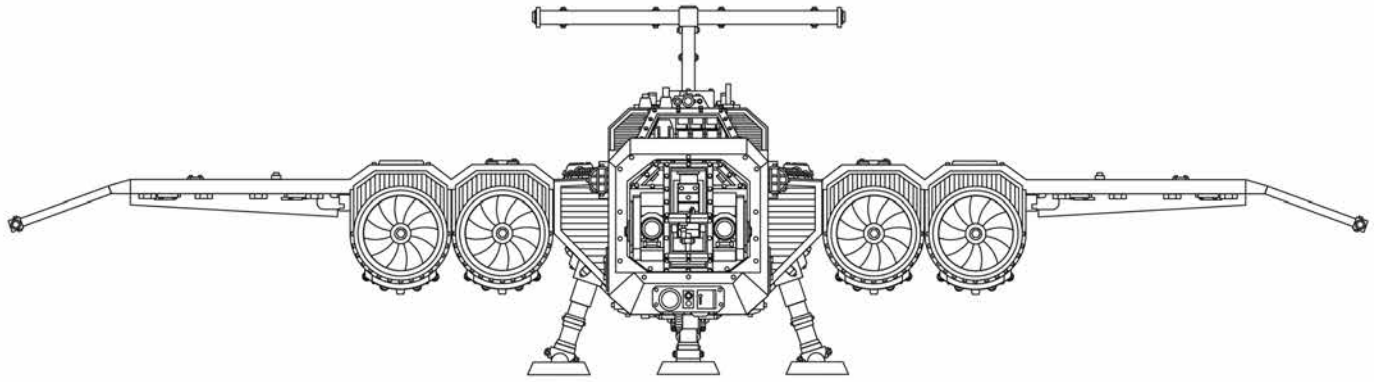
**Powerplant:** Four J79-CS afterburning ramjets

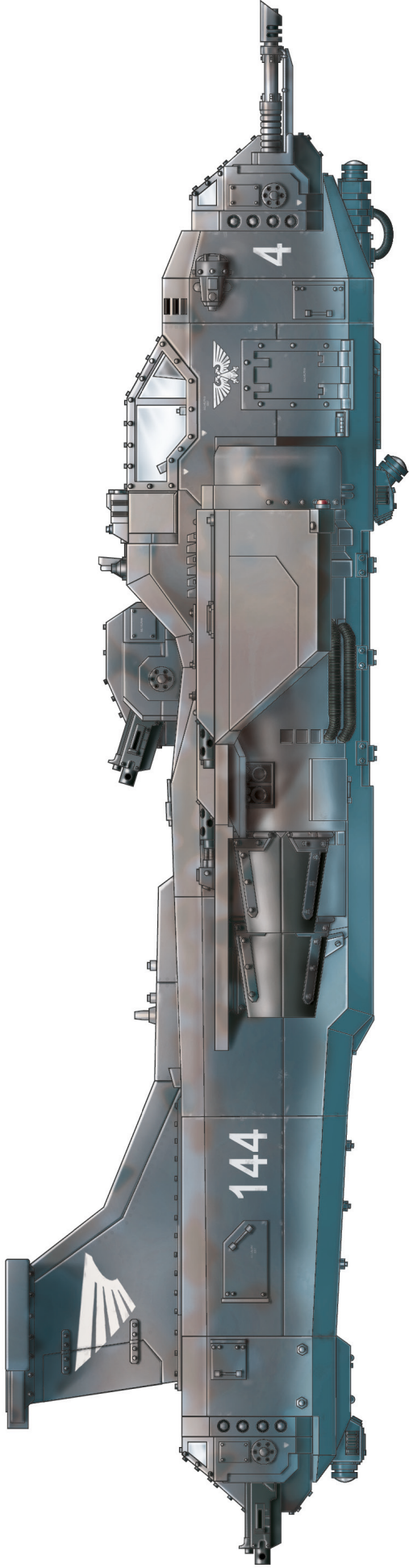
**Performance:** Maximum speed 1800kph (1125mph) at 5,000 feet; cruising speed 1200kph (750mph); range 15,000km approx.

**Weight:** 41 tonnes (empty).

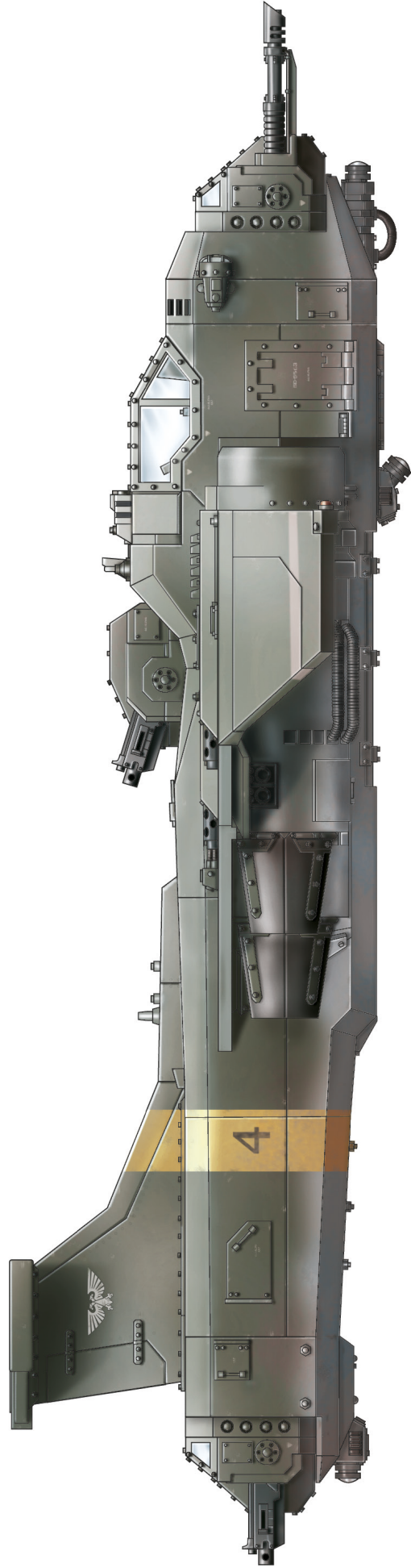
**Dimensions:** Wingspan 24.6m; length 19.2m; height 4.8m (landing gear down).

**Armament:** Two nose-turret lascannons, two dorsal turret heavy bolters, two rear turret heavy bolters, 6000lbs bomb bay payload, four under-wing hardpoints.

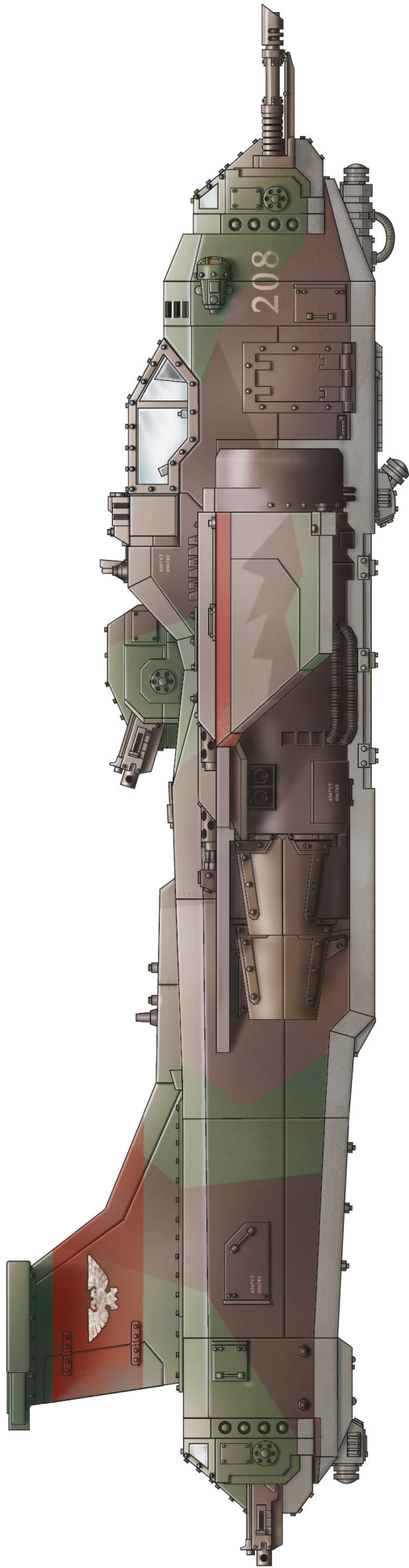




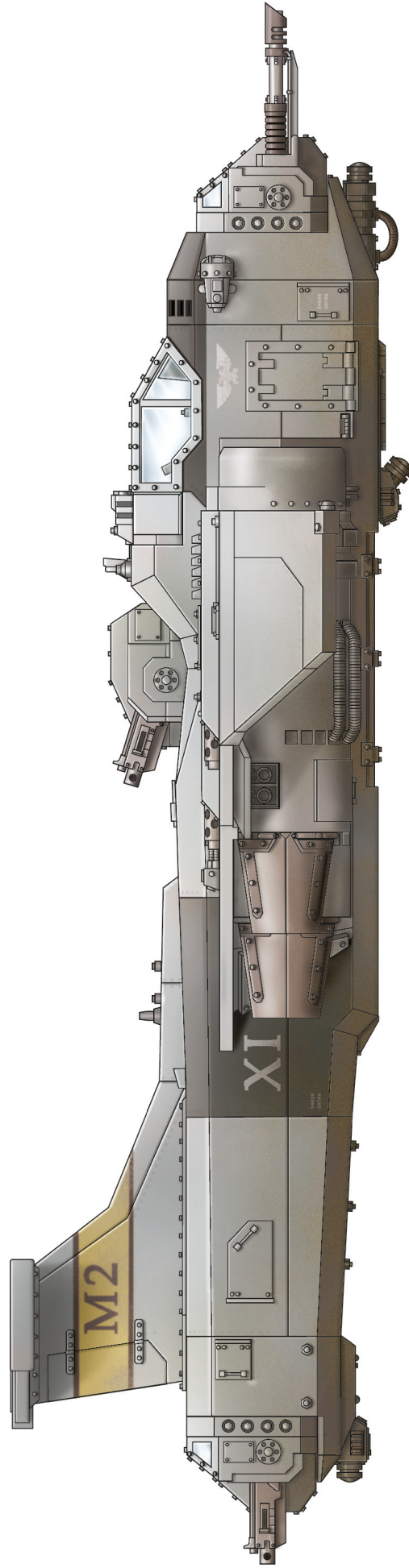
Marauder Bomber of 144th Bomber wing. The wing's fourth aircraft, based at Hive Infernus during the second Armageddon War.



Marauder Bomber of 1167th Bomber wing. based on Cadia.



Marauder Bomber of the 'mighty' 208th Bomber wing, seen here during a raid on the Koralkal oilfields.



Marauder Bomber of the 2010th Bomber wing, Belatis V.

# MARAUDER DESTROYER



## BACKGROUND

The Destroyer is the name given to a particular variant of the Marauder bomber designed for dedicated ground attack missions. The Marauder Destroyer specialises in low level attacks. It has a reduced bomb payload in favour of increased firepower. It bristles with weaponry: its nose cone mounts six autocannons, capable of unleashing a maelstrom of fire. Under the wings are eight racks for Hellstrike missiles. The tail turret replaces the standard defensive heavy bolters with two assault cannons, which are used to strafe targets after the main attack run is complete and the Marauder is climbing away from the target.

The Marauder is primarily equipped for deployment in close ground support. It lacks the bomb payload for any other role, although it can search for emerging targets behind the lines with its missiles and reduced bomb-load, but there are generally too few Destroyers for it to be wasted in the 'interdiction' role.

Records show that the first use of the Marauder Destroyer was during the Second War for Armageddon, after heavy losses in the Naval airforces. Ork dominance of the skies over certain areas of Armageddon forced the few remaining Marauders to be refitted to operate at night, flying at extremely low level where they could evade detection. Given the new low-level tactics, a new weapons payload was sanctioned.

Airbases, headquarters and supply depots are all high priority targets, which, if neutralised, can drastically reduce combat effectiveness. Unfortunately for Imperial forces, they are also

among the most heavily defended. If attacking such targets with the standard Marauder, the Imperial Navy might use an entire squadron, carpet bombing enemy positions from high altitude. The Destroyer however, crewed by hand picked Imperial Navy pilots, allows Imperial commanders to strike hard at these key targets with far less risk of failure.

The heavy firepower also means a Destroyer is the weapon of choice for close ground support. As an added bonus, the deafening roar of a low-flying Marauder Destroyer's quad ramjets, as it comes in for an attack run, is a great boost to friendly ground troops' morale.

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Type:** Ground attack bomber

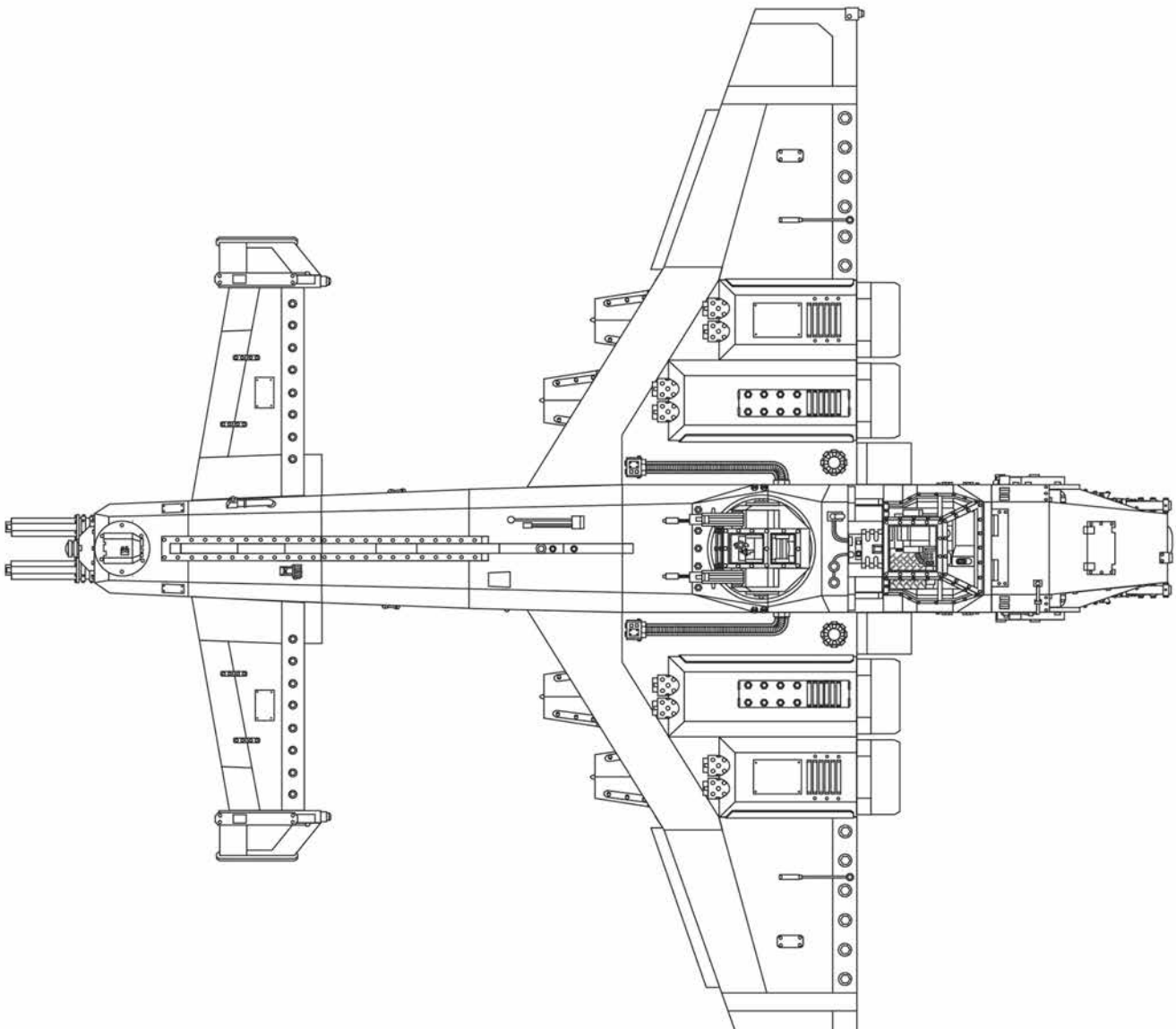
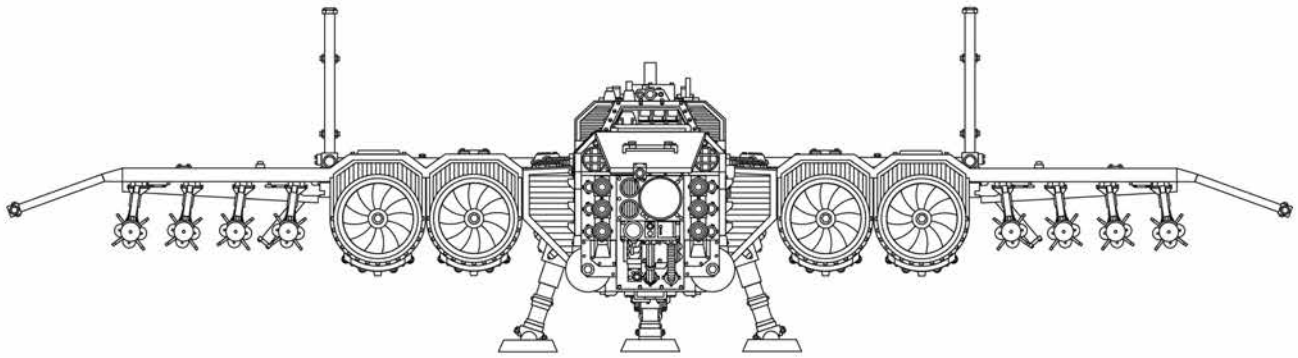
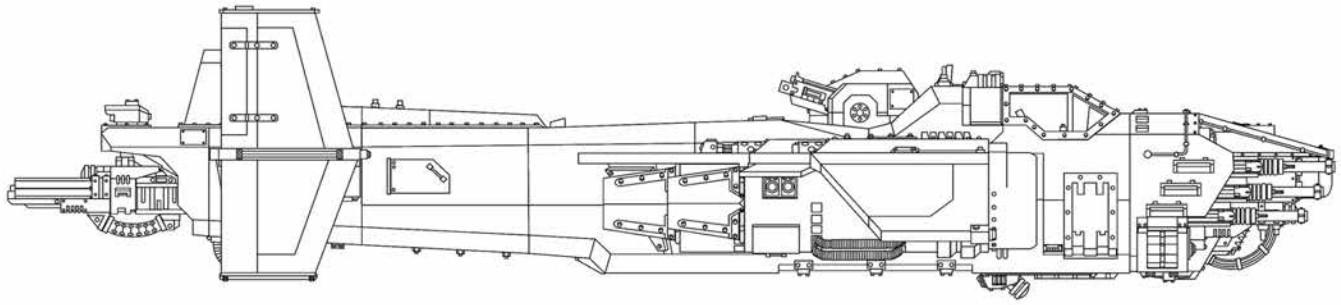
**Powerplant:** Four J79-CS afterburning ramjets

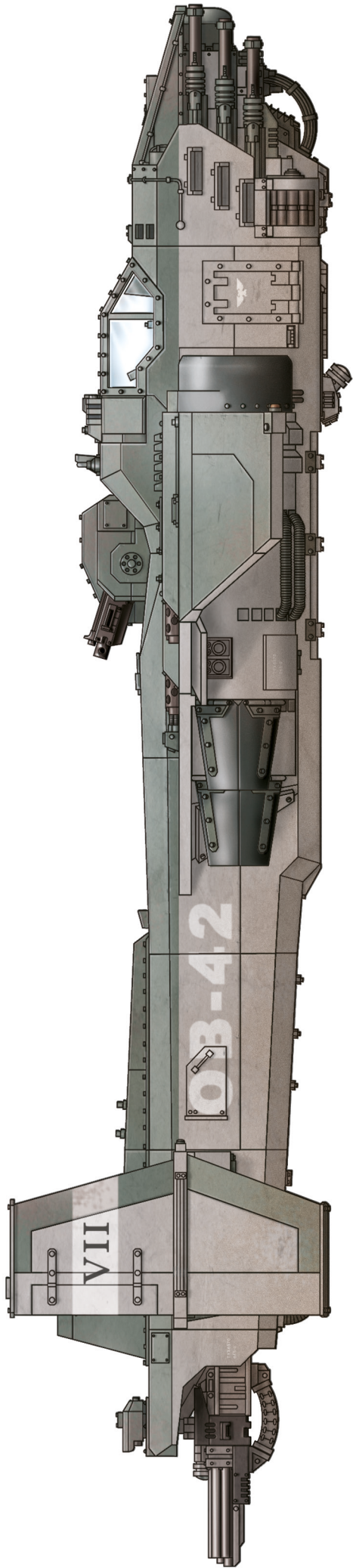
**Performance:** Maximum speed 1800kph (1125mph) at 5,000 feet; cruising speed 1200kph (750mph); range 12,000km approx.

**Weight:** 43 tonnes (empty).

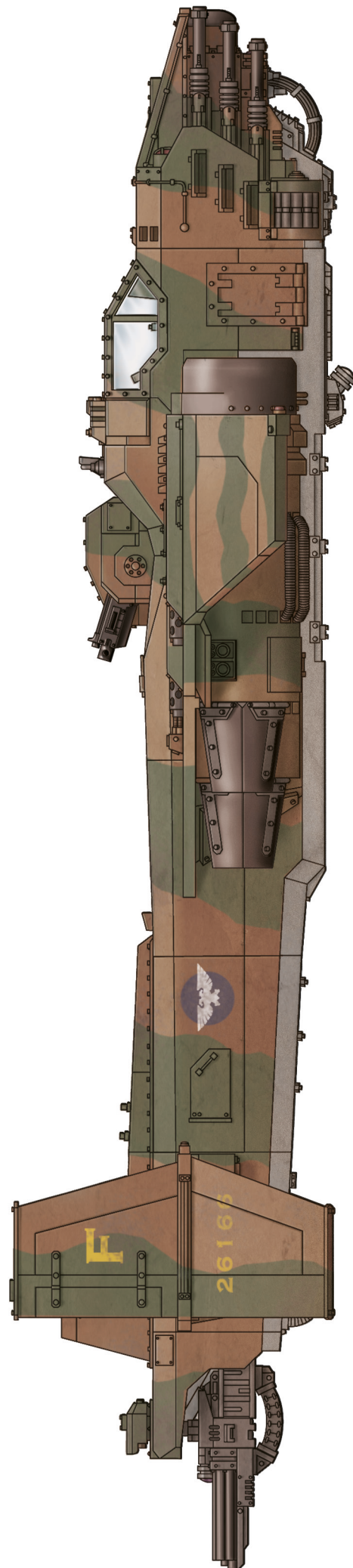
**Dimensions:** Wingspan 24.6m; length 23.2m; height 4.8m (landing gear down).

**Armament:** Six nose-mounted autocannons, two dorsal turret heavy bolters, two rear turret assault cannons, 3000lb bomb bay payload, eight under-wing hardpoints.





Marauder Destroyer of Strike Force 'Soryn', during operation 'Executioner's Sword', against Ork-controlled manufacturom facilities of Tigrus.



Marauder Destroyer of the 52nd Bomber wing, Heilon V campaign.

# SPACE MARINE AIRCRAFT



# THUNDERHAWK GUNSHIP



## BACKGROUND

Perhaps more than any other vehicle, the Thunderhawk Gunship is the lynchpin of a Space Marine Chapter. A versatile aircraft combining orbital drop ship, gunship and medium bomber roles, it is a Chapter's fleet of Thunderhawks that allow its forces to rapidly assault anywhere on a planet's surface from a strike cruiser in orbit.

A Thunderhawk gunship is amongst the most advanced and technologically sophisticated vehicles deployed by any Imperial force. Each gunship is packed with advanced targeting, sensory, communication, avionics and navigational equipment, protected inside a heavily armoured hull.

The armour is a layered composite of ablative ceramite layer, over a ceramite absorption and energy dissipation layer, over a thermoplas fibre mesh, over titanium rolled plates, over an adamantium inner hull. This provides superb protection from all incoming fire. The ceramite layers and thermoplas fibre mesh in the Thunderhawk are increased in depth to provide extra heat shielding during entry into a planet's atmosphere. The Thunderhawk must be able to withstand repeated atmospheric entries, and as such the ceramite layers have been increased. The Thunderhawk is strongly constructed to withstand enemy fire and the worst of atmospheric conditions. A Thunderhawk can take an immense amount of damage and keep flying. This allows a Thunderhawk to bludgeon its way through enemy interceptors and flak fire to land its cargo safely into the heart of any battle. Despite their complex systems, they have a well-deserved reputation for being rugged and reliable.

As well as armour construction, a Thunderhawk has other advanced systems. Multi-spectral remote targeting surveyors control the primary dorsal weapon and forward heavy bolters, relaying information to the aircraft's gunner on the flight deck.

As a gunship, the Thunderhawk carries a fearsome array of weaponry and ordnance. Its primary weapon is the limited traverse dorsal mounted weapon, either a turbo-laser or battle cannon. For additional power in ground attacks, it mounts twin lascannons, and, for engaging enemy interceptors or sweeping landing zones with suppressive fire, up to eight heavy bolters in remote turrets. The gunner, assisted by the Thunderhawk's Machine-Spirit, controls all these weapons from the flight deck. In addition, a Thunderhawk can carry various payloads of missiles and bombs for specific bombing missions.

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Type:** Gunship

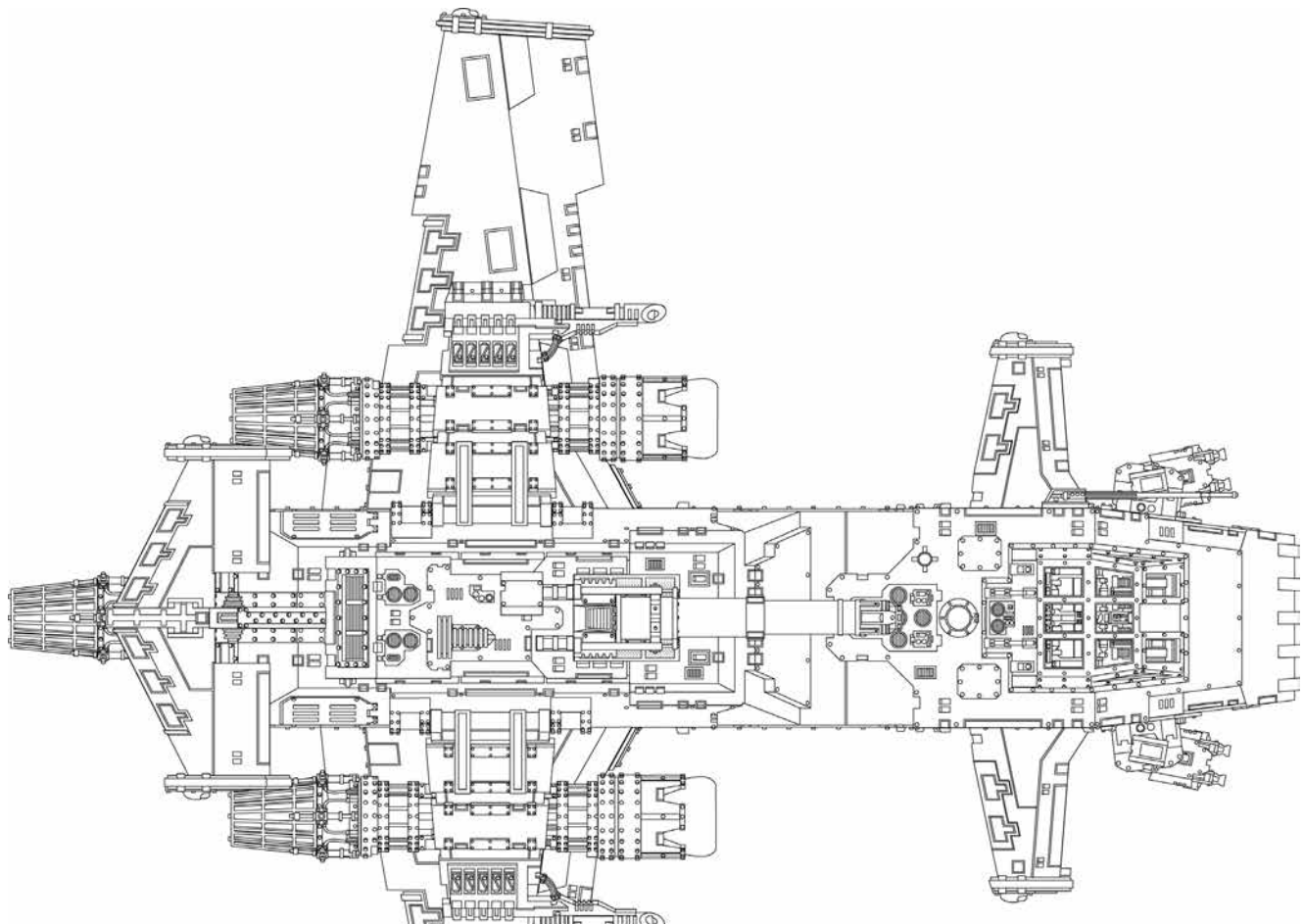
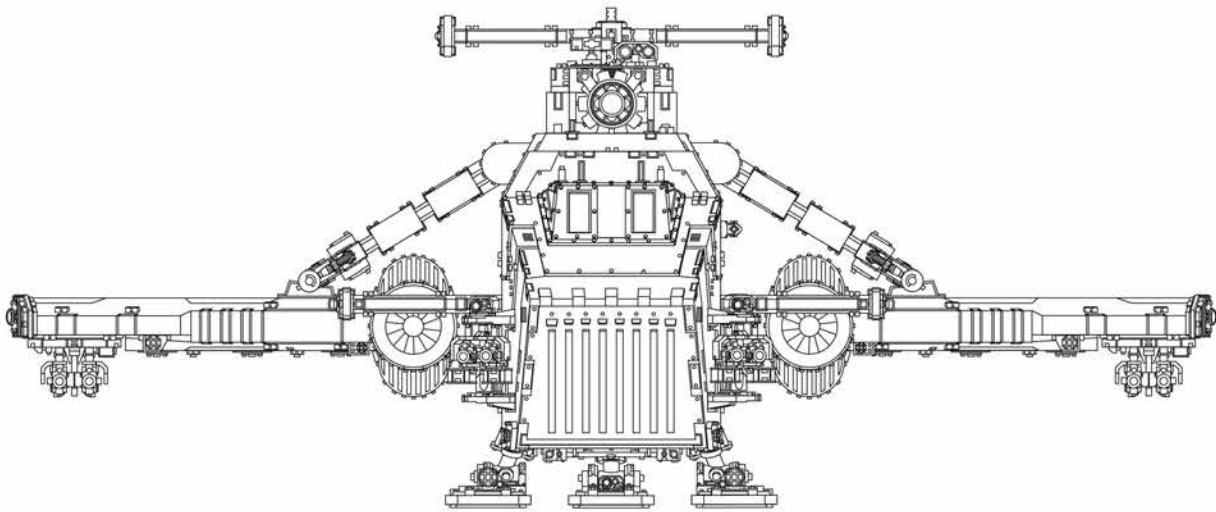
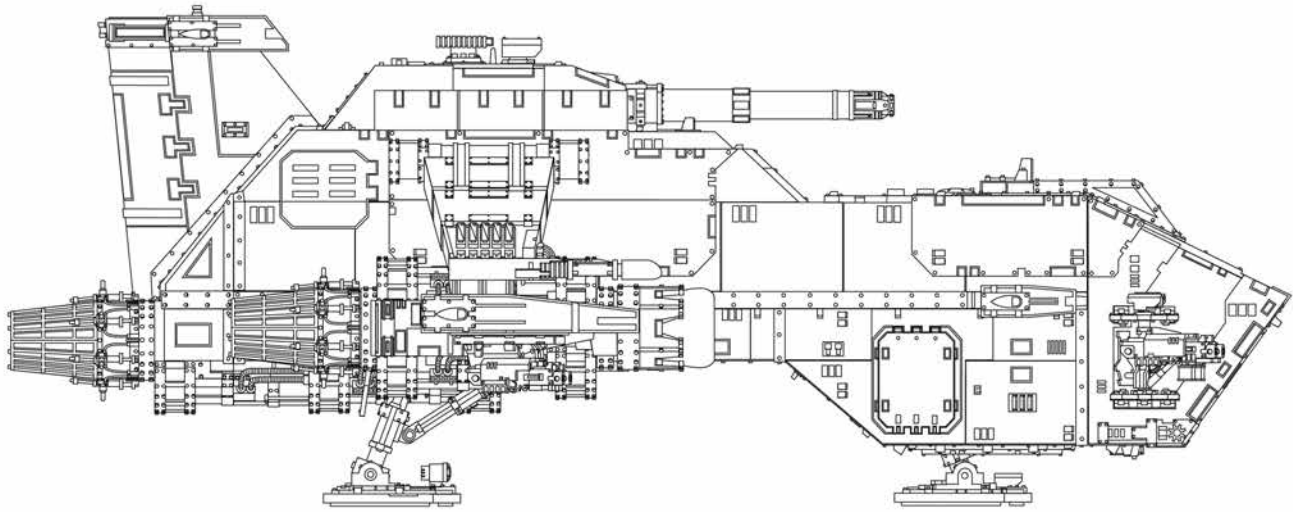
**Powerplant:** 3 x RX-92-00 combination rocket/afterburning turbofans

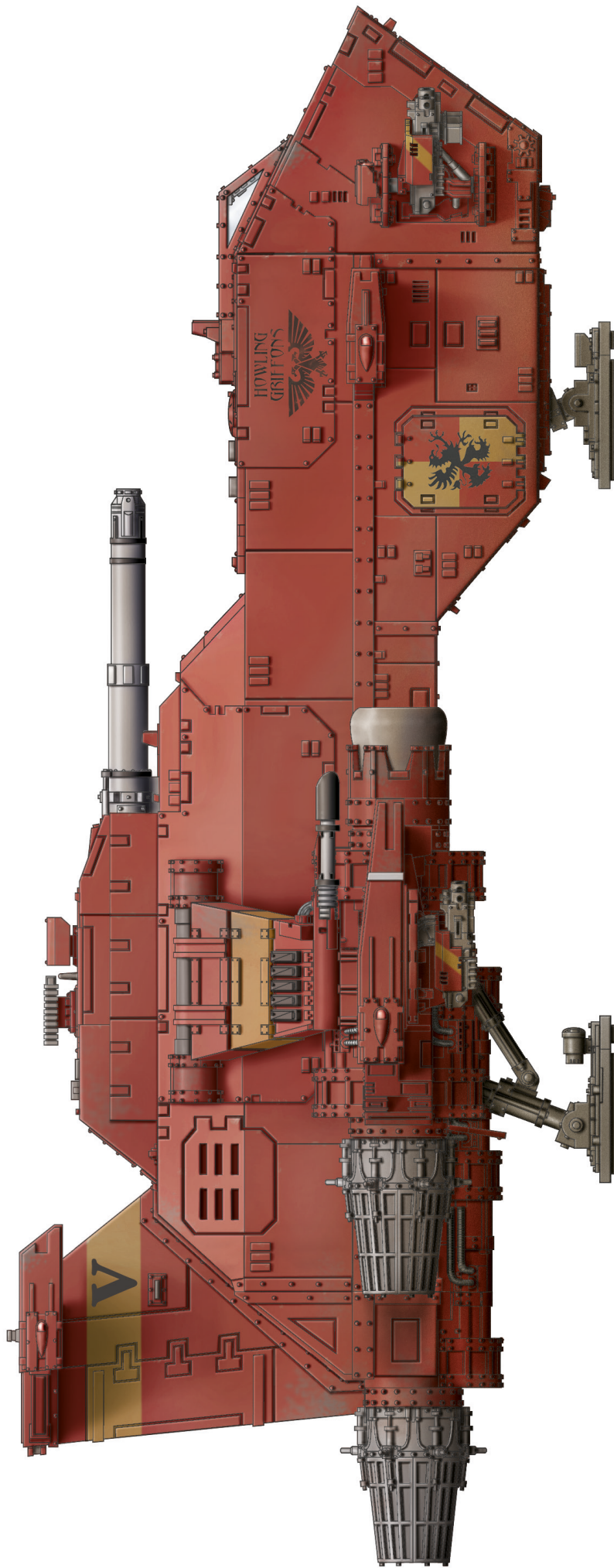
**Performance:** Maximum speed 2000 kph (1250 mph) at 5,000 feet, cruising speed 1400 kph (875 mph), range 28,000 km approx.

**Weight:** 121 tonnes (empty)

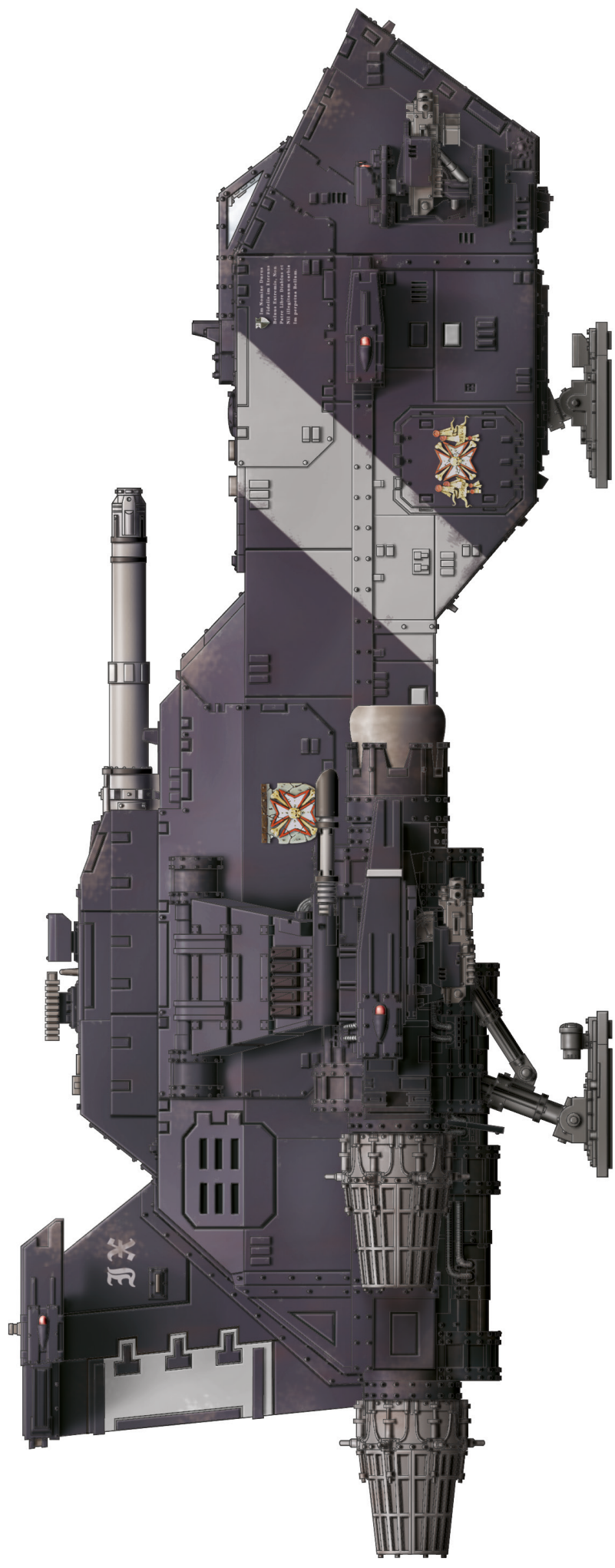
**Dimensions:** Wingspan 26.65 m, length 26.6m, height 9.8m

**Armament:** Dorsal mounted turbo-laser, two lascannons, eight heavy bolters.

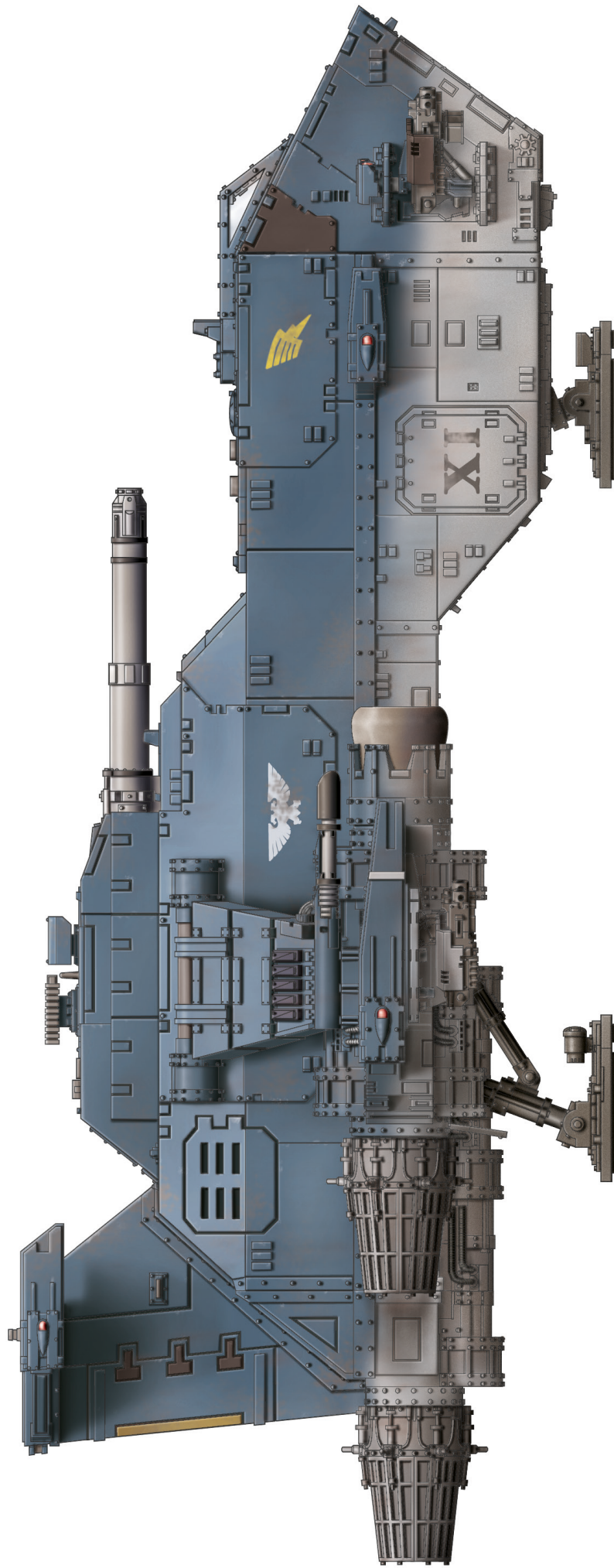




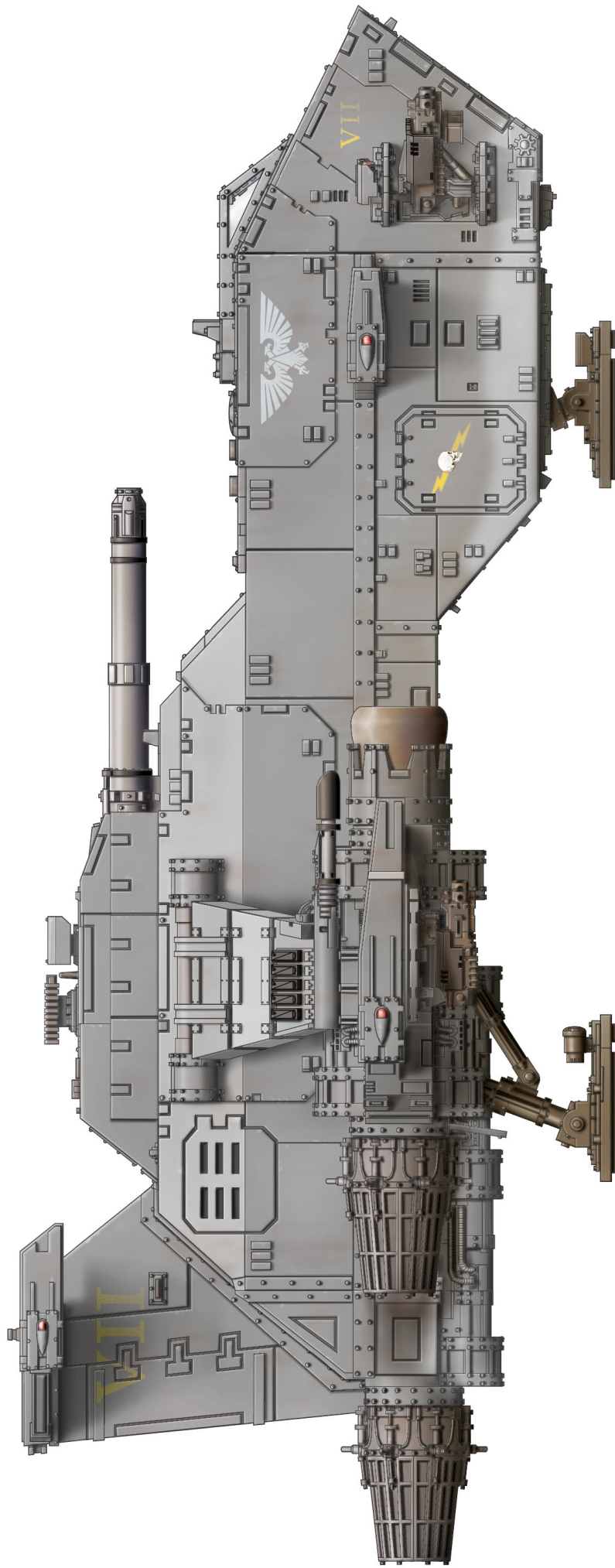
Thunderhawk Gunship of the Howling Griffons Chapter. Fifth aircraft of the Dennar IV suppression force.



Thunderhawk Gunship of the Black Templars Chapter, deployed during the Third Armageddon War.



Thunderhawk Gunship of the Death Strike Chapter, Verdant II counter-strike force.



Thunderhawk Gunship of the Revilers Chapter. This is the Chapter Armoury's seventh aircraft, deployed for the Azoth landings.

# THUNDERHAWK TRANSPORTER



## BACKGROUND

The Thunderhawk transporter is the logistical support variant of the standard gunship. It is used to quickly move a Space Marine Chapter's vehicles from strike cruisers in orbit to a planet's surface, or from one ground operation to another. The transporter does not carry troops unless they are pre-loaded into the vehicles. It is armed with four heavy bolter turrets for self-defence, but can also carry wing mounted hellstrike missiles for attacking a landing zone. This is rarely required, as most of transporter's work is done after a landing zone has been secured. During planetary assaults, transporters fly non-stop missions ferrying vehicles and supplies to the Space Marines on the ground.

Twin-winged and powered by four RX-92-00 combination rocket/turbofan engines, the transporter is powerful enough to lift two fully loaded Rhinos or a single Land Raider, using large magnetic clamping arms to lock its cargo in place. It has four arms mounted upon runners on the fuselage, so they can be moved into position on a vehicle's side. The jointed arms then clamp the vehicle and lift it off the ground into the carry position. Upon landing, the arms will be lowered to place the under-slung vehicles on the ground, allowing the transporter to swoop in, drop off its cargo and quickly blast off. This minimizes the time a transporter is stationary on the ground and thus vulnerable to enemy attacks.

As well as carrying vehicles, a Thunderhawk transporter can also be equipped with an under-slung supply pod for moving ammunition, fuel or other important supplies to a planet's surface. Transporters also carry other useful equipment such as winches and a drop pod recovery sling. They have a standard crew of two: a pilot and a co-pilot.

Tactically, the transporter is a vital addition to any Space Marine strike force. Whilst gunships can transport men and their heavy weapons and provide heavy fire support, transporters must land the force's vehicles and supplies, without which a strike force could not operate on the ground for long.

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Type:** Heavy transport dropship

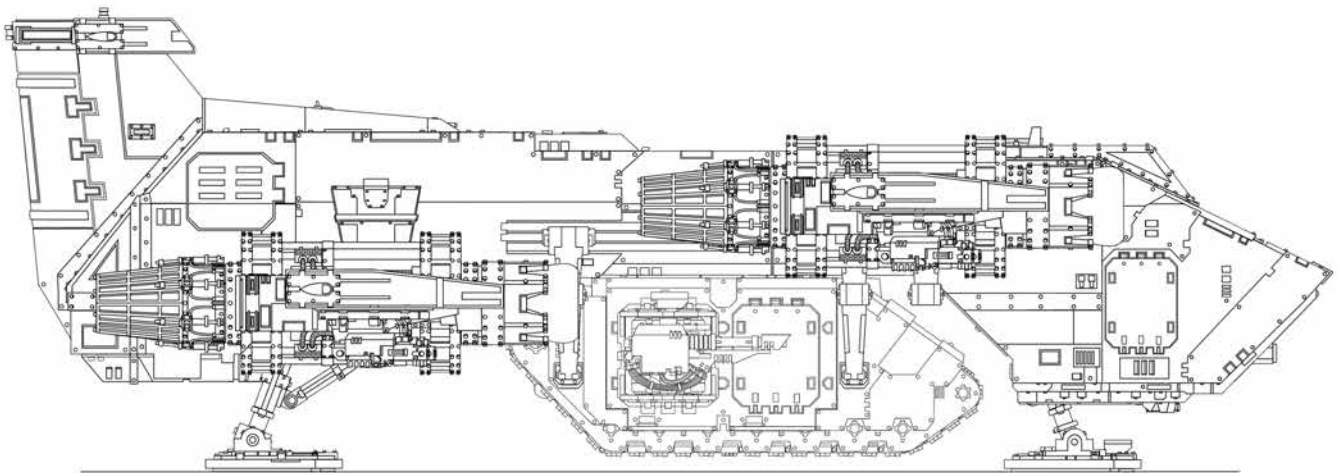
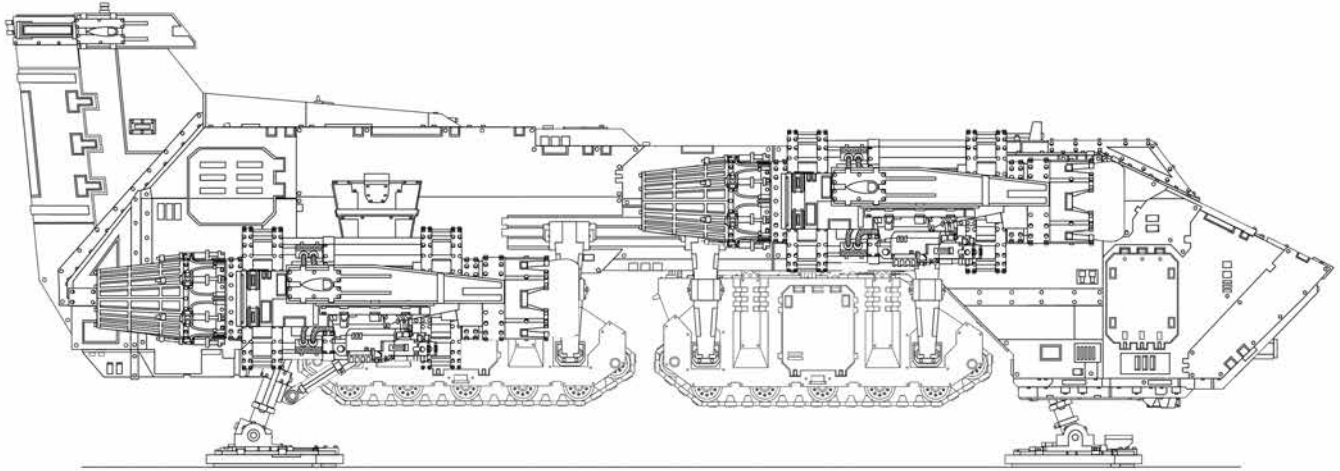
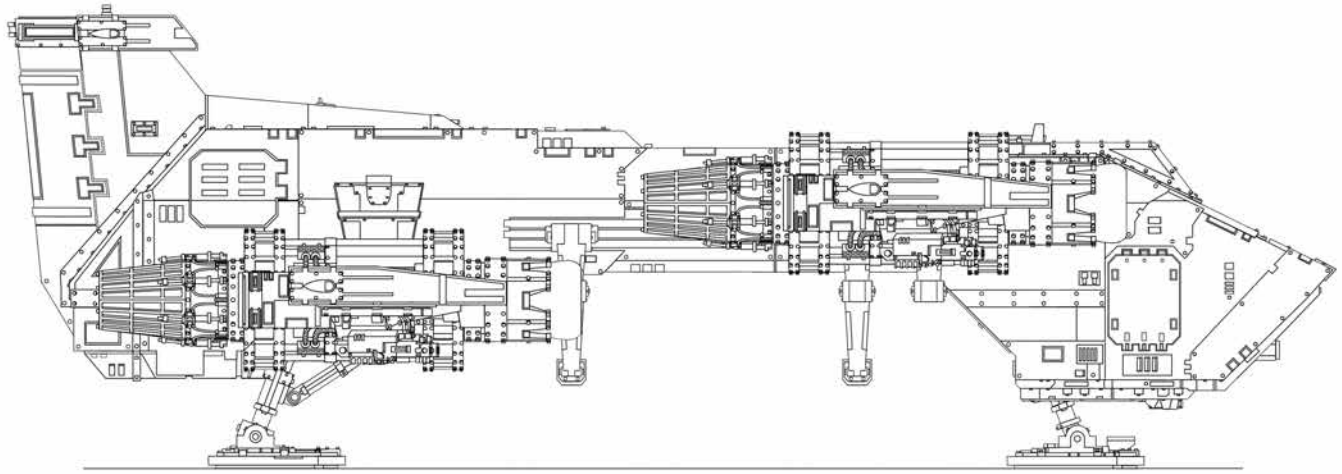
**Powerplant:** 4 x RX-92-00 combination rocket/afterburning turbofans

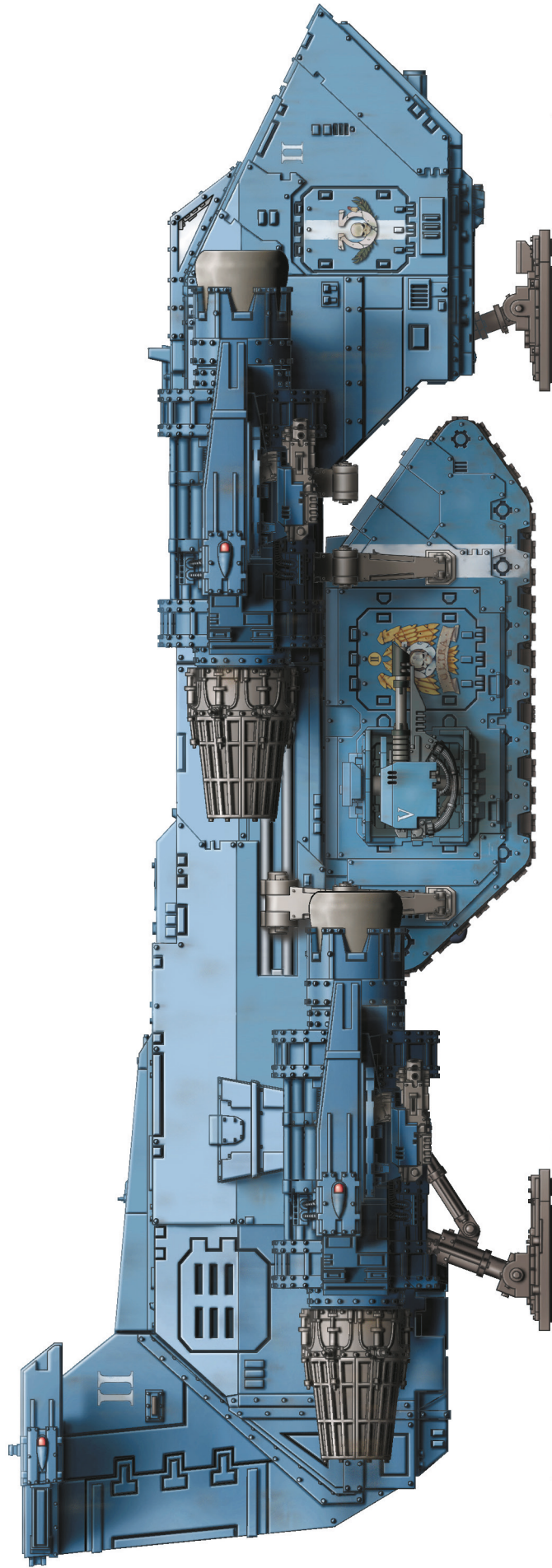
**Performance:** Maximum speed 2000 kph (1250 mph) at 5,000 feet, cruising speed 1400 kph (875 mph), range 28,000 km approx.

**Weight:** 105 tonnes (empty)

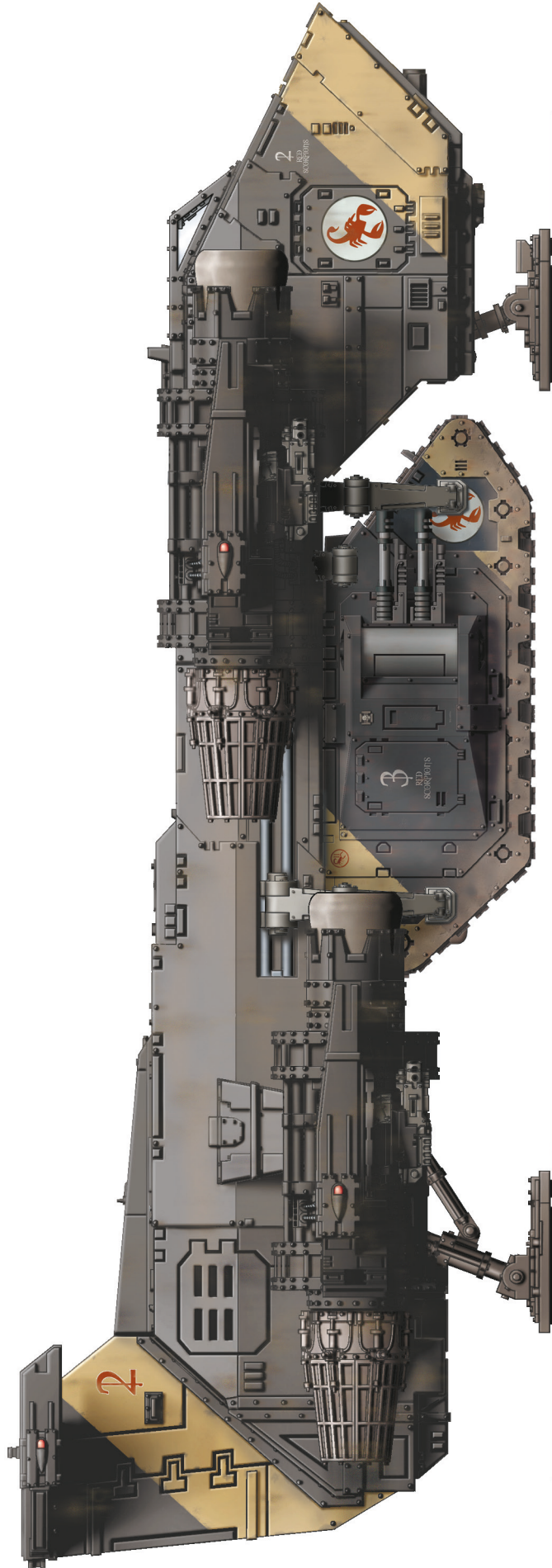
**Dimensions:** Wingspan 26.65 m, length 28.8m, height 8.6m

**Armament:** Eight heavy bolters.

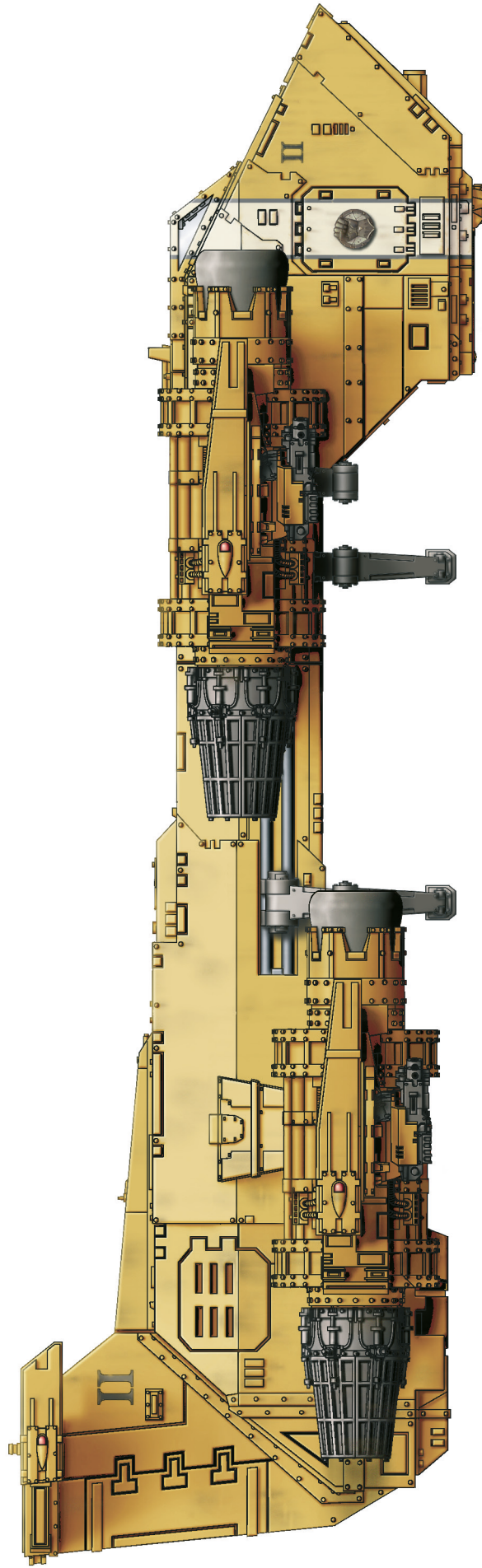




Thunderhawk Transporter of the Ultramarines Chapter, part of Strike Force Ideaeus, deployed for protection duties with Explorator Force Delpha.



Thunderhawk Transporter of the Red Scorpions Chapter, seen here during the Moran Extraction.



Thunderhawk Transporter of the Imperial Fists Chapter, the second aircraft of Strike Force Actaon, Baile Alpha deployment.

# ORK AIRCRAFT



# FIGHTA



## BACKGROUND

Like all Ork vehicles, Ork aircraft are constructed by their Mekboyz – a breed of Ork technicians who have a natural affinity for making certain objects (mostly to do with waging war, such as tanks, guns and aircraft). When building vehicles, Mekboys tend to stick to familiar design, which they seem to have an innate ability to build and repair. How a Mekboy knows what to build, even he would not be able to tell you. There is no training for Mekboyz, they just have an inbuilt aptitude for building mechanical objects. All the Mekboy knows is that this is the way to do it, and this way works, so he just replicates the design, with little desire to alter it. As a result many Ork vehicles are very similar, with only cosmetic differences, and many alterations are often added by the vehicle's owner or crew.

Some Mekboys, usually those that have taken serious head injuries, will come up with a brand new design, or a plan to alter a vehicle to improve it. To conservative Mekboyz, these mad Meks are looked on with grave suspicion and shunned. Why change a design that works?

Ork fightas are the smallest type of Ork aircraft. Built for speed and firepower, a fighta can only carry a small wing-mounted payload of bombs or rockets, but do carry multiple 'eavy shootas in the nose and wings, producing a lethal hail of bullets, especially at close ranges. Ork fighta pilots love nothing better than to get close to a target before pouring fire (known as dakka to Orks) into it to tear it apart. Rookie (or green) pilots are taught to fire long, uncontrolled bursts, the more bullets flying the better. Ammunition expenditure is never a consideration.

The fighta's powerful engine is crude but remarkable effective, producing a huge amount of thrust (and often an alarming trail of black smoke). Flying in a straight line, a fighta is easily a match for any Imperial fighter. It retains its manoeuvrability by utilising two vector engine nozzles, which can divert some of the thrust and thus change the aircraft's trajectory. Using these engine nozzles tends to throw the aircraft violently into its new direction, giving the appearance that the Ork pilot is wildly out of control. This is a feature that appeals to the Ork pilot, as he careens through the sky, the wilder the ride the better.

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Type:** Fighter, interceptor.

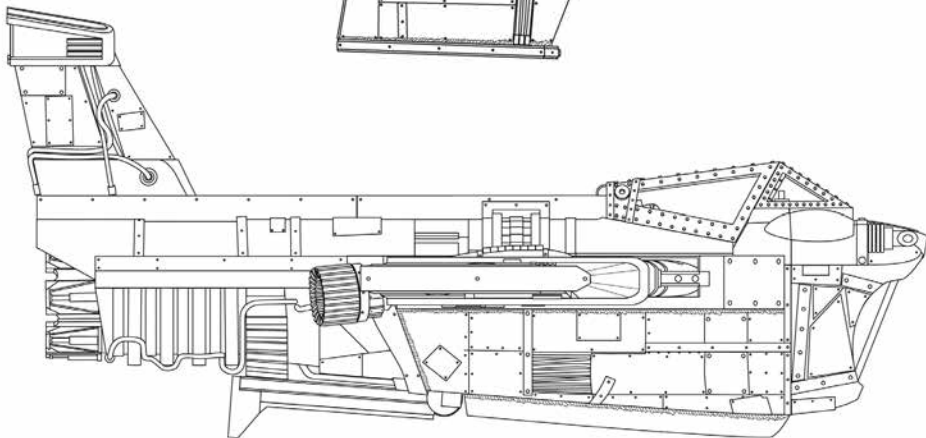
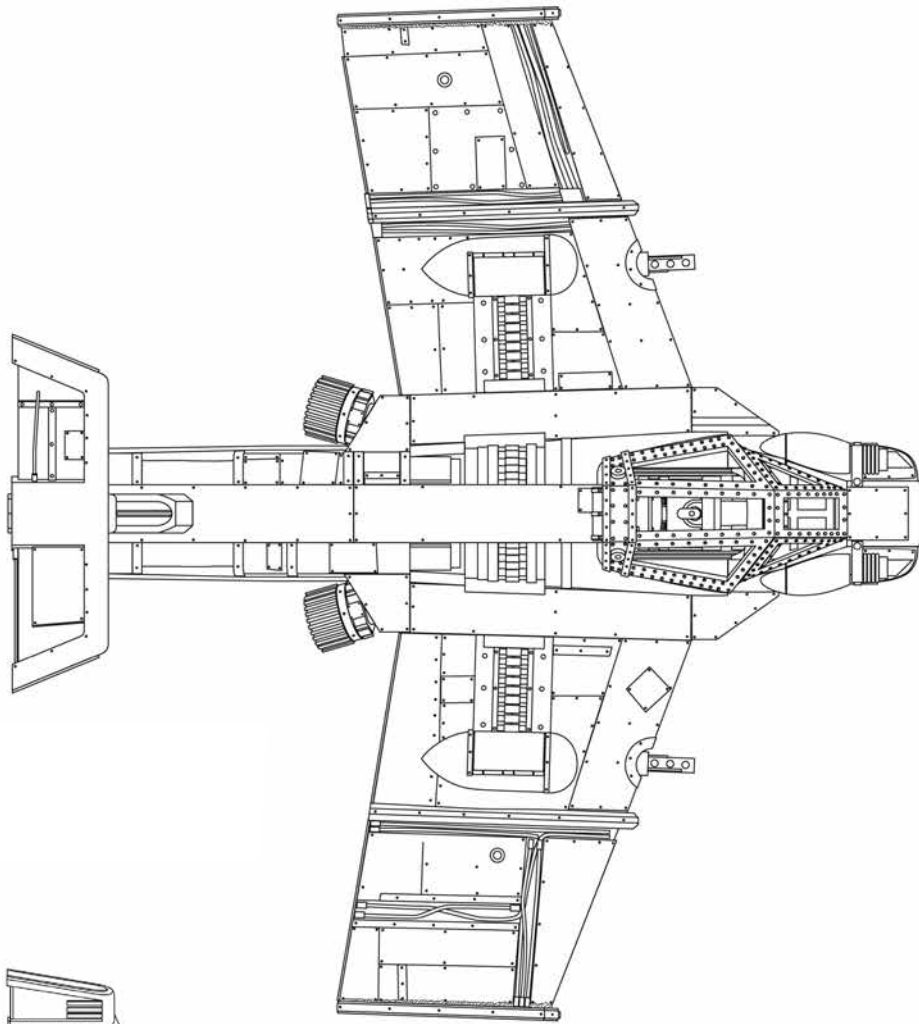
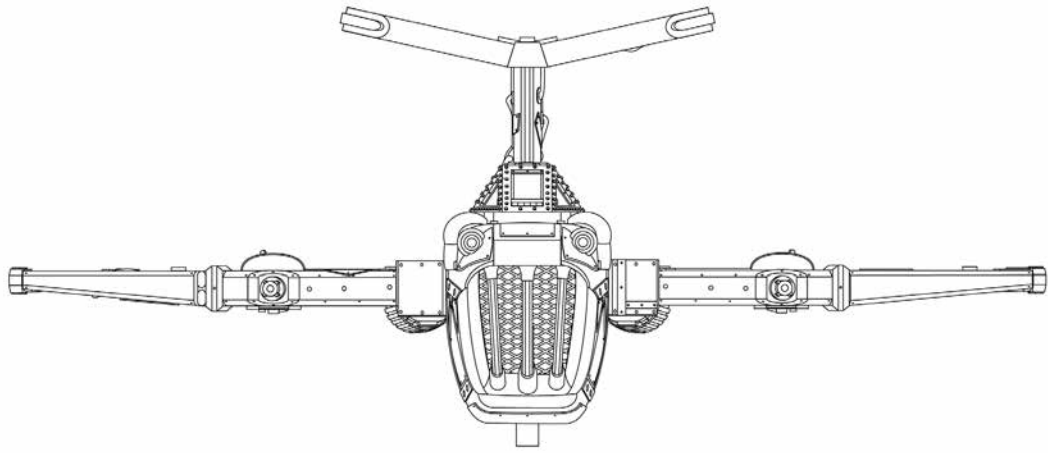
**Powerplant:** Unknown.

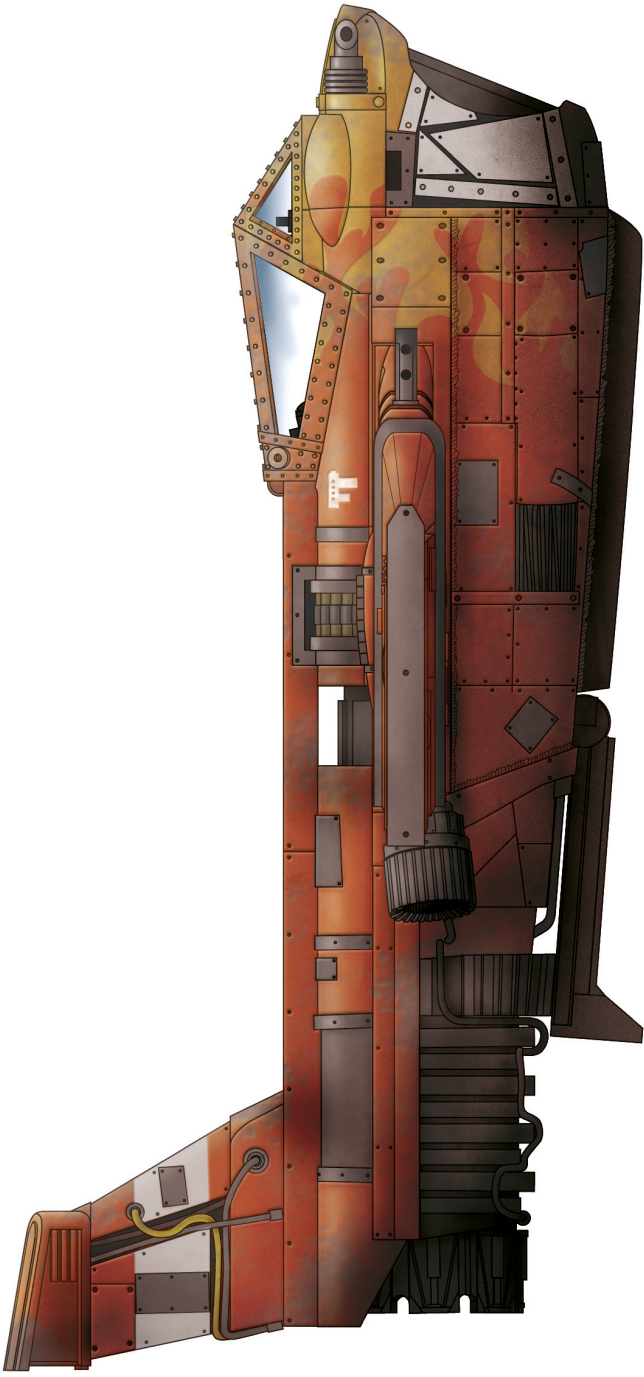
**Performance:** Maximum speed 2100kph (1312mph) at 5,000 feet; cruising speed 1900kph (1188 mph); range 9,000km approx.

**Weight:** 11 tonnes (empty).

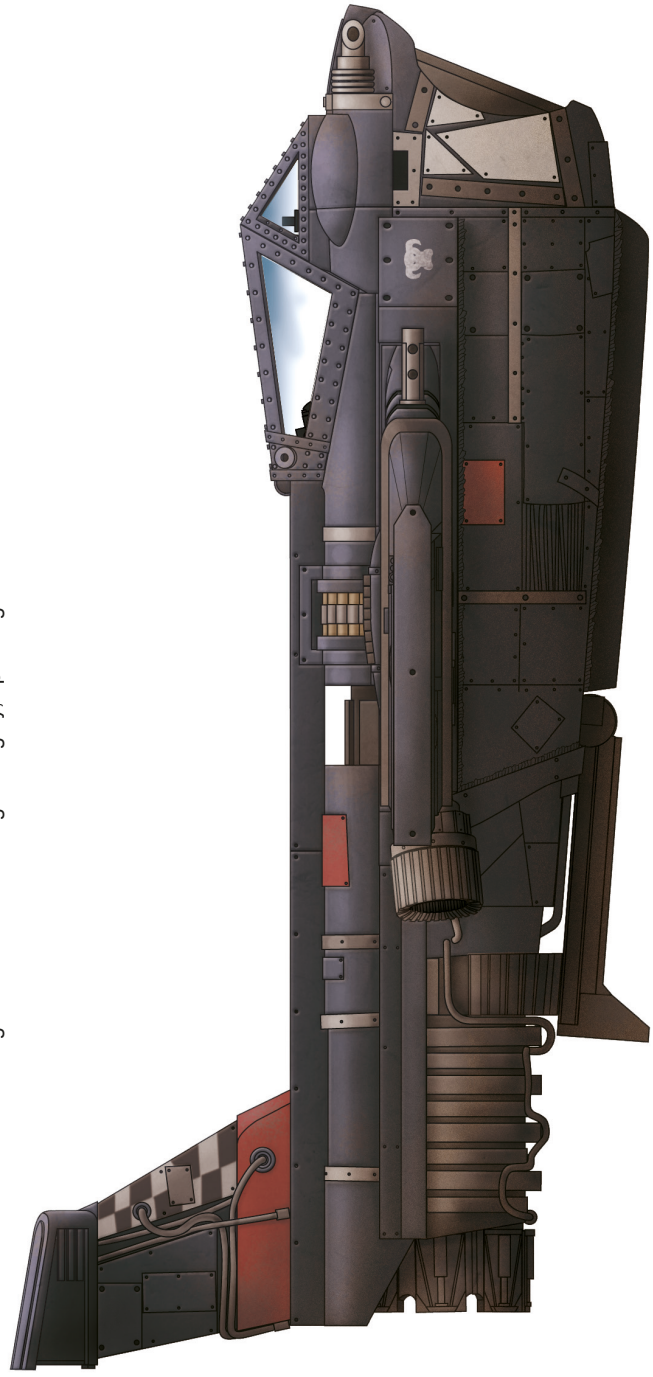
**Dimensions:** Wingspan 13m; length 11.8m; height 3.75m.

**Armament:** Two nose-mounted 'eavy shootas, two wing-mounted 'eavy shootas, two under-wing hardpoints.

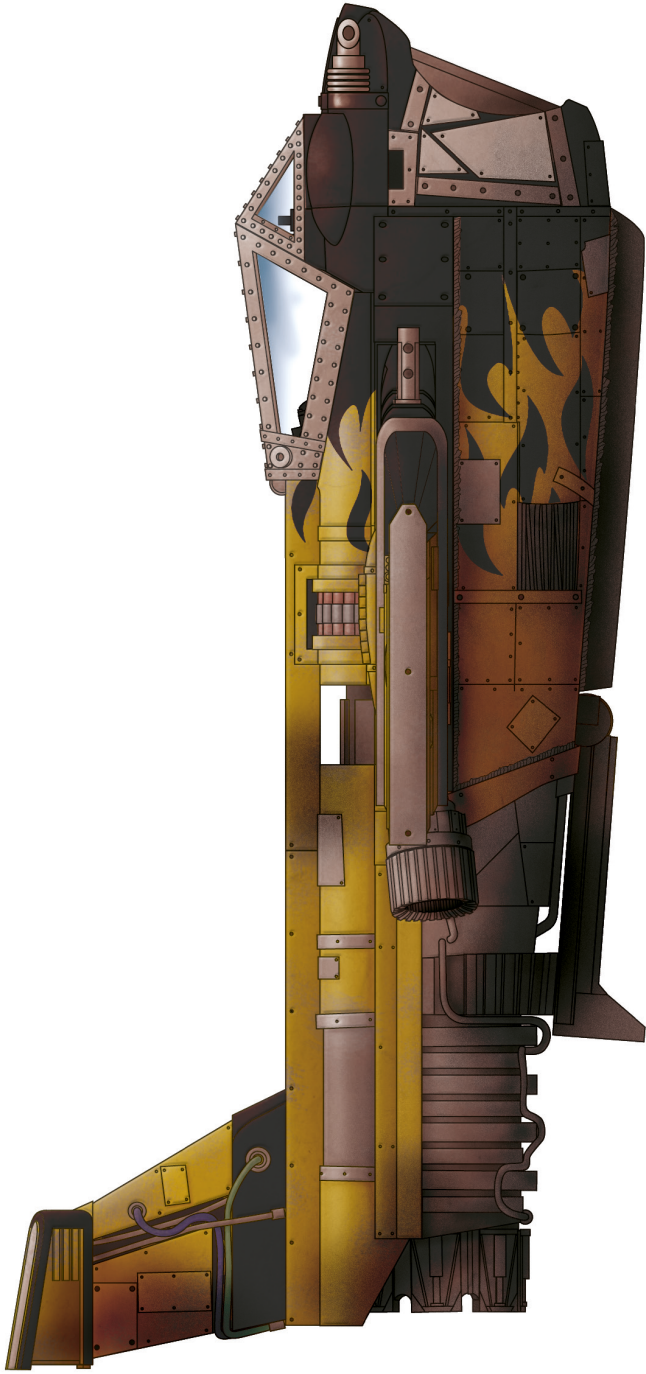




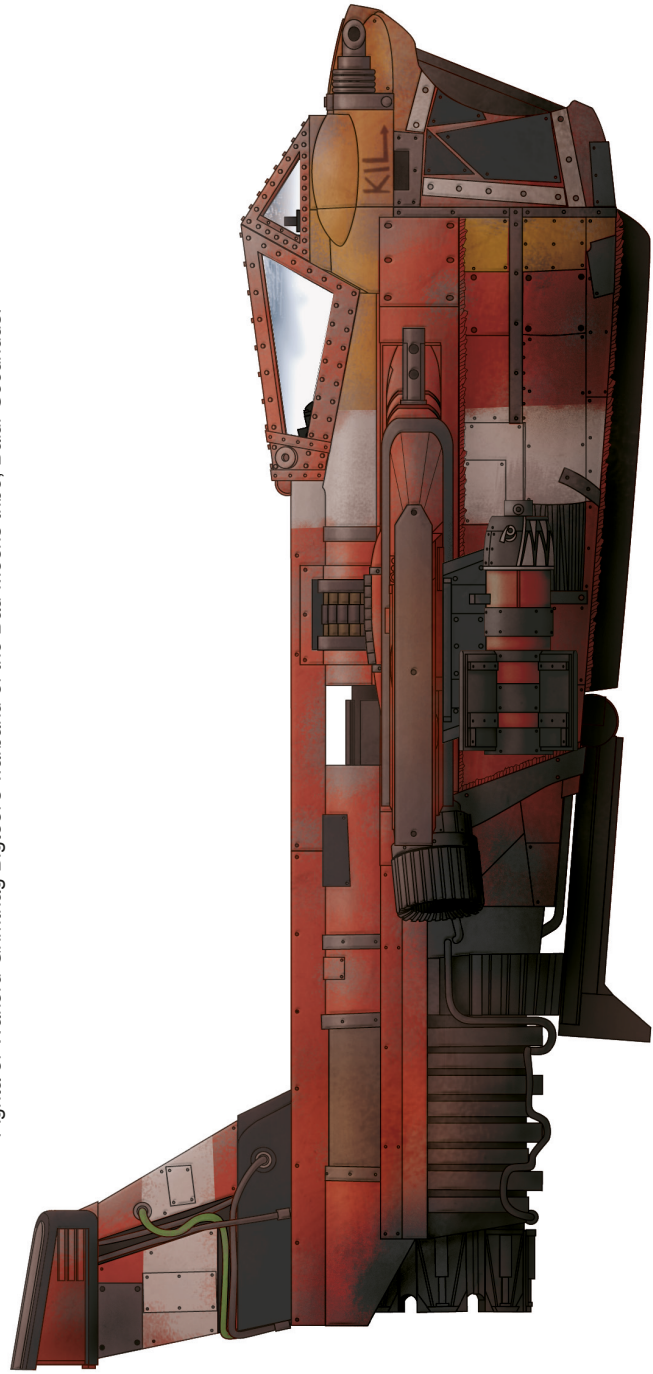
Fighta of Warlord Maddog da Mighty, operating over Yarant II.



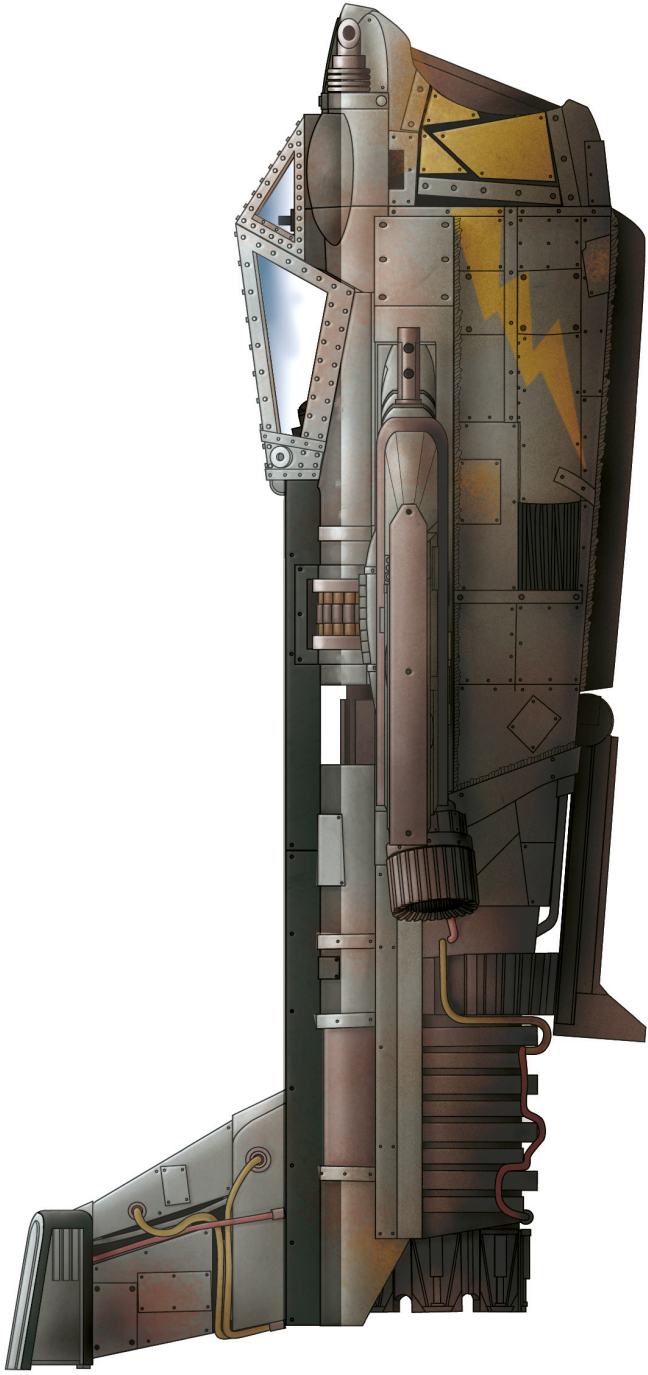
Fighta of the Ork ace 'da Black Barun', Desolation Valley, Rynn's World.



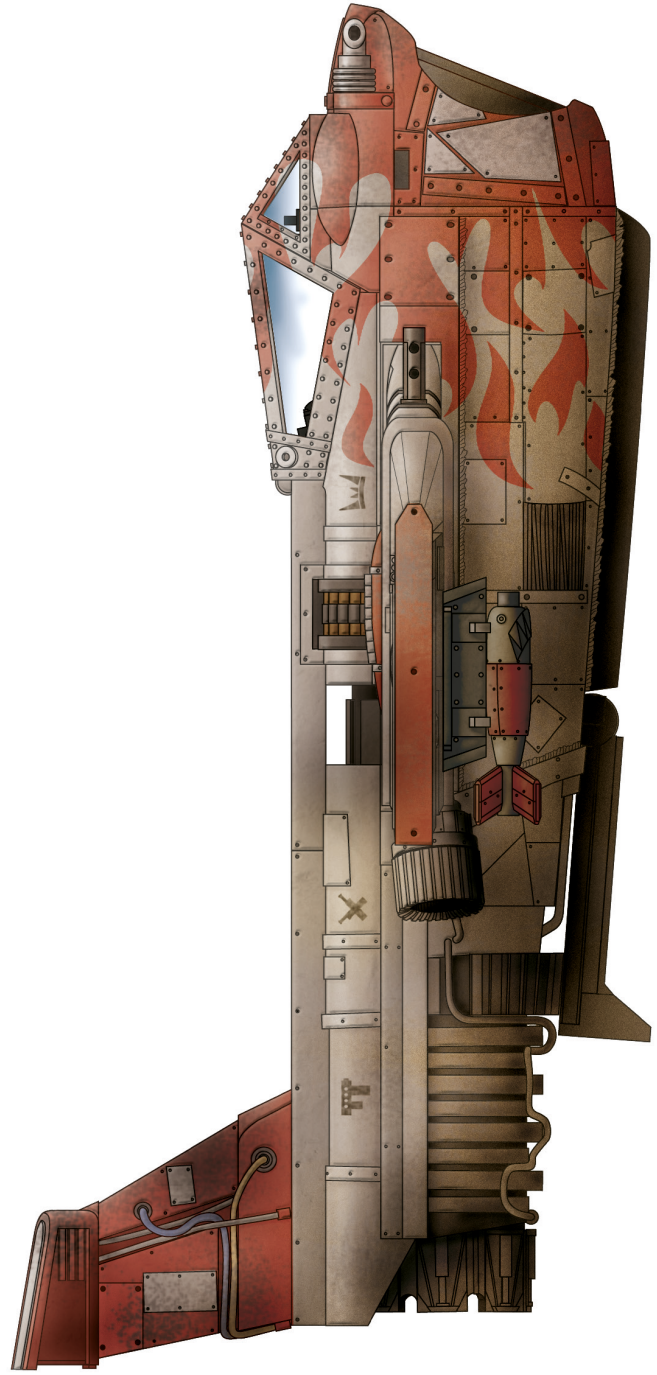
Fighta of Warlord Grimthag Bigtoof's warband of the Bad Moons tribe, Batur Secundus.



Fighta in the common red colours of the Kuilt of Speed, Sulphur river attack force, Rynn's World.



Fighta of Waaagh! Ugskraga, Balle Alpha.



Fighta of 'Vulcha' squadron', operating in the Fire Wastes during the Third Armageddon War.

# FIGHTA-BOMMER



## BACKGROUND

The fighta-bommer is the most commonly encountered Ork aircraft. Heavier than the fighta, it carries a larger payload of bombs and rockets for ground attack missions, the favoured tactics of all Ork airforces. The fighta-bommer is very similar to the fighta, but being larger and heavier lacks the straight line speed of the fighta. It uses the same engine layout and, in many cases, the same engine – salvaged from crash sites.

Ork aircraft take-off using a launch trolley. Once 'bombed-up', the aircraft is loaded onto a trolley and then pulled onto the runway. The aircraft's engines then power the aircraft, trolley-and-all, down the runway until take-off speed is achieved. As the aircraft starts to rise, the trolley is released and crashes back to earth. To land, the aircraft slows down until it almost stalls, then slides on its reinforced belly onto the runway in a barely controlled skid. Each aircraft has a landing hook which drags along the ground to slow the aircraft until it comes to a halt in a steaming cloud of exhaust fumes and dust.

The main differences between the fighta-bommer and its smaller cousin are its wing mounted payload and the addition of a rear facing ball turret for self defence whilst the aircraft is making its attack runs. The crew of two is usually an Ork pilot and his Gretchin gunner, who clammers through the cockpit and is then sealed into the ball turret before take-off. If the crew should need to eject, the pilot may escape from the cockpit, but there is no provision for the Gretchin gunner to escape.

Instead of bombs or rockets, the fighta-bommer is large enough to carry two grot bombs. Grot bombs are guided

missiles, piloted by Gretchin who fly the missile at its target, blissfully unaware of the fatal effects of the missile's detonation.

Ork pilots are themselves outcasts from Ork society. Most Orks prefer to keep their feet firmly on the ground, and believe real fighting is done up close and personal. There are some unstable individuals amongst a tribe that crave to fly through the sky like a bird. The Orks call them Flyboyz, and they all belong to a sub-cult known as Speed Freaks. It seems that for a Flyboy their demand for extra speed cannot be satisfied by land based vehicles. They take to the sky in search of ever greater exhilaration. Their reckless flying, diving bombing and strafing runs, as well as the search for greater and greater speeds, seem to change their brain wave patterns, inducing a state of manic euphoria. Other Orks consider them to be quite mad, and avoid them. Flyboyz live in semi-exile from the tribal hierarchy, only associating with other Flyboyz, Gretchin slaves and gunners and the Mekboyz who build and maintain their aircraft.

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Type:** Fighter-bomber

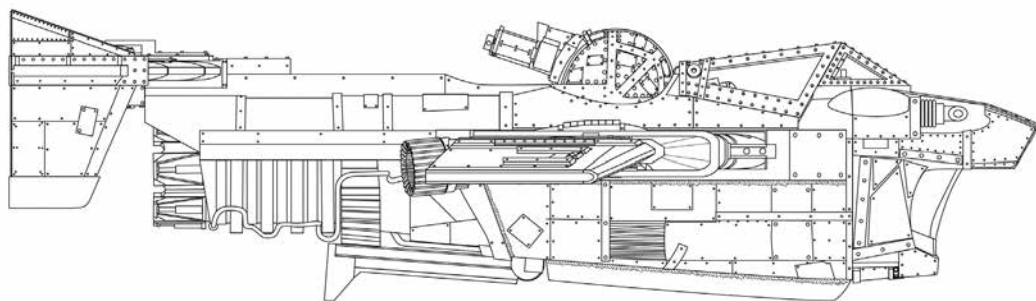
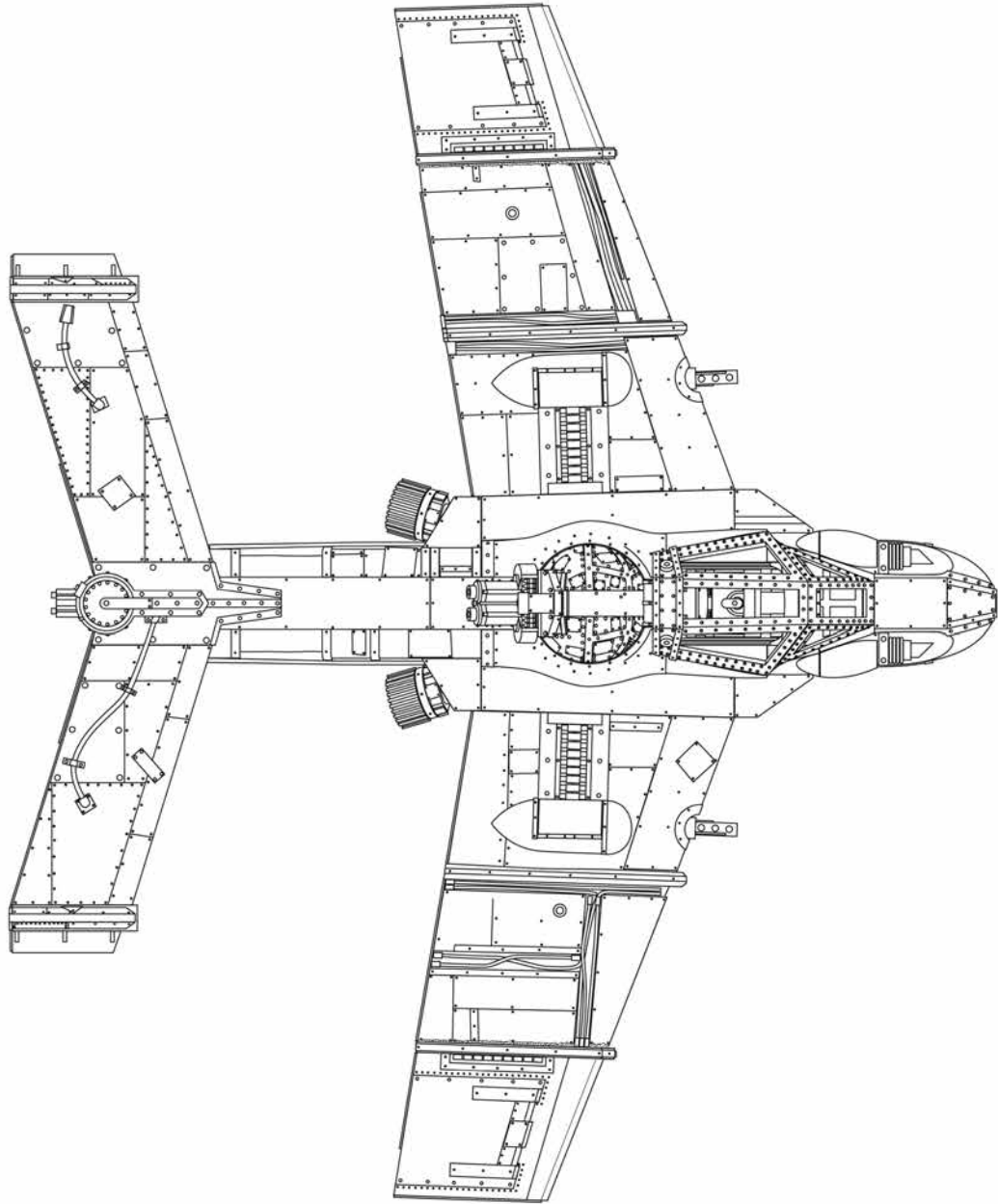
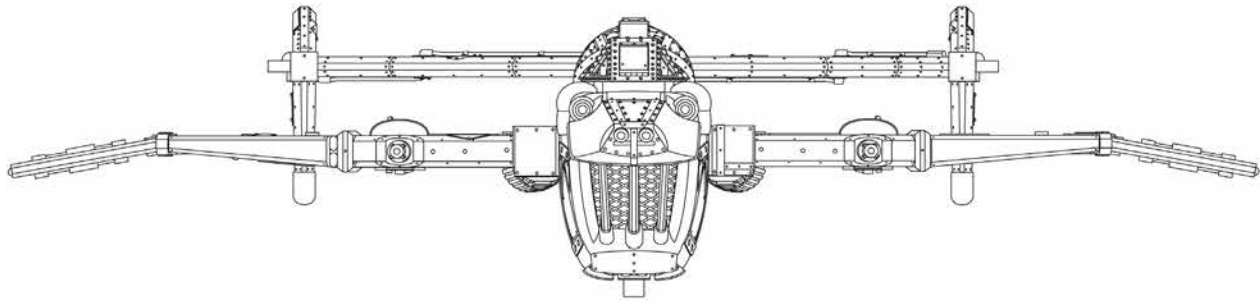
**Powerplant:** Unknown

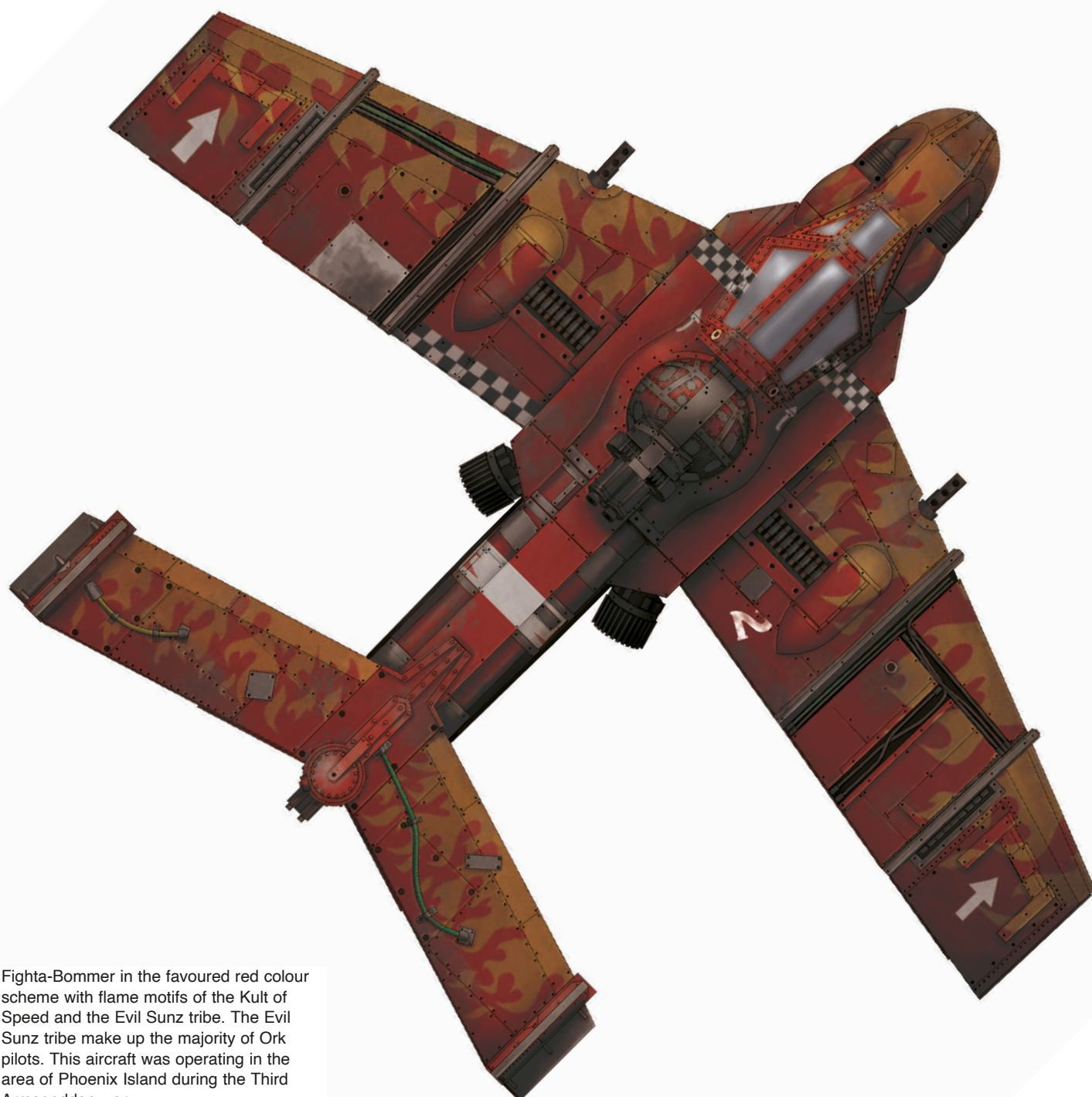
**Performance:** Maximum speed 1900kph (1188mph) at 5,000 feet; cruising speed 1400kph (875 mph); range 9,000km approx.

**Weight:** 13.5 tonnes (empty).

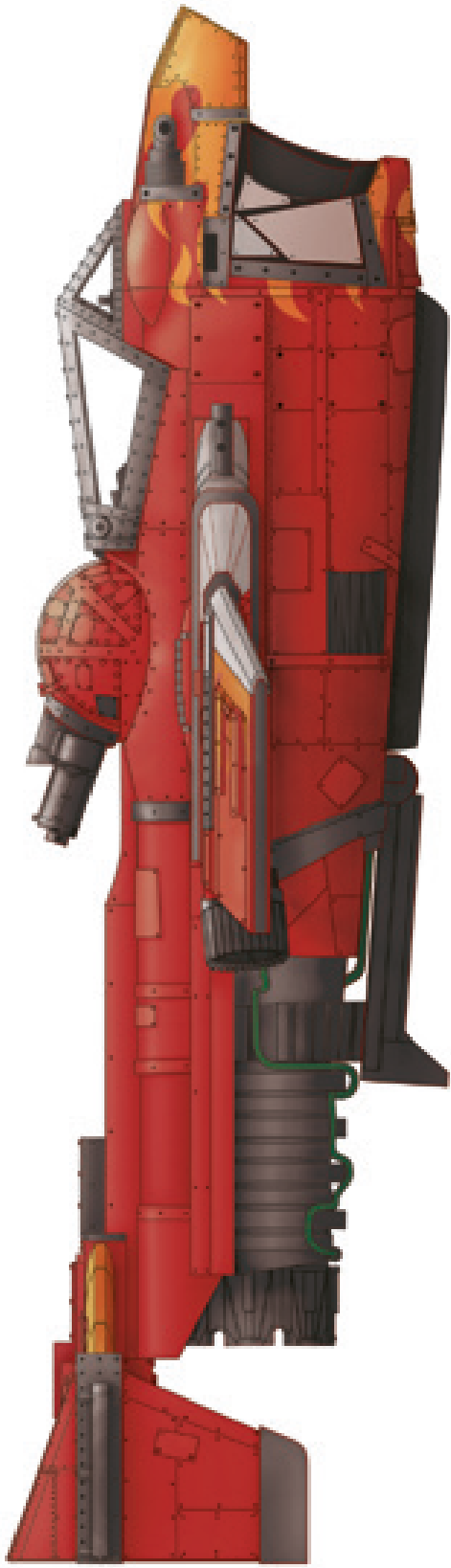
**Dimensions:** Wingspan 17.9m; length 14.2m; height 3.75m.

**Armament:** Two nose-mounted 'eavy shootas, two wing-mounted 'eavy shootas, two ball turret-mounted 'eavy shootas. Four under-wing hardpoints.

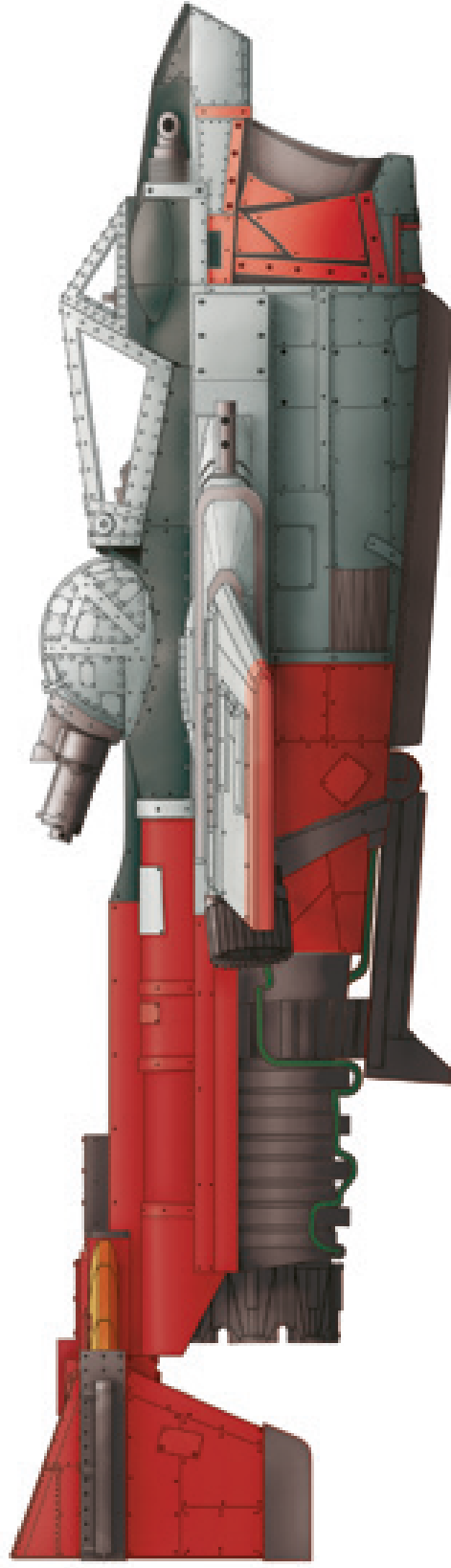




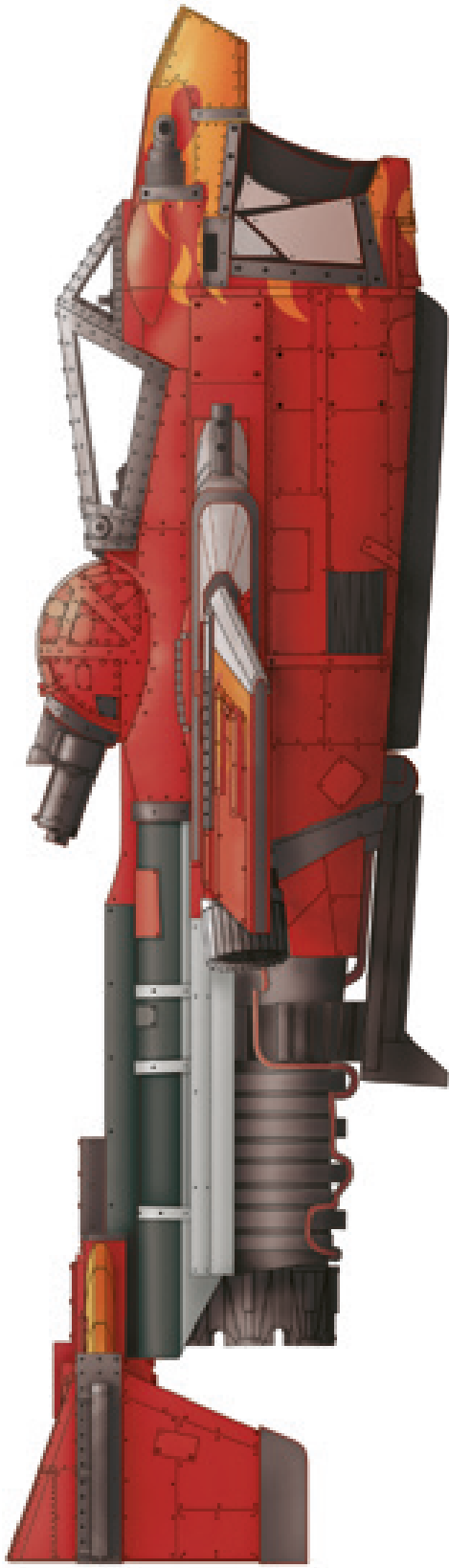
Fighta-Bommer in the favoured red colour scheme with flame motifs of the Kult of Speed and the Evil Sunz tribe. The Evil Sunz tribe make up the majority of Ork pilots. This aircraft was operating in the area of Phoenix Island during the Third Armageddon war.



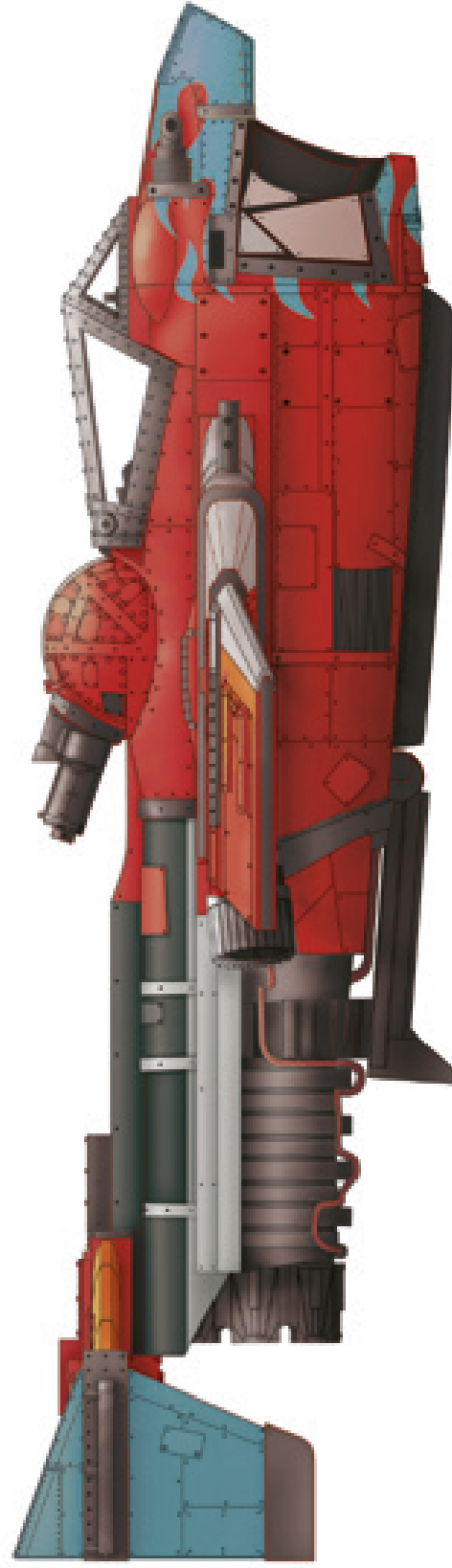
Fighta-Bommer based at Lagrot's Gulch airbase, Golgotha Prime.



Fighta-Bommer of Warlord Ugkra Badun, Levilnor IV.



Fighta-Bommer shot down over the Desolation Valley, Rynn's World.



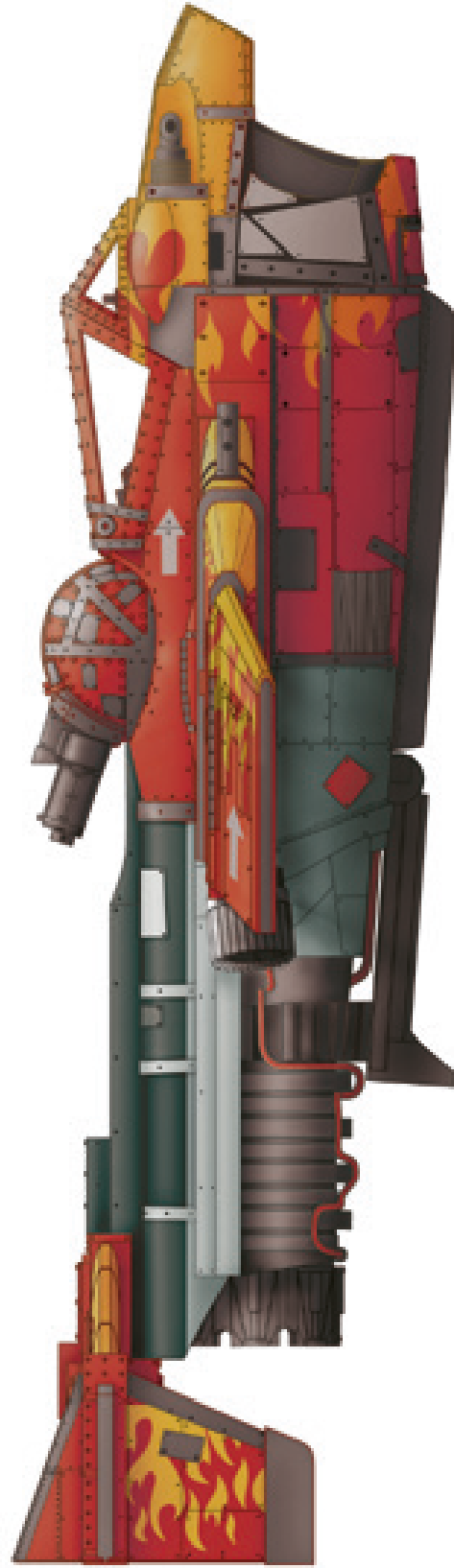
Fighta-Bommer of Warlord Krugga Ironbutz Tanka boyz, a Blood Axe tribe notorious for imitating Imperial Guard forces.



Grot bomb. Rynn's World.



Grot bomb. Armageddon.



Fighta-Bommer identified supporting Ork warbands on Medusa V.

# TAU AIRCRAFT



# BARRACUDA



## BACKGROUND

The Barracuda air superiority fighter is the Tau's most common atmospheric aircraft. Faster than the Imperial Navy's Marauder bomber, but lacking the flat out top speed of the Thunderbolt or Lightning fighter, it makes up for this due to its sophisticated electronic systems and pilot's natural talents. In a dogfight, Thunderbolts and Barracuda are very closely matched, with the Thunderbolt having the edge on speed, and the Barracuda having the manoeuvrability. The Imperium's pilots often have a hard edge of combat experience that the Tau Air Caste find hard to match.

All Tau pilots come from the Air Caste. Air Caste members live almost exclusively off-world in orbital stations and habitats. Over time their long-term exposure to lower gravity has affected their physiognomy. This means that, even when operating in a gravity well, the Air Caste have developed superior three-dimensional awareness and marginally better acceleration and gravitational tolerances than their human opponents. Physically, this makes a Tau pilot naturally better suited to the rigours of air to air combat than a human pilot, able to make tighter turns and hold them longer, and push the gravity envelope further. Utilising these advantages, the Barracuda excels in air to air combat, but this is only a part of its role. Ground attack is the second part, flying in direct support of Hunter Cadres.

A Barracuda is armed with a nose-mounted, pilot aimed, ion cannon. This is the aircraft's primary weapon for use in dogfights, backed up by two drone controlled burst cannons in the wings. For ground attacks, it is primarily armed with wing mounted missile pods. When used in a ground attack role, a Barracuda can carry additional armament of up to four

Seeker missiles. These are not controlled by the pilot but by a Markerlight operator on the ground.

All Barracudas are equipped with escape pods. In the event that the aircraft sustains serious damage, the pilot can eject. The entire cockpit capsule disconnects and has limited gravitic mobility to return the pilot safely to earth. Once on the ground, the pilot must make his own escape.

Different Air Caste Septs have been identified operating slightly different versions of the Barracuda. Some are equipped with night-fighting filters, whilst other utilise disruption pods and decoy launchers for additional protection.

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Type:** Air Superiority fighter.

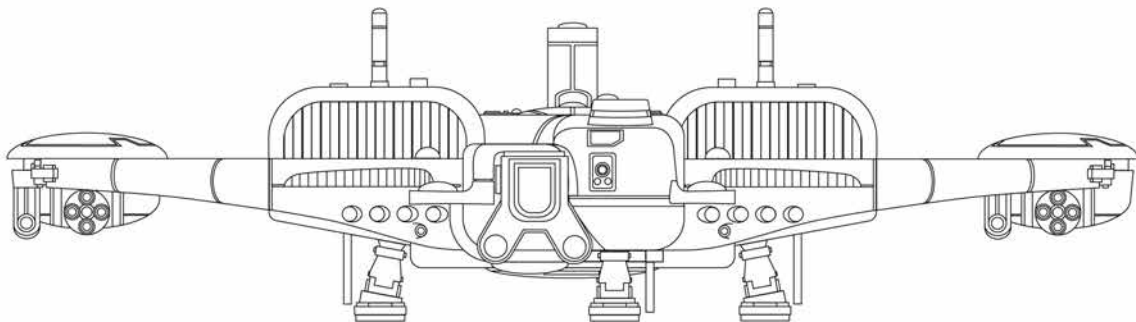
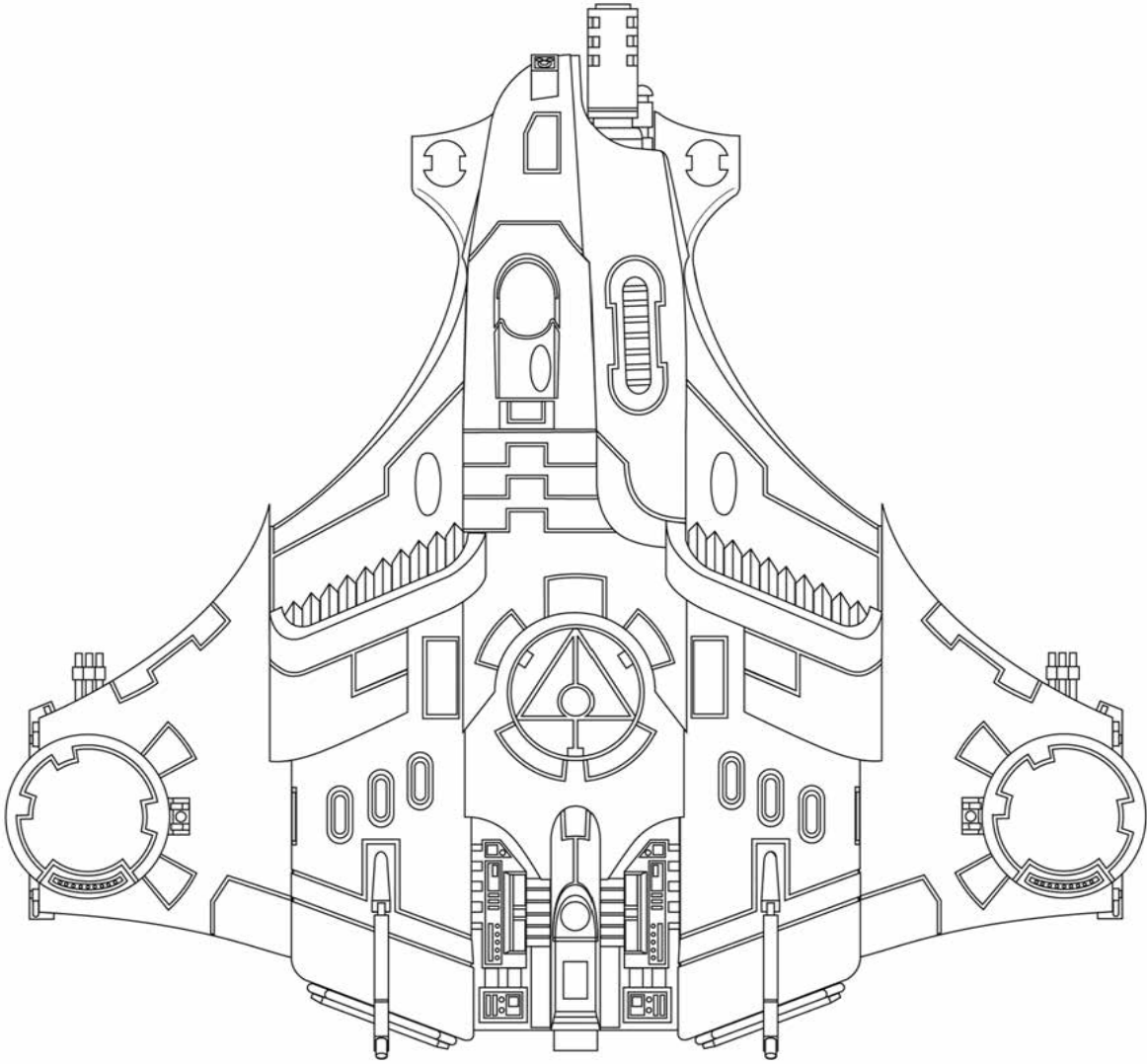
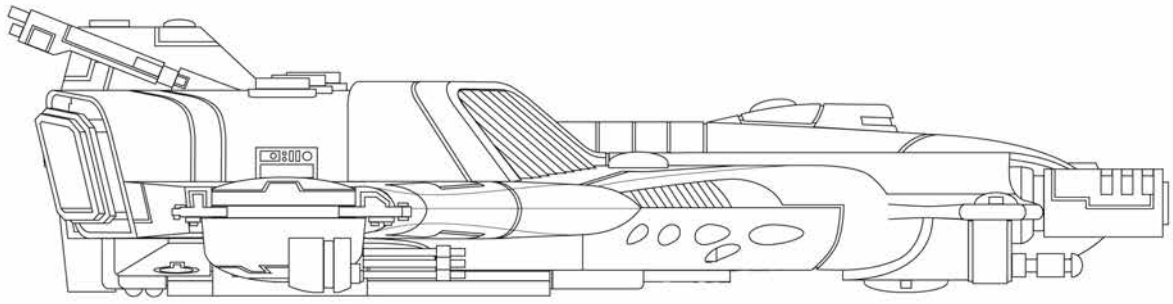
**Powerplant:** Unknown.

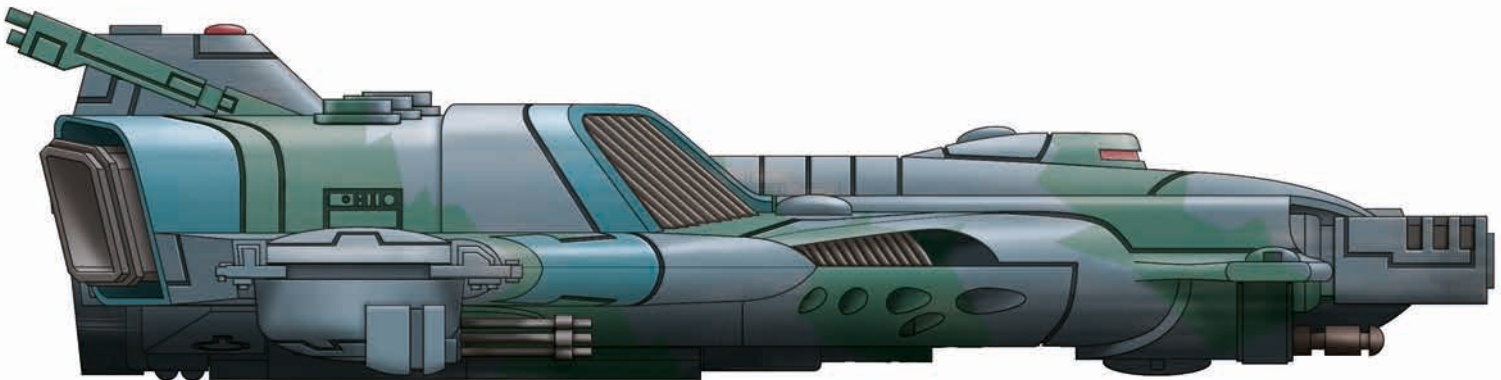
**Performance:** Maximum speed 2100kph (1312mph) at 5,000 feet; cruising speed 1400kph (875 mph); range unknown.

**Weight:** 7 tonnes (empty).

**Dimensions:** Wingspan 12.5m; length 11.4m; height 3.25m.

**Armament:** Nose-mounted ion cannon, two wing-mounted missile pods, two wing-mounted drone-controlled burst cannons, missile bay for four Seeker missiles.





The Barracuda is the standard frontline fighter of the Tau's Air Cadres. Small, mobile and well-armed for dogfighting or, when equipped with additional Seeker missiles for ground support, the Barracuda is a direct match for the Imperial Navy's main fighters. It is generally deployed in the same battlefield roles.

The Barracuda's main armament is its ion cannon, off-set in the nose, this heavy weapon is mainly used to engage other aircraft. The Barracuda's second armament is its wing-mounted missile pods. The pods carry small, rapid firing, direct fire missiles but ammunition is limited due to weight restrictions. Finally, for all-round protection the Barracuda has wing-mounted, drone-controlled burst cannons. These are generally used in dogfights to provide defensive fire against enemy fighters.

The aircraft shown here is a Barracuda identified supporting Hunter Cadre El'Corri during the second battle of Nimbosa City, on Nimbosa. During the Nimbosa campaign Tau forces, under Commander Brightsword, attacked and captured the Imperial colony after protracted fighting against the armed colonists. It is thought that no colonists survived the first battle of Nimbosa City. The Imperial response to the loss of Nimbosa was to launch a counter-invasion, and Nimbosa City was one of the invasion's targets. Heavy fighting took place against Tau Hunter cadres who had fortified their positions amongst the already devastated city.

The 167th Turian Imperial Guard regiment, supported by Imperial Navy fighter and bomber wings, and spearhead by an Imperial Fists strike force, attempted a landing close to Nimbosa City. A four day battle ensued.

The Tau's defences were strengthened by the deployment of a full Air cadre, approximately 25 Tau aircraft were identified over the course of the battle. The Barracuda's main role was to intercept the Imperial Navy's bomber wing and escorting fighters, as the Marauders sought to destroy the Tau strongpoints amongst the ruins below.

The effectiveness of the Tau's aerial defense proved a crucial factor in the outcome of the battle. The loss of 15 Marauder bombers over the four days meant that the Guardsmen on the ground lacked the heavy bomber support they were relying on, and their attack was halted by fierce street-fighting.

Eventually, the Turian regiment was forced to withdraw with heavy losses, and was later annihilated at the Koloth Gorge massacre, which saw the final defeat of the Imperium's attempt to recapture the Nimbosa colony.

This aircraft was confirmed as shot down over Nimbosa City on day three of the battle.



The nose and cockpit of this Barracuda bear the aircraft's identification markings. Ordo Dialogus research believes that the larger symbol on the nose roughly represents the fourth digit in the Tau's numeric system.

The multiple slash markings on the rear of the cockpit may be the rank of the Air Caste pilot who crews this aircraft, although it might also designate the aircraft's sub-unit within the Air cadre.

The writing has not been translated, but might be a warning or instruction stencil, especially as it is on top of the cockpit's hatch. Direct comparison with human norms are impossible.





Barracuda, deployed against Orks warbands on Fi'rios.



Barracuda, shot down over the Iracunda Isthmus, T'ros.



Barracuda of the D'yanoi colony. Deployed against Tyrannids on the arctic world of Ik'yabar.



Barracuda of the Dalylth Prime defence force.

# TIGER SHARK



## BACKGROUND

The Tiger Shark is the Barracuda's larger cousin. It is a large aircraft deployed in the fighter-bomber role. Often encountered flying in support of Tau Hunter Cadres during major operations, it is faster and more manoeuvrable than the Imperium's direct equivalent – the Marauder bomber - but the Tiger Shark lacks the large bomb payload.

Tiger Sharks are never as numerous as the Barracuda, but have many features and systems in common with it. All crew come from the Air Caste, giving them the natural advantage of superior three-dimensional awareness and tolerance for higher acceleration speeds and more Gs in the turn than a human pilot. Like the Barracuda, different Air Caste Septs operate slightly different versions. Other Tiger Shark variants have been identified armed with multiple burst cannons and Seeker missiles.

The Tiger Shark's main role seems to be the deployment of drones. Its drone racks can deploy a shower of remote weapons platforms anywhere over the battlefield, as well as strafing with its ion cannons and wing-mounted missile pods. It is armed with ion-cannons and missile pods for ground attacks, and drone-controlled burst cannons for defence against enemy fighters, although a flight of Tiger Sharks will usually also be accompanied by Barracudas as fighter cover.

The aircraft has two crew, a pilot and a navigator/weapons operator. Their cockpit is also an escape pod, which can detach from the aircraft's fuselage and has limited gravitic mobility to bring the crew safely back to the ground.

On Taros, Tiger Sharks supported Tau operations as a rapid response force. Flying from well-hidden bases on the Iracunda Isthmus, Tiger Sharks were often the first Tau forces to respond to the Imperial Guard's advances, quickly seeding an area with Drone squadrons, whilst other Tau ground forces were moved into place. Tiger Sharks were the first Tau forces to reach hydro-processing plant 23-30 after the Elysian Drop Troops' surprise attack, quickly reinforcing the garrison with Drone squadrons.

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Type:** Bomber.

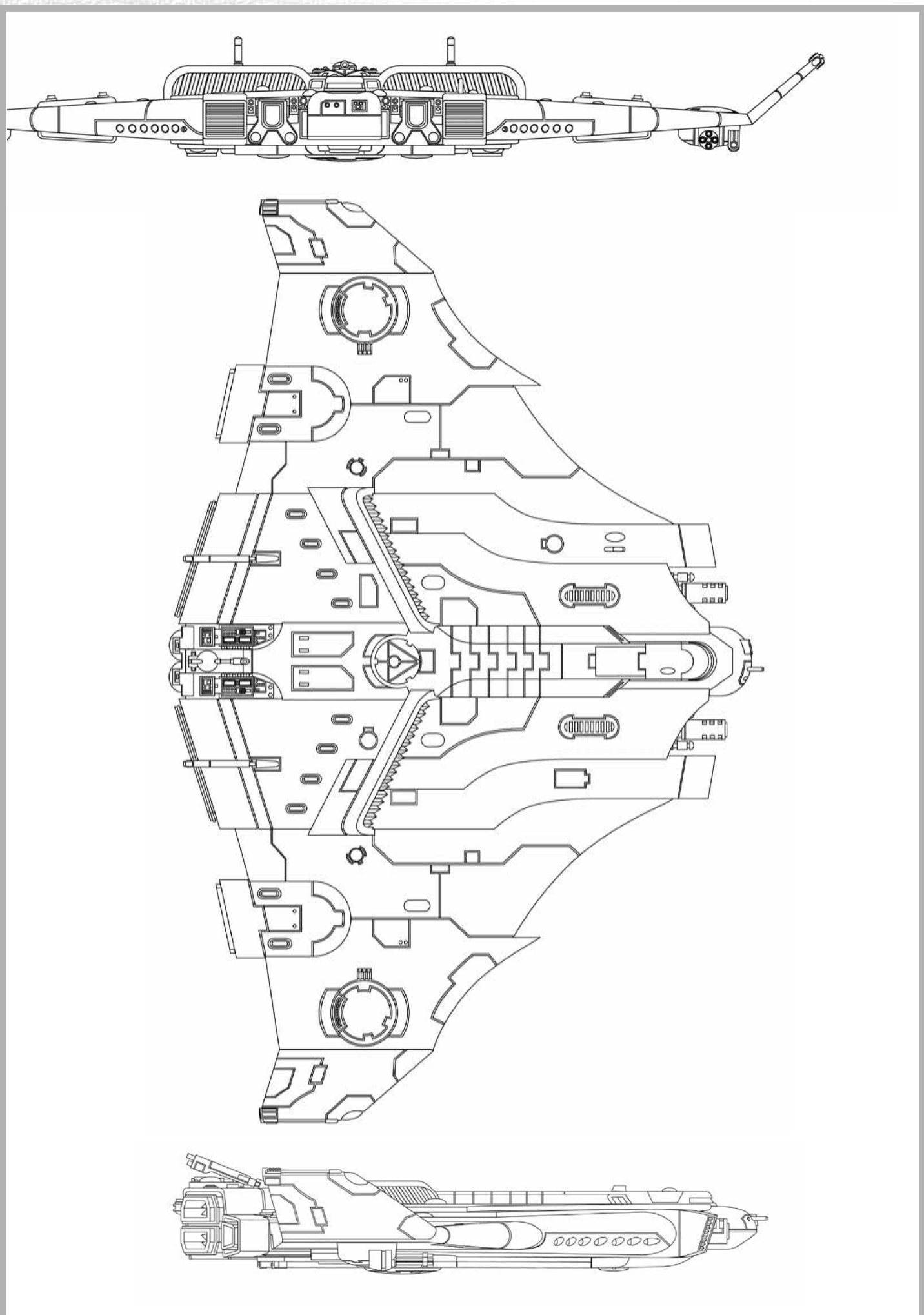
**Powerplant:** Unknown.

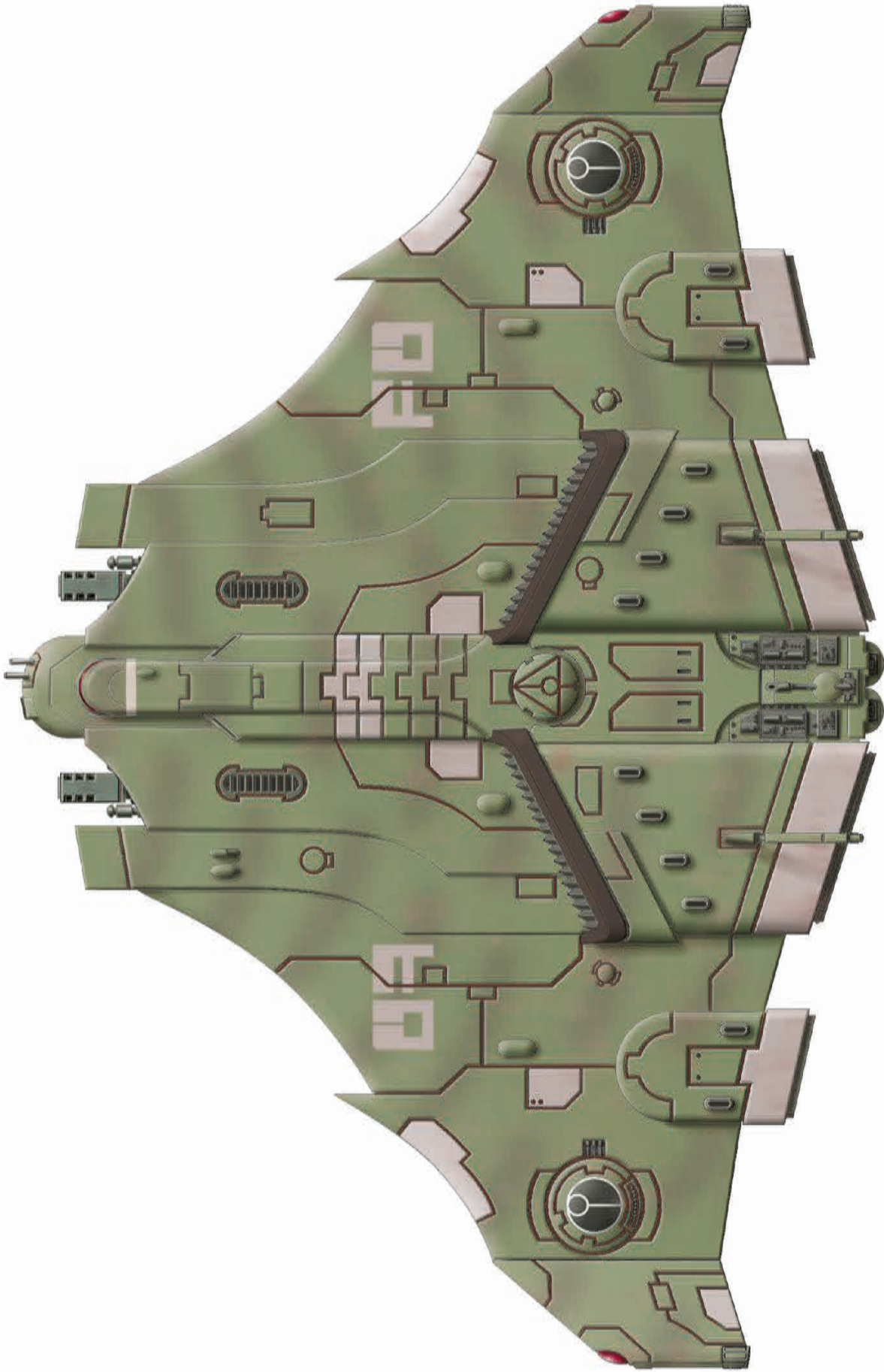
**Performance:** Maximum speed 2100kph (1312mph) at 5,000 feet; cruising speed 1400kph (875 mph); range unknown.

**Weight:** 25 tonnes (empty).

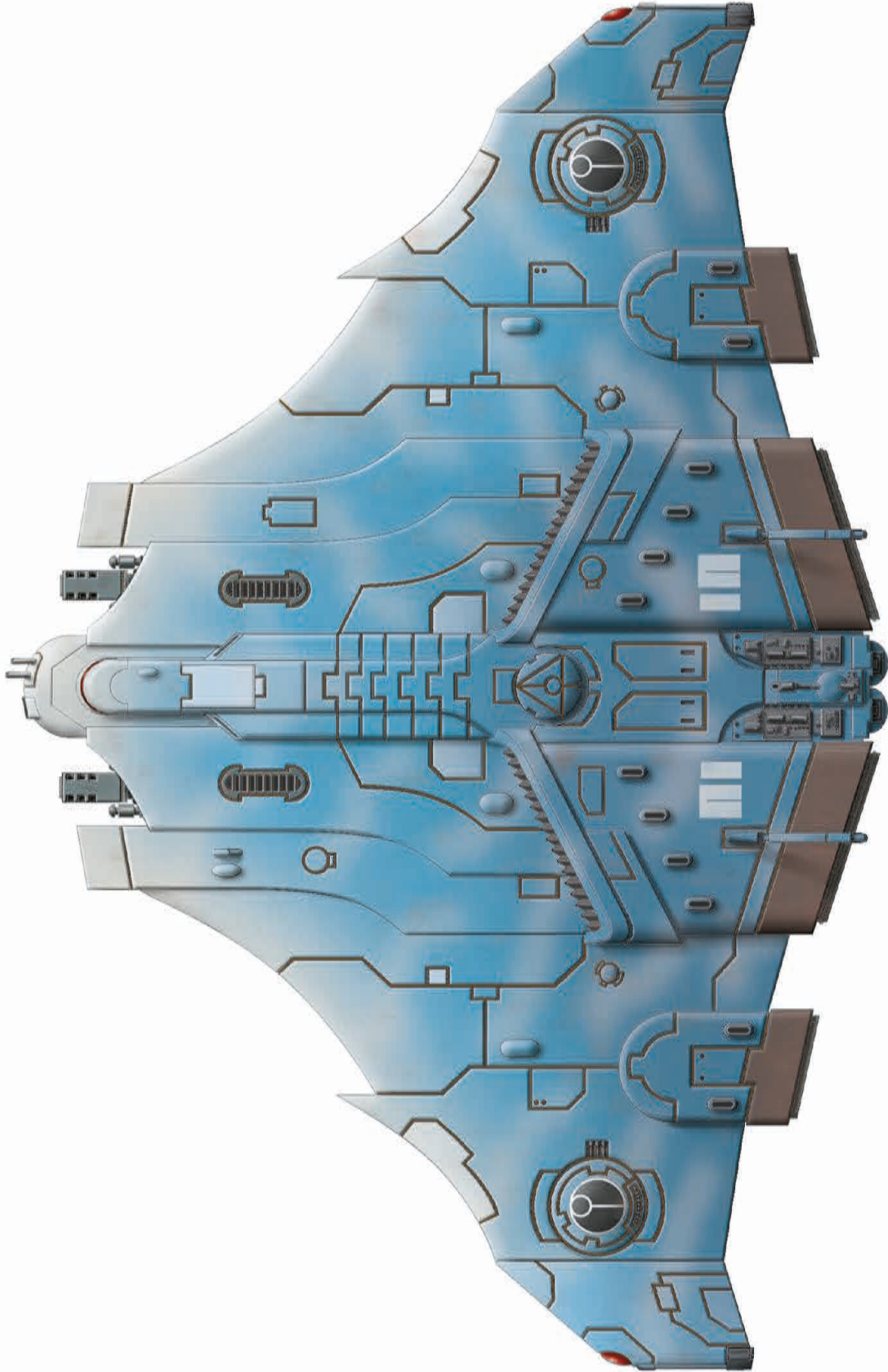
**Dimensions:** Wingspan 21; length 14.1m; height 2.31m.

**Armament:** Two ion cannons, two wing-mounted missile pods, two wing-mounted drone-controlled burst cannons, missile bay for six Seeker missiles.

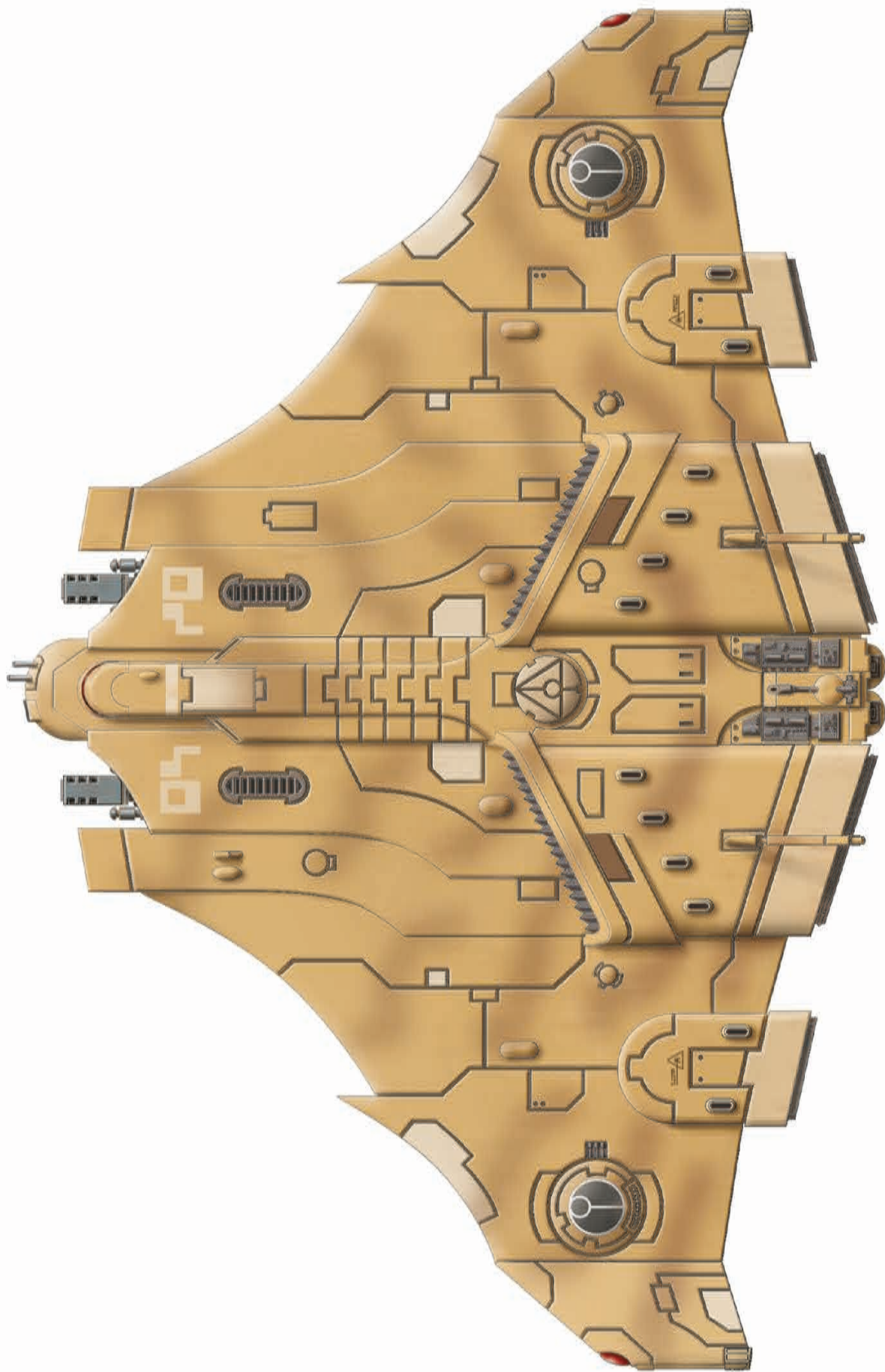




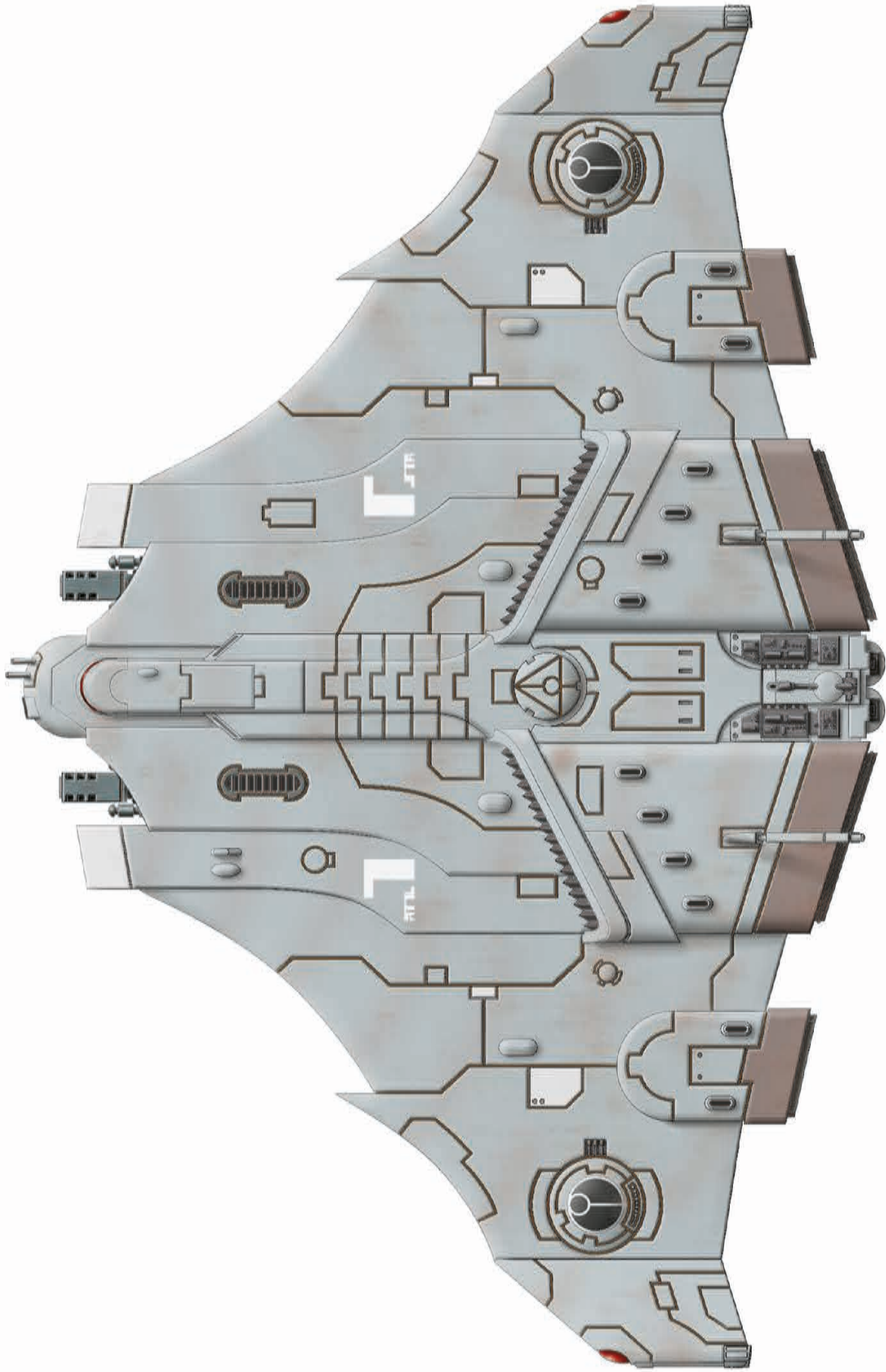
Tiger Shark, deployed on Fi'rios.



Tigershark, part of the Dailyth defence force.



Tigershark, deployed during the T'ros campaign.



Tigerhawk, deployed during the Koloth Gorge Massacre, Nimboosa.

# TIGER SHARK AX-1-0



The Tiger Shark AX-1-0 is a new variant of the standard aircraft, re-armed for a ground attack role. The Tau Air caste deployed its new variant for the first time on Taros, where the Imperial Navy command codified it as the AX-1-0. Only one aircraft was encountered, but since then its use has spread to other war zones on the fringes of the Tau Empire.

The aircraft is a heavily armed Tiger Shark, replacing all its drone racks and ion cannons with two heavy railguns and a Seeker missile array. These massive weapons, usually mounted on the far larger Manta, turn the Tiger Shark into a formidable ground attack bomber, capable of engaging and destroying super heavy tanks and Titans. It is thought that the AX-1-0 was developed as a direct response to the Imperium's largest Titans. Until the Taros campaign, the Tau had very few weapons capable of stopping the Imperium's greatest war machines. But now it seems that the Air Caste and Earth Caste had secretly been developing a weapon capable of countering this threat.

It was during the breakthrough to the Iracunda Isthmus that the Tau first unleashed their latest weapon, with spectacular results. The sudden destruction of the Warhound Titan *Advensor Primaris* by a Tiger Shark attack caused the remaining Titans to be withdrawn from the frontline. Since its first success the AX-1-0 has seen service with other Tau Air cadres supporting the Third Sphere expansion. The aircraft has proved itself a valuable addition to the Tau's armoury, and its railguns are

capable of engaging and destroying just about any ground target.

As yet, AX-1-0 have not been encountered in large numbers, and they have only been used for special missions against specific hard targets that other Tau weaponry is not suited to engaging. Targets include enemy command and communication bunkers, hardened weapon positions, missile silos and super heavy vehicles.

The AX-1-0 is a large and comparatively cumbersome aircraft, and so must be deployed with a fighter escort for its own protection. The AX-1-0's potent weaponry makes it a priority target for enemy pilots and anti-aircraft crews.

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Type:** Ground Attack Bomber.

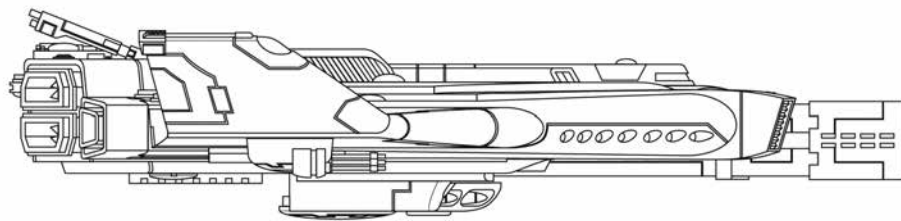
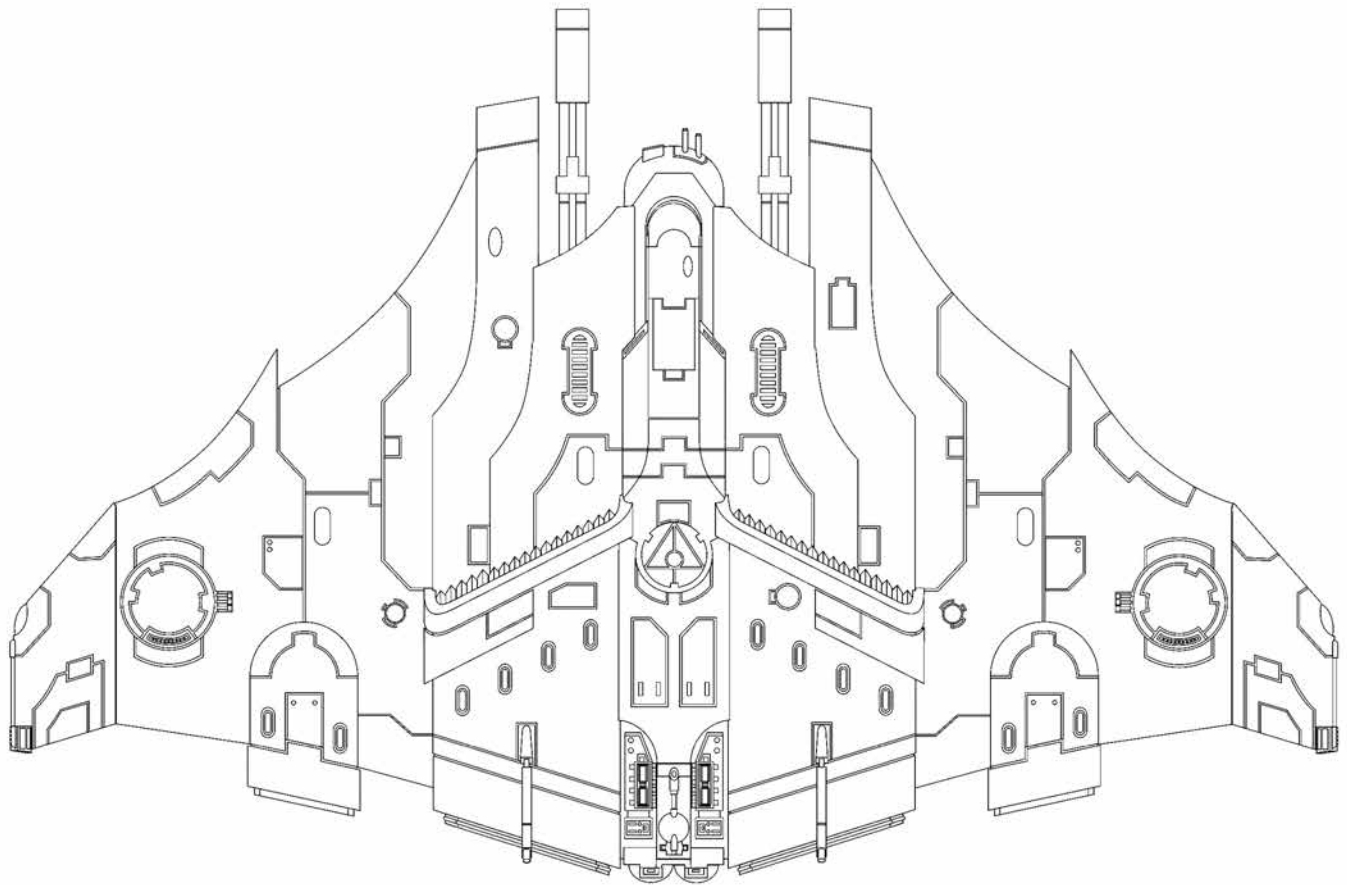
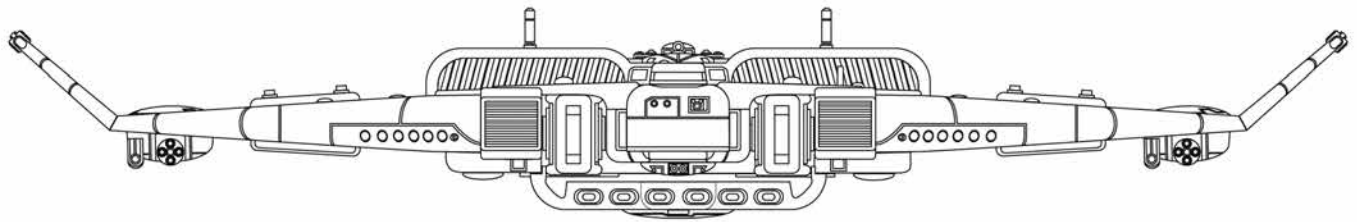
**Powerplant:** Unknown.

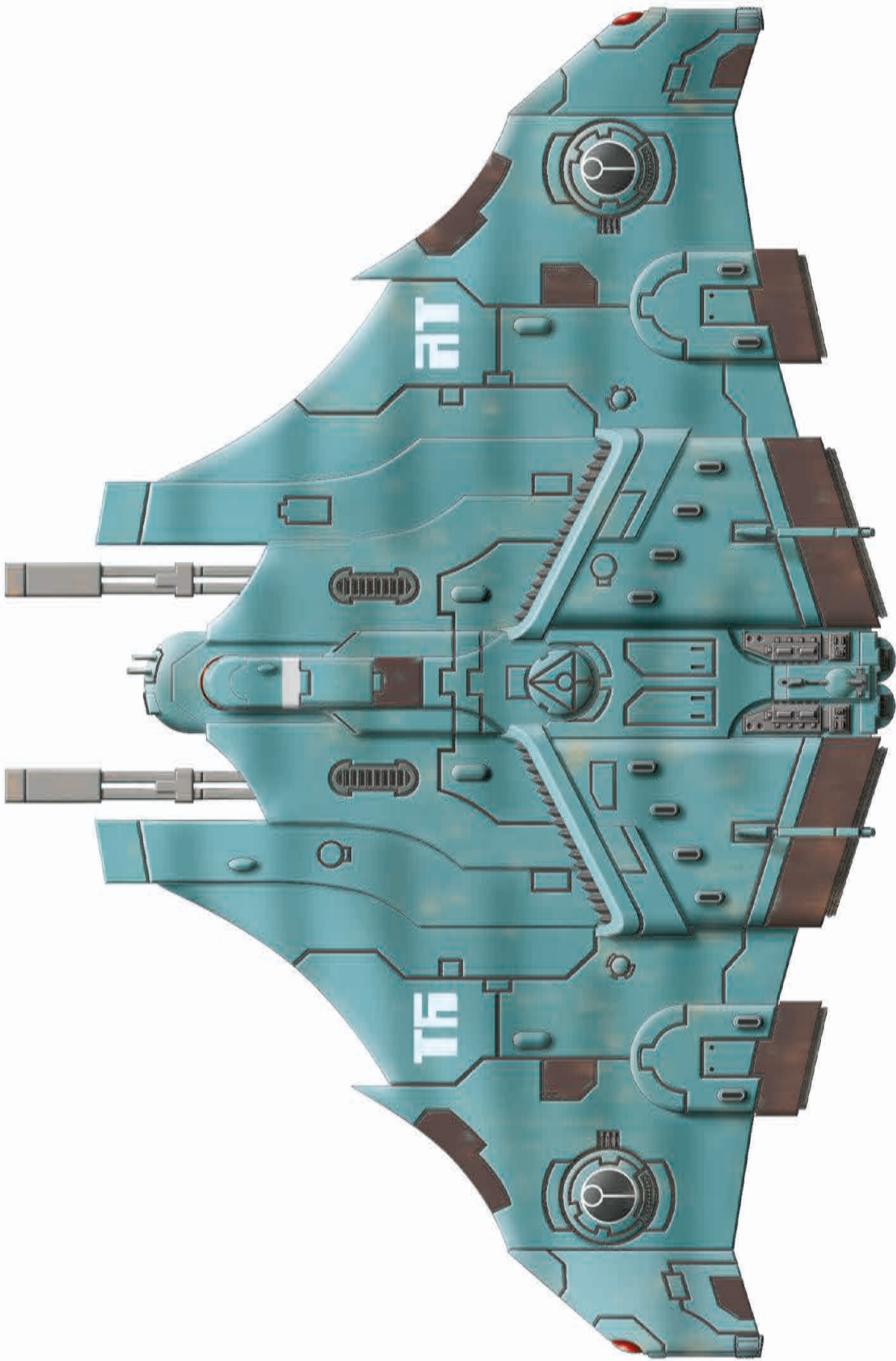
**Performance:** Maximum speed 2050kph (1312mph) at 5,000 feet; cruising speed 1400kph (875 mph); range unknown.

**Weight:** 26 tonnes (empty).

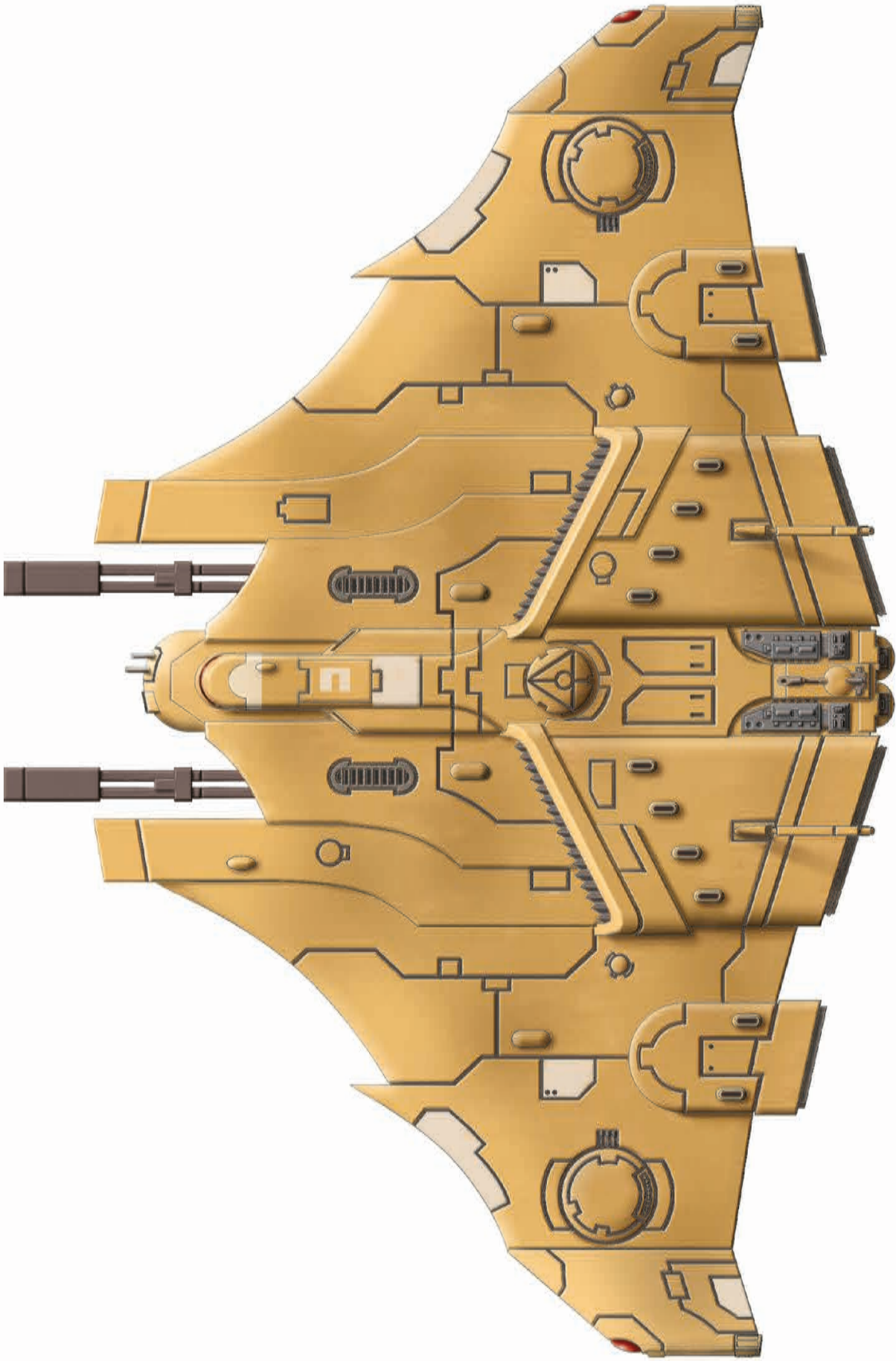
**Dimensions:** Wingspan 21; length 13.2m; height 2.31m.

**Armament:** Two heavy railguns, two wing-mounted missile pods, two wing-mounted drone-controlled burst cannons, missile bay for six Seeker missiles.





Tiger Shark AX-1-0, part of Commander Shadowsun's force during a raid of Dyrnos III.



Tiger Shark AX-1-0. It bears no Sept markings and may be a newly built aircraft not yet issued for service.

# ORCA



## BACKGROUND

The Orca is a dedicated orbital transport vehicle – a shuttle for moving troops, equipment and supplies from spaceships in orbit to a planet's surface. Unlike the Space Marine Thunderhawk gunship, or the Tau's own far larger Manta, the Orca is not a front line combat vehicle, armed and armoured to take part in a battle. The Orca is only equipped for self-defence. Its primary function is transportation.

An Orca's large hold can carry up to 48 Tau Fire Warriors and their equipment. Two or three Orcas can transport an entire Hunter Cadre's worth of troops, drones and battlesuits onto a planet's surface. These would not usually be dropped directly in combat, but would more likely be inserted onto the planet's surface some distance from the enemy to take up positions before a battle. During large planetary invasion operations, the Orca provides important support to the Manta. Whilst Mantas transport the bulk of the Tau forces, Orcas allow a Shas'o to be flexible in the deployment of his Hunter Cadres, using the Orca for special missions.

On dangerous missions, or if they have to approach a battlefield, a flight of Orcas will be defended by Barracudas, whose job is to intercept enemy fighters or engage ground targets that threaten an Orca and its cargo. The Orca's ventral, pop-down turret mounted weaponry is not well suited to dog-fighting, although it provides some protection from interceptors attacking from below, climbing to intercept the descending Orca. The weaponry's main use is for sweeping a landing zone with fire prior to a landing.

Using the Tau's anti-grav technology, and powered by quad ramjets, the Orca is fast and highly manoeuvrable for its size and bulky appearance.

The Orca is crewed by a single Air Caste pilot, and its command centre is controlled by two Fire Caste operators. A Tau commander, or Ethereal, can oversee operations from there.

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Type:** Dropship.

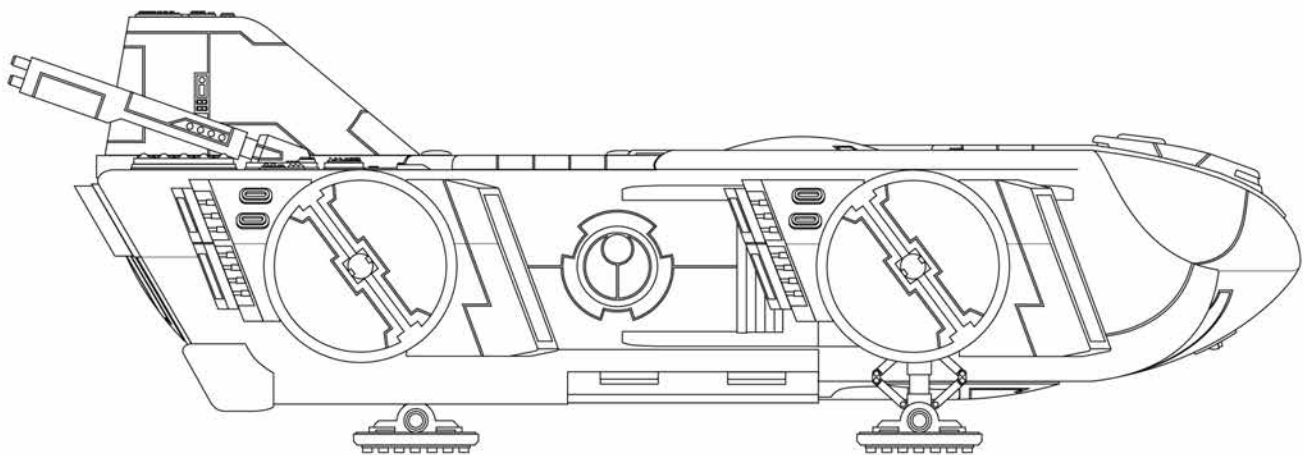
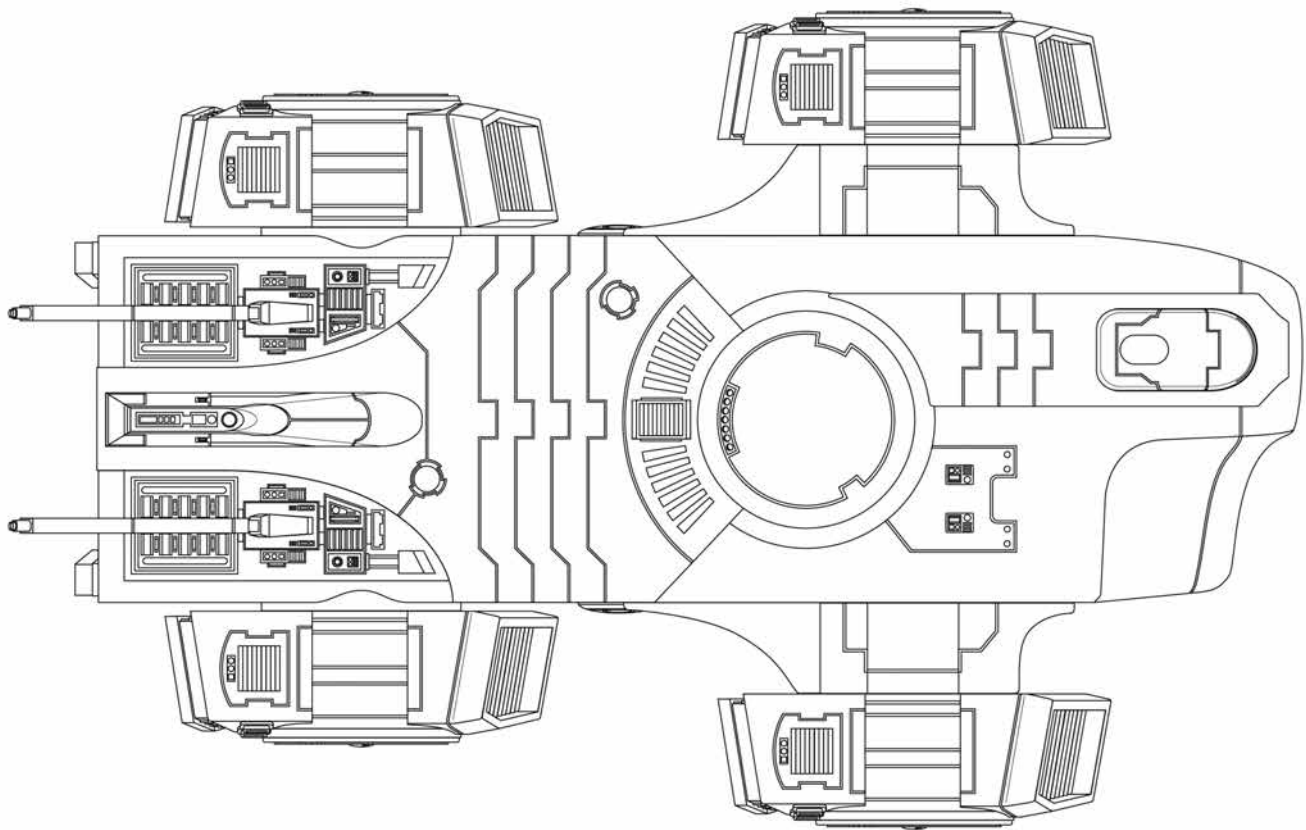
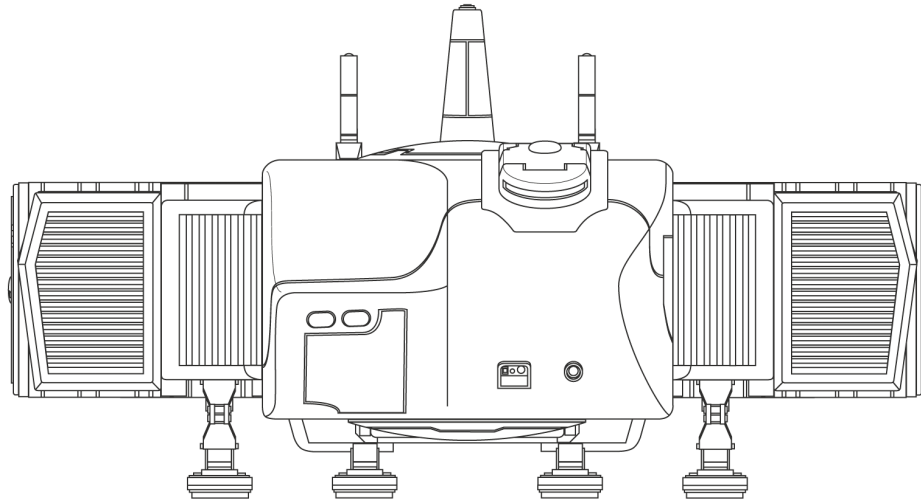
**Powerplant:** Unknown.

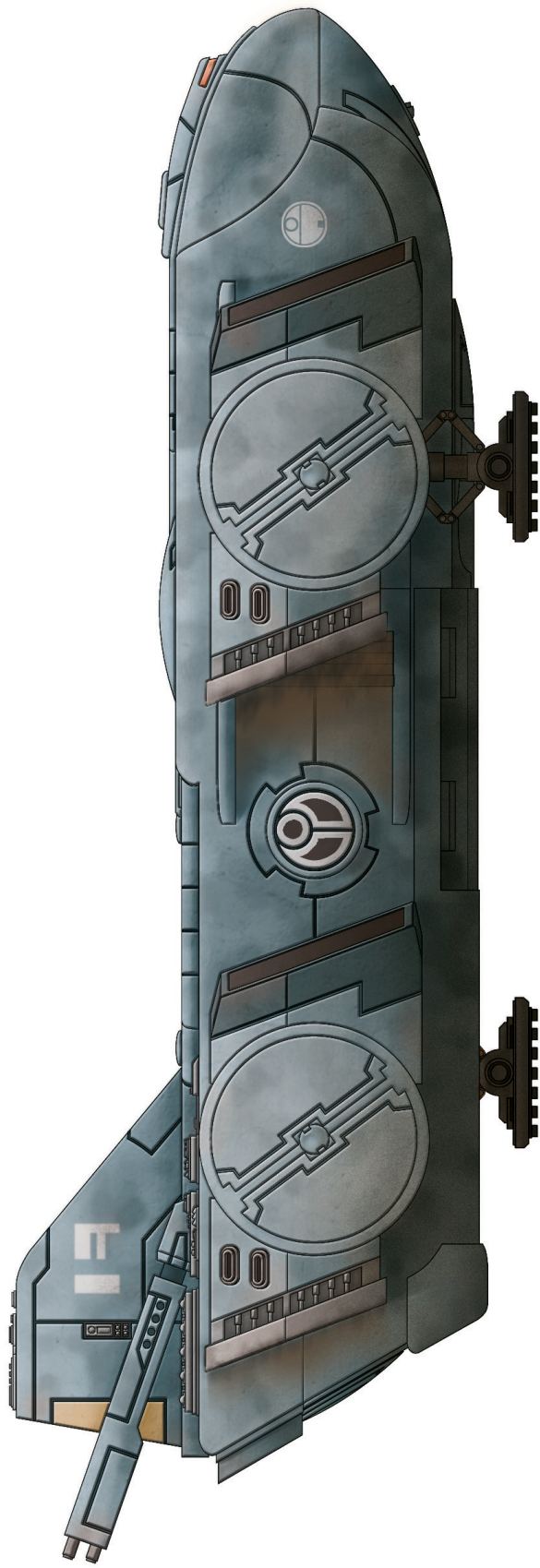
**Performance:** Maximum speed 2000kph (1250mph) at 5,000 feet; cruising speed 1200kph (780 mph); range unknown.

**Weight:** 25 tonnes (empty).

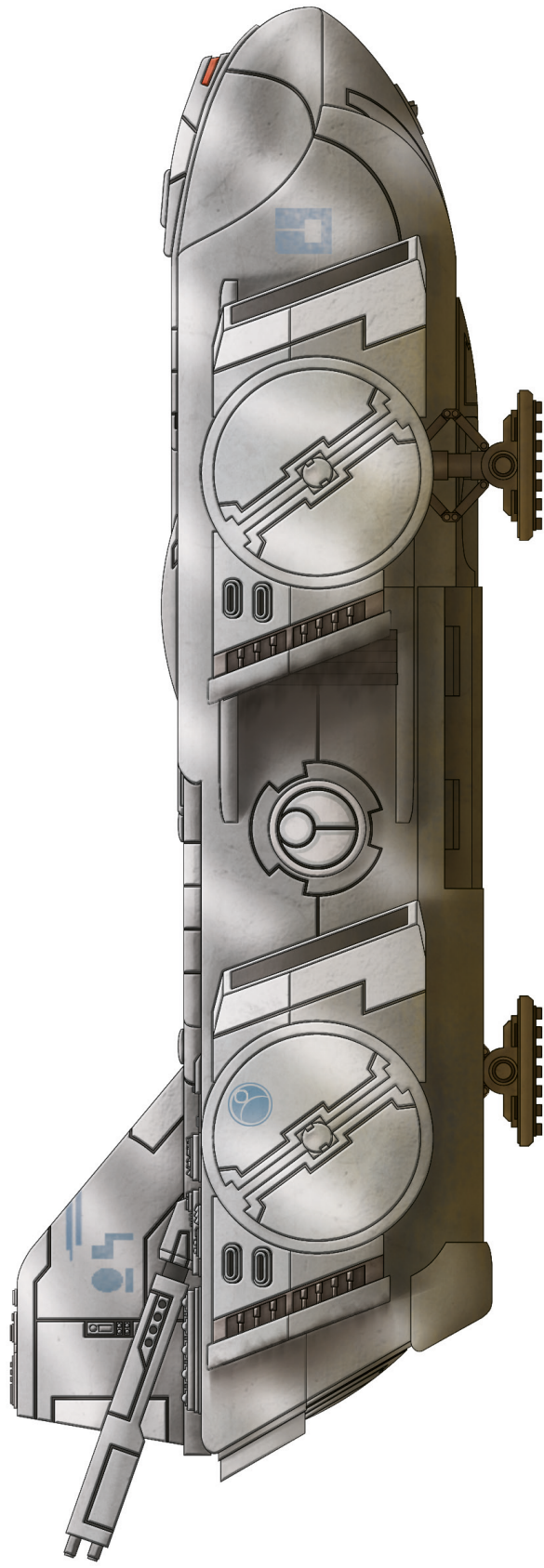
**Dimensions:** Wingspan 14m; length 21.45m; height 4.95m.

**Armament:** Two burst cannons and a missile pod mounted in a drop-down ventral turret.

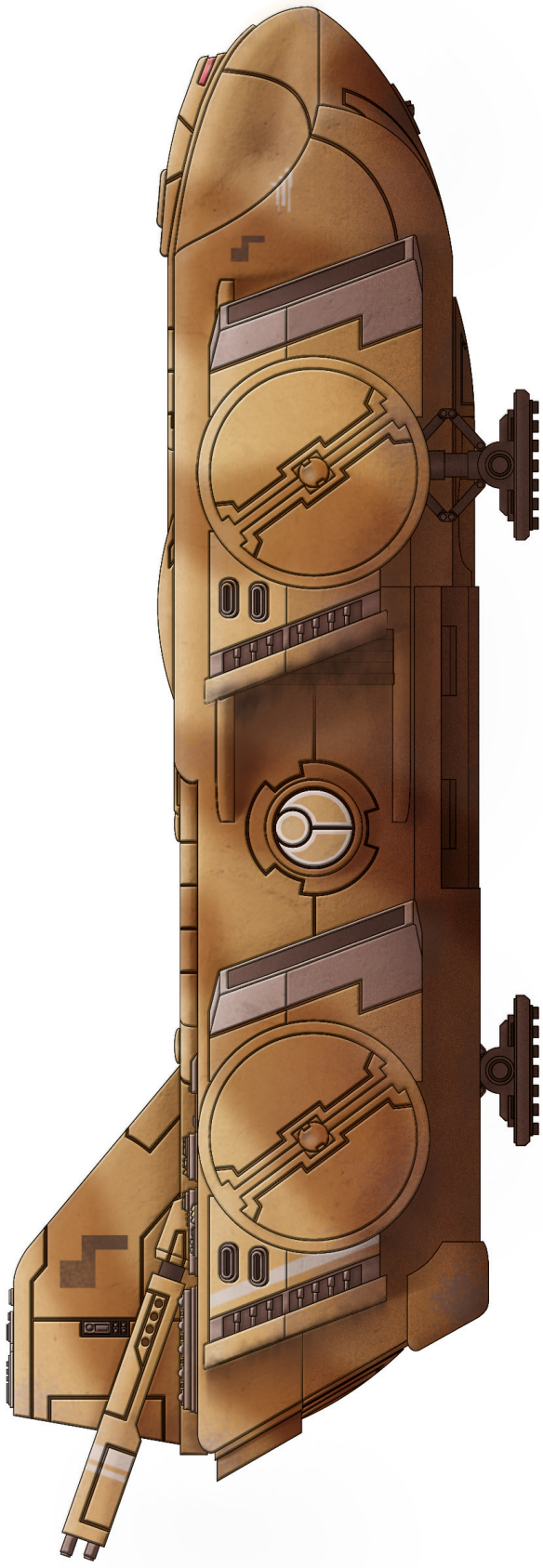




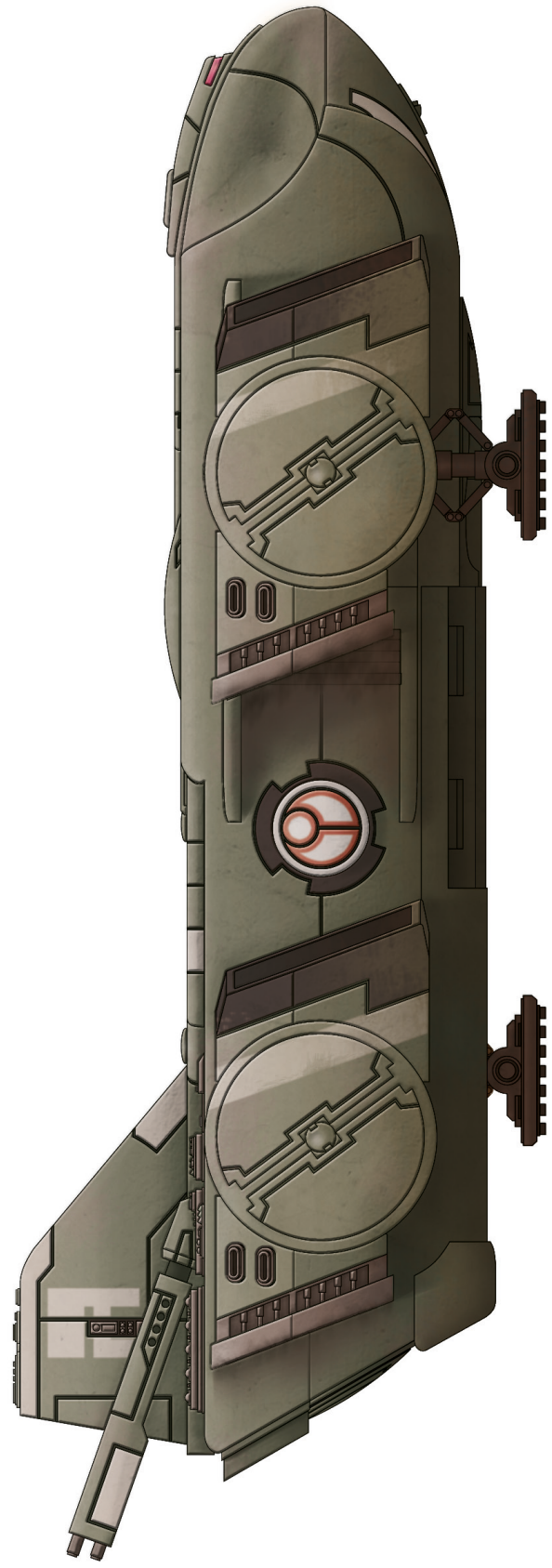
Orca dropship, part of the Nimbosa task force.



Orca dropship supporting Tau forces fighting Tyranids on Ikyabar.



Orca dropship deployed during the Tyros campaign.



Orca dropship deployed against Ork warbands on Firios.

# MANTA



## BACKGROUND

The Manta is the Tau's super-heavy dropship, it is so large that it is actually a small spacecraft. The Manta is the Tau's closest equivalent to the Imperium's Titans or Ork Gargants, and carries comparable firepower. It is well armed and armoured for use in front line combat, where it is expected to deploy and fight as an attack craft.

A Manta carries a fearsome amount of firepower. Its main weapons are twin heavy railguns. These guns fire a fin-stabilised round for extra lift (and therefore extra range) whilst in an atmosphere. The heavy railgun's sub-munitions shell is equipped with a drone processor, which is programmed to direct the shell to its target. This is mostly used during starship combat, to find weak points in the armour of enemy ships (sub-munitions lacking the penetrating power of the standard round), but is also useful in ground combat. As back-up to the main weapons, the Manta mounts twin ion cannon batteries in its wings. These provide shorter ranged saturation fire when in the thick of battle.

The rest of the Manta's arsenal consists of prow-mounted launch ports for up to ten Seeker missiles. These can be controlled by the crew, or by other Markerlight operators on the ground. The Manta's last weapons are its 16 drone-controlled burst cannon turrets. These are positioned all around the Manta's hull for close defence whilst landed and as anti-aircraft weapons when in flight. The turrets are positioned so that all angles of approach are covered by multiple burst cannons.

The Manta is the Tau's smallest interstellar capable spacecraft. It has limited etherdrive capacity, but because of its size, a Manta can only make very short hops, restricting its use. For longer trips it must be transported inside the far larger carriers. As a spacecraft, Mantas are entirely crewed by members of the Air Caste.

As well as its firepower, the Manta has a large transport capacity. The ship's main body is split into two transport decks. The upper deck holds troops or battlesuits, whilst the cavernous lower deck can hold up to four (fully loaded) Devilfish or Hammerheads. The entire lower transport deck is an elevator, which is lowered to allow access. It can also be fitted to carry extra troops, battlesuits, Kroot, or just about any vehicle or equipment operated by the Fire Caste.

As well as its own cockpit, each Manta also contains a sophisticated command bridge. From here a Tau commander can oversee battlefield operations.

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Type:** Super-heavy Dropship.

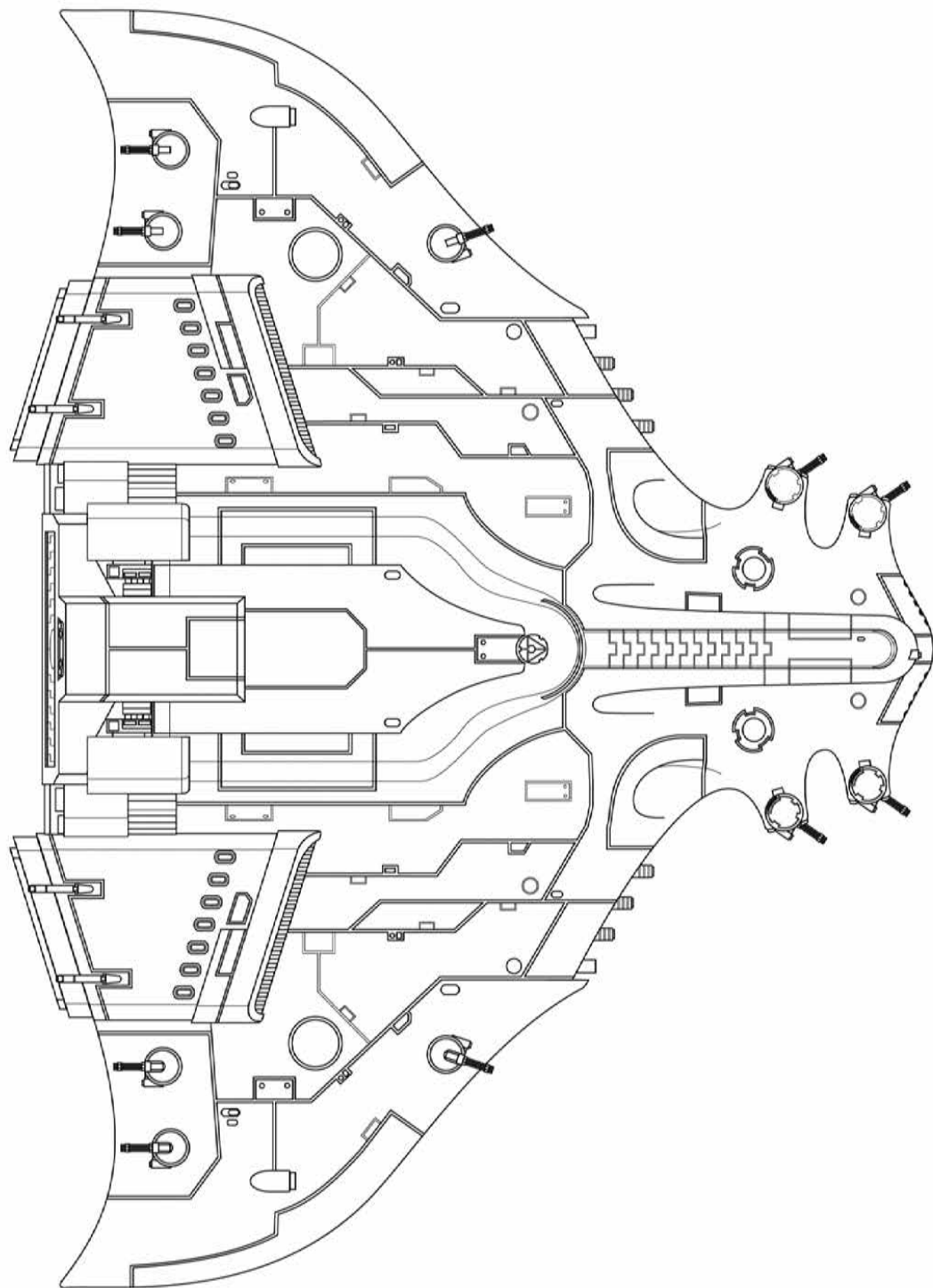
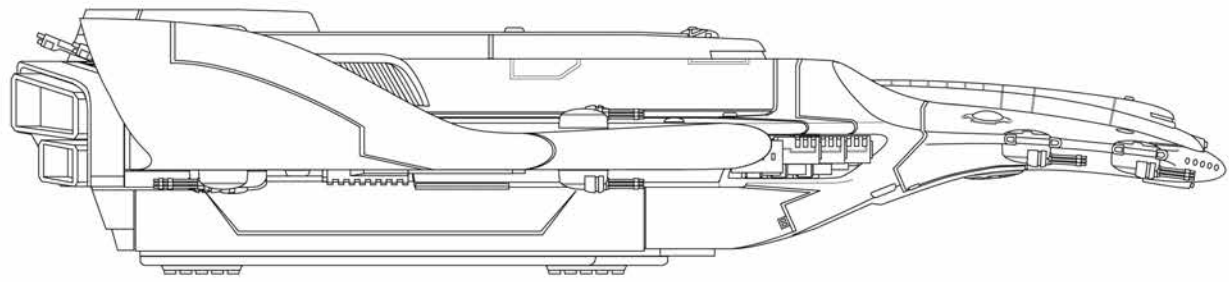
**Powerplant:** Unknown.

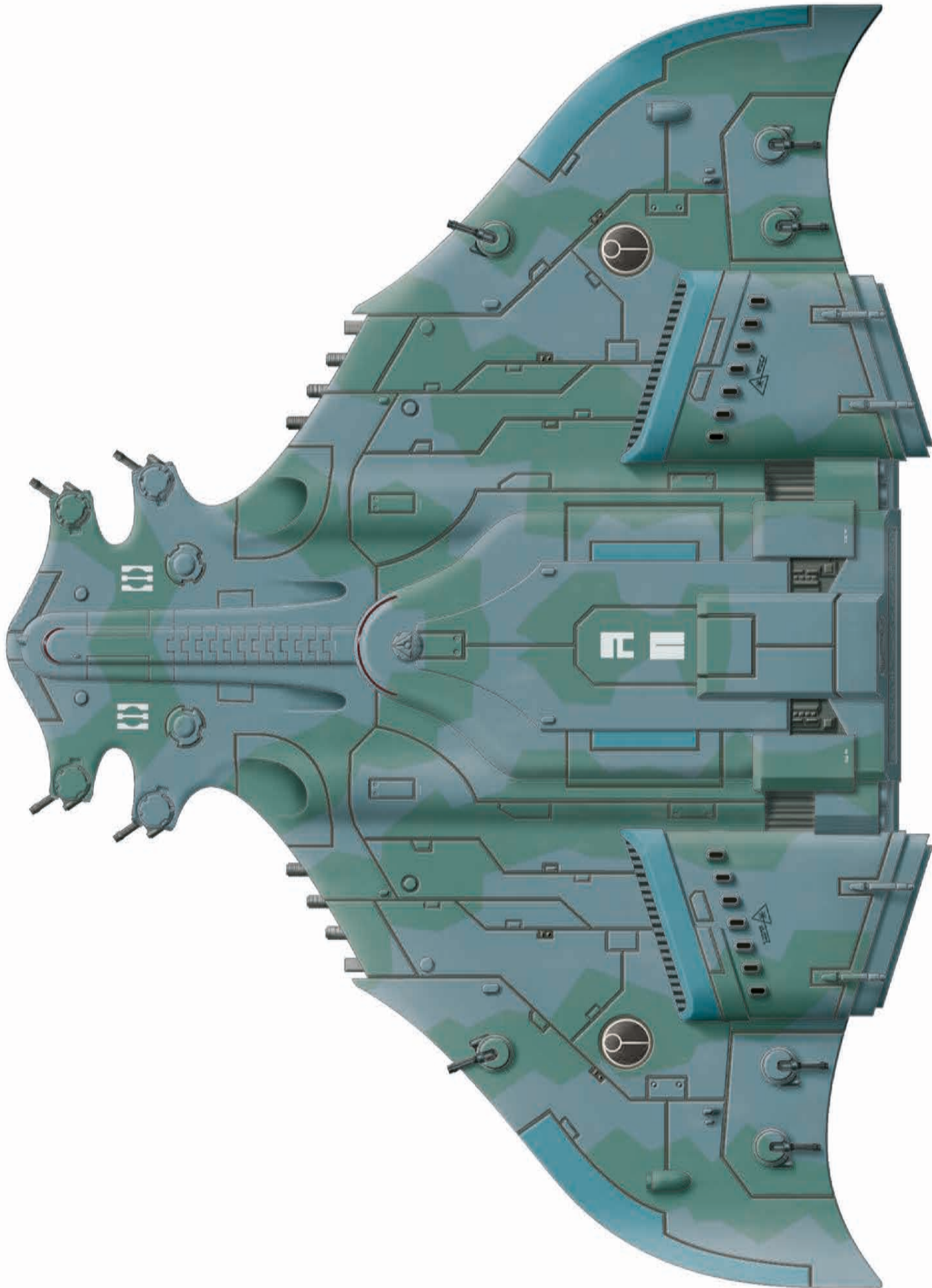
**Performance:** Maximum speed 2600kph (1625mph) at 5,000 feet; cruising speed 1600kph (1000 mph); range unknown.

**Weight:** 382 tonnes (empty).

**Dimensions:** Wingspan 52m; length 32m; height 8m.

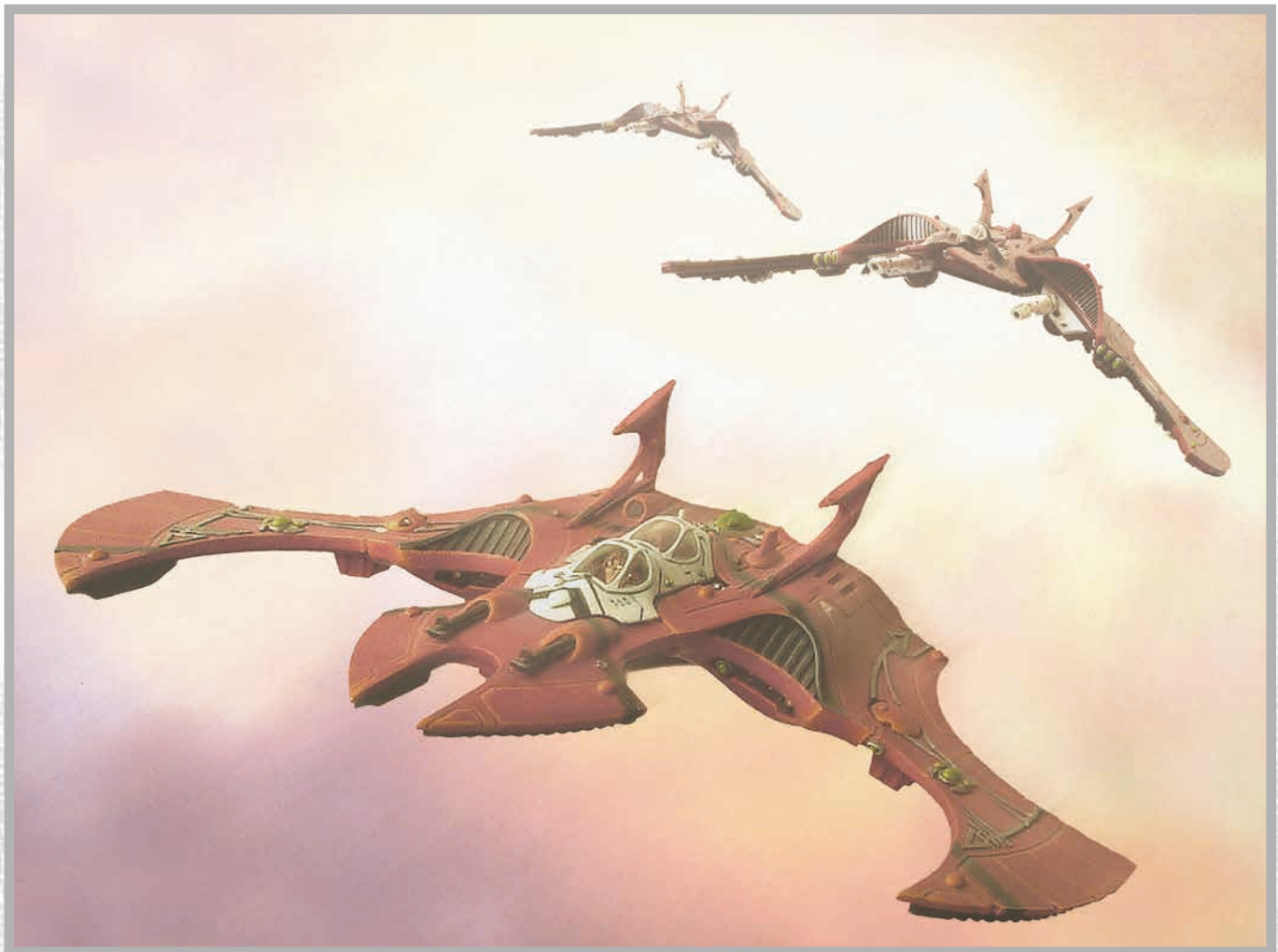
**Armament:** Two heavy railguns, two triple ion cannon batteries, sixteen drone-controlled burst cannon, ten Seeker missiles.





Manta of Hunter Cadre El'Corri during the second battle of Nimbaia City, Nimbosa.

# ELDAR AIRCRAFT



# NIGHTWING



The Eldar's frontline fighter aircraft is the infamous Nightwing. Hated by all enemies of the Eldar, it is a sleek and deadly aircraft, capable of out-matching just about any other aircraft in the sky. The Nightwing is the pinnacle of Eldar aircraft technology, a superbly designed fighter-interceptor that provides Eldar craftworld forces, and Eldar corsair raiding parties, with the decisive edge in aerial combat. Utilising the Eldar's sophisticated anti-gravity technology, the Nightwing is capable of aerobatics feats most Imperial Navy pilots would consider impossible.

The Nightwing is extremely fast in a straight line, utilising its swept wing design for extra speed. With its wing in the backwards position it can easily outpace any Imperial fighter. For extreme manoeuvres the wings sweep forwards, allowing the Nightwing to pull high speed, high-g turns, and brake the aircraft very rapidly during a dogfight. Eldar pilots master this manoeuvre, suddenly braking and swerving hard to throw off pursuit.

Dogfighting is where the Nightwing really excels. It is not heavily armed for ground attack missions, although its brightlances are still powerful enough to destroy enemy tanks. For specialist ground attack missions, the Eldar usually turn to the Nightwing's larger cousin, the Phoenix. The Nightwing's armament is primarily designed for engaging and destroying enemy aircraft.

Like other Eldar vehicles, the Nightwing relies on speed and agility to avoid damage rather than armour. The Nightwing is protected from enemy fire by image distorting holo-fields. The field generator makes it difficult for enemy targets to lock-on to the Nightwing, and throws out false images which confuse enemy pilots.

A notable feature of the Nightwing (and other Eldar aircraft) is that it has no landing gear. Due to the Eldar's mastery of anti-grav technology, when the aircraft has landed, it still sits upon an anti-grav field, allowing it to hover just above the ground.

Nightwing pilots are almost always young Eldar who have yet to travel the darker Aspect paths. Many do have previous experience as Jetbike riders or from crewing Vypers or Falcons. Those with the desire and the aptitude move on to fly Nightwings. Many pilots will also go on to walk the Path of the Outcast, and Eldar corsair bands are often well equipped with Nightwings to support their lightning raids.

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Type:** Fighter/interceptor.

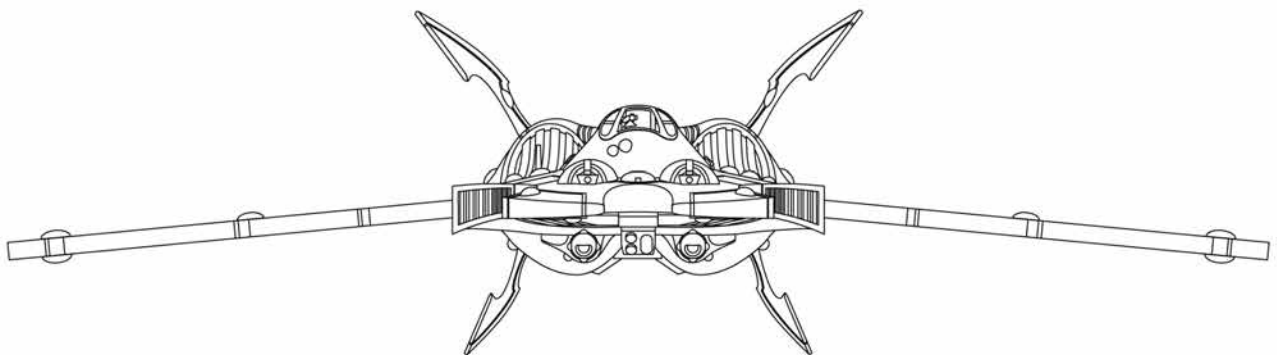
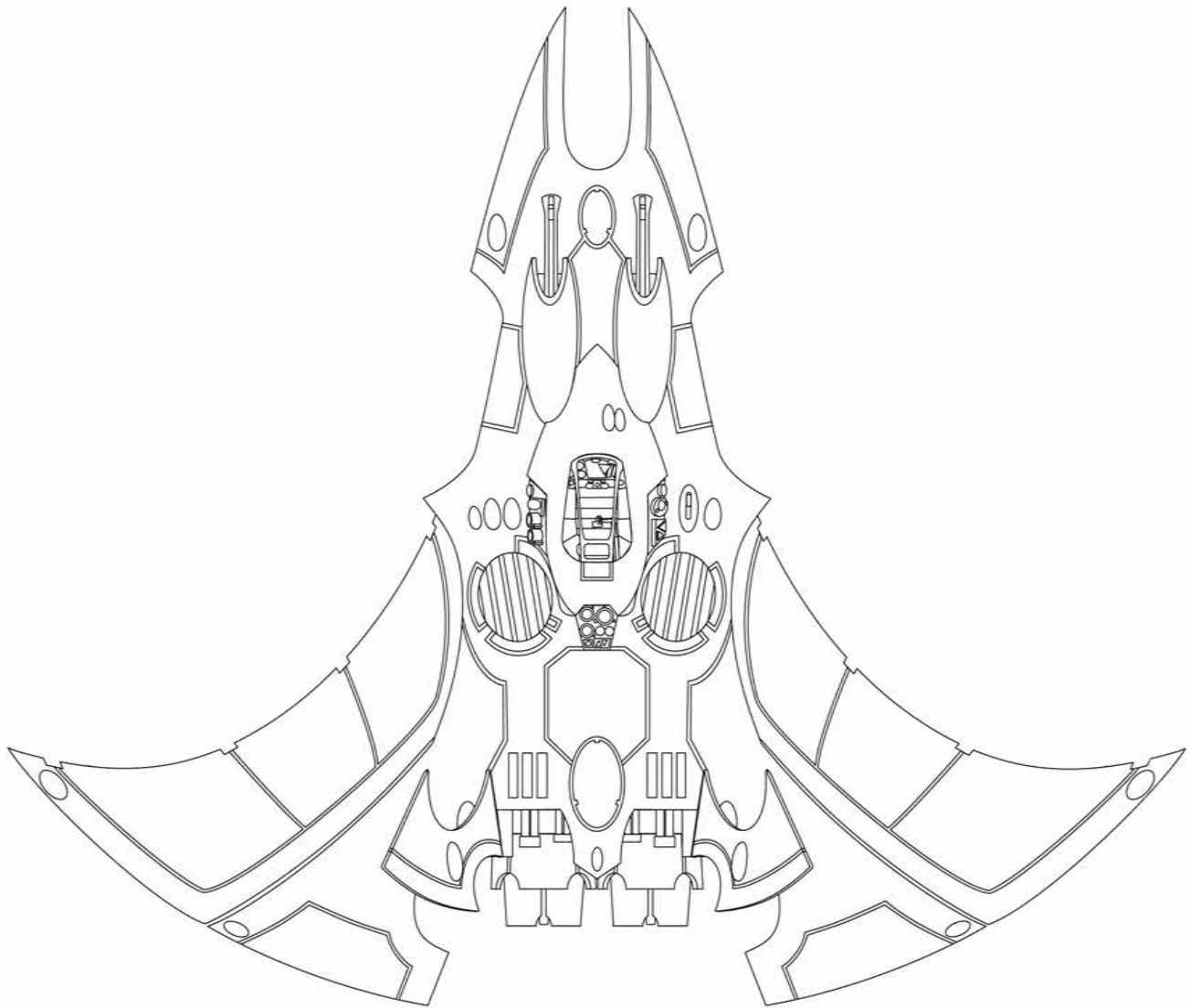
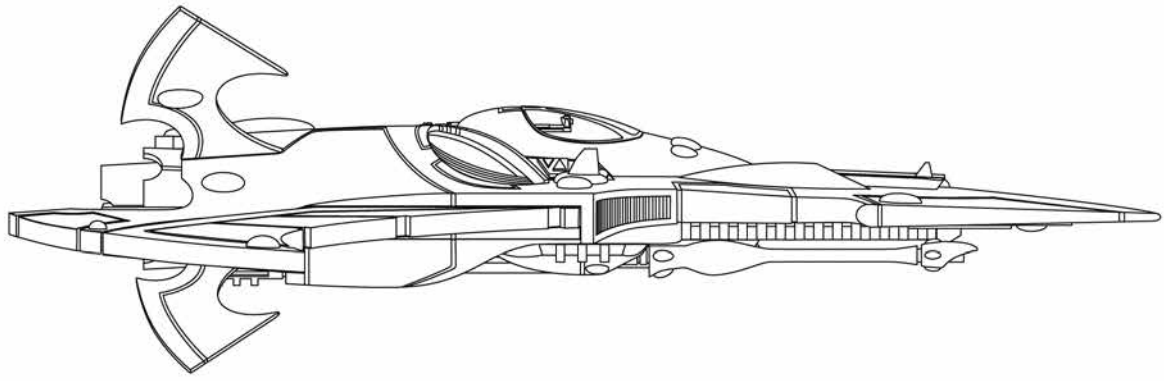
**Powerplant:** Unknown.

**Performance:** Maximum speed 3600kph (2250mph) at 5,000 feet; cruising speed 2300kph (1430mph); range unknown.

**Weight:** Approx 5 tonnes (empty).

**Dimensions:** Wingspan 15.4m; length 12m; height 4.3m.

**Armament:** Two nose-mounted shuriken cannons, two ventral mounted brightlances.





A Nightwing of Alaitoc craftworld, as deployed during the infamous attack on Krayak's Moon. The Eldar's sudden attack on the Imperial garrison on Krayak's Moon remains unexplained, although serves as an example of why the Eldar are considered untrustworthy and unpredictable by most Imperial commanders.

The Alaitoc strike force struck with speed and precision, having already thoroughly scouted the Imperial base's defences. A squadron of Nightwings opened the attack, targeting the outpost's air defences and destroying them, laying the base open to attacks by a following wave of Phoenix. With the base badly damaged by the attacks, the Eldar's ground forces moved in to overwhelm the surviving defenders.



Nightwing of Biel-Tan craftworld, identified in the area of the Karsundi river, Lammas campaign.



Nightwing of Ulthwe craftworld, part of the Belial strike force.



Nightwing of the infamous Eldritch Raiders corsairs band, Ceres XII raiding party.

# PHOENIX



## BACKGROUND

The Phoenix has many features in common with the Nightwing, but lacks the straight line speed and top end manoeuvrability of the fighter, instead carrying a larger weapons payload for its role as a ground attack fighter. Despite its loss of speed, the Phoenix is still an outstanding aircraft, capable of tangling with most enemy fighter aircraft and still coming out on top.

The Phoenix's weapons load includes two, nose-mounted shuriken cannons, primarily for use against enemy aircraft. Below the fuselage is a single centreline mounted pulse laser, a powerful, rapid firing laser weapon used for pinpoint accuracy against hard targets. The fuselage also holds the Phoenix's main ground attack weapon, two rapid firing Eldar missile launchers, armed with plasma missiles. This is an area saturation weapon, obliterating a target in a hail of expanding plasma explosions.

The Phoenix has two crew, one pilot to fly the aircraft, whilst the co-pilot operates the weapons systems. Like the Nightwing, the aircraft is well protected inside its disruptive holofield.

Like all Eldar aircraft, the Phoenix is constructed of complex psychoplastics, formed into solid shapes under psychic pressure by the Eldar's Bonesingers. The fuselage is reinforced by wraithbone, for extra strength and resilience, this also means the crew will be psychically attuned to their aircraft, improving response times and allowing the pilots to control the aircraft with the utmost efficiency.

Phoenix are common throughout all the Eldar craftworlds, and

amongst Eldar corsair bands. Those aircraft from craftworlds bear the usual colours associated with it. Corsair bands use more flamboyant colour schemes and motifs, often allowing pilots to individually decorate their aircraft with flames, skulls and mythical beasts being common devices.

The Eldar's long history of warfare has taught them the value of air power, and their aircraft have been developed to give them aerial supremacy over any battlefield they must fight on, against any foe. With Nightwings flying as escort cover to intercept and destroy enemy fighters, this clears the way for the Phoenix to swoop in low against enemy ground targets.

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Type:** Ground attack fighter-bomber.

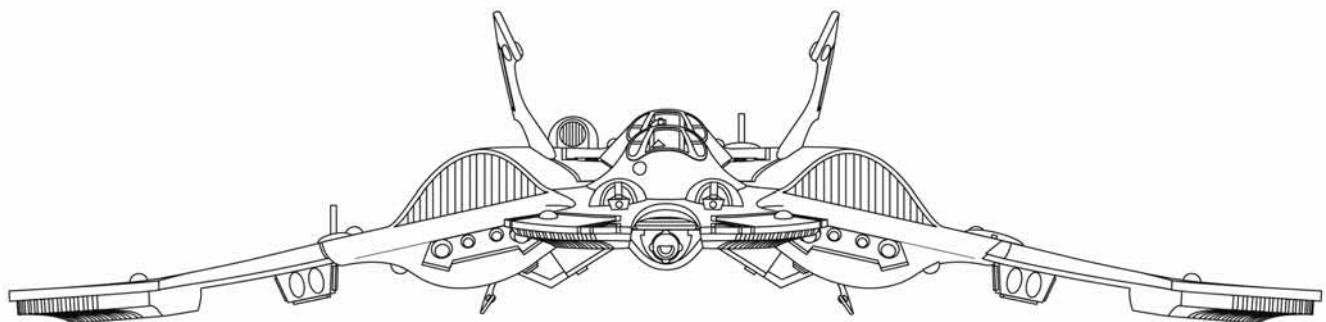
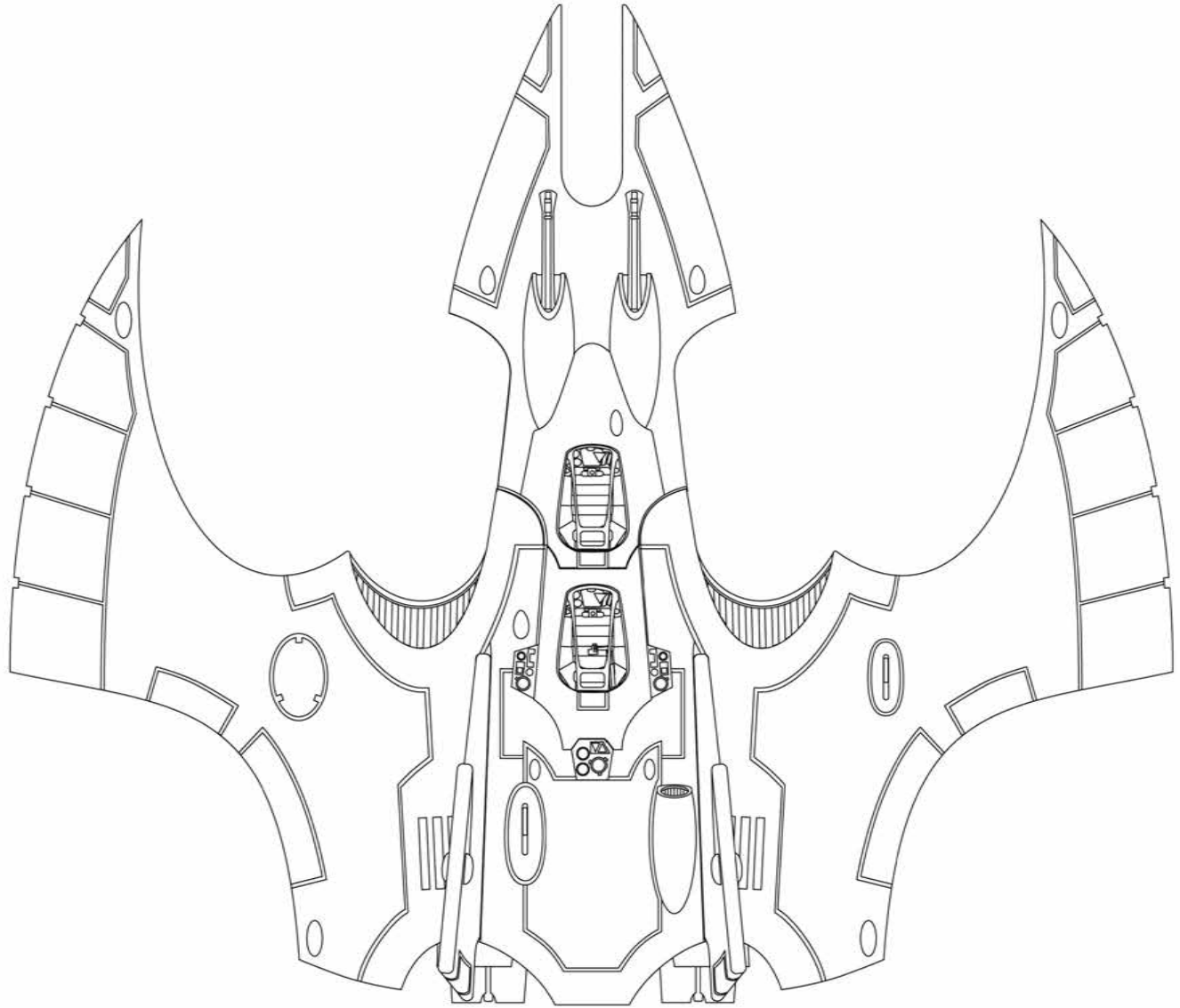
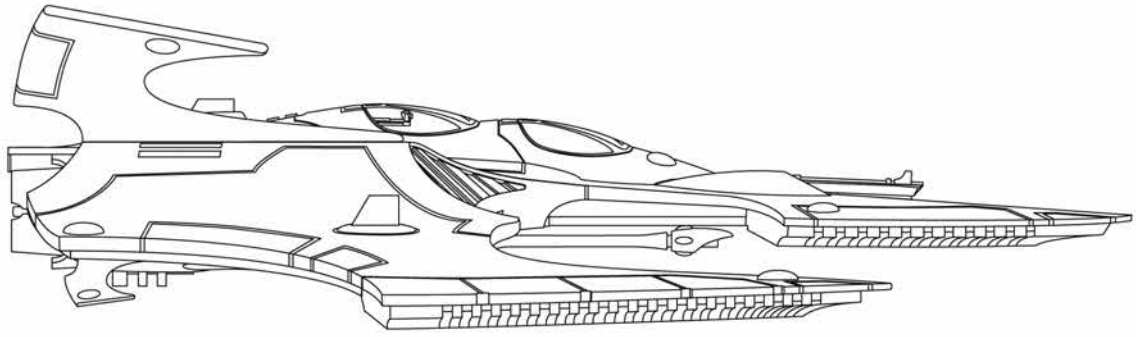
**Powerplant:** Unknown.

**Performance:** maximum speed 3100kph (1930mph) at 5,000 feet; cruising speed 1900kph (1180mph); range unknown.

**Weight:** Approx 6 tonnes (empty).

**Dimensions:** Wingspan 14.75m; length 12.6m; height 3.4m.

**Armament:** Two nose-mounted shuriken cannons, two underwing Eldar missile launchers, ventral-mounted pulse laser.





Phoenix of lyanden craftworld, part of the force that devastated Assyri Prime.



Phoenix of Saim-Hann craftworld, supporting the Wild Riders during the Battle of Barbarius.



Phoenix of Biel-Tan craftworld, supporting the Swordwind Host in fighting against the Orks of the Empire of Octarius.



Phoenix of Prince Galadhar the Grey's corsair band, encountered on Duros.  
This corsair band is believed to have close links with Iyanden craftworld.

# VAMPIRE RAIDER



## BACKGROUND

The Vampire Raider is the Eldar's largest atmospheric aircraft, although as a drop ship it can also operate in the hard vacuum of space. It is used primarily as a transport for Eldar assault forces, descending from orbiting spacecraft to strike their targets before quickly withdrawing. As a drop ship it is highly favoured by Eldar corsair bands, who make wide use of Vampires to land their raiding parties.

For its size the Vampire is fast, agile and well-armed – mainly for supporting fire as it approaches a landing zone. It has a nose mounted scatter laser and two underwing hardpoints which mount twin-linked pulse lasers. It also has a holo-field for protection. When Vampires are required to land troops they usually fly with an escort of Nightwings.

The Vampire can carry up to 30 troops in its passenger compartment and has two crew, a pilot and co-pilot. Other variants of the standard raider have been identified, one particular modification is the inclusion of heavier weapons for ground attack bombers.

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Type:** Dropship.

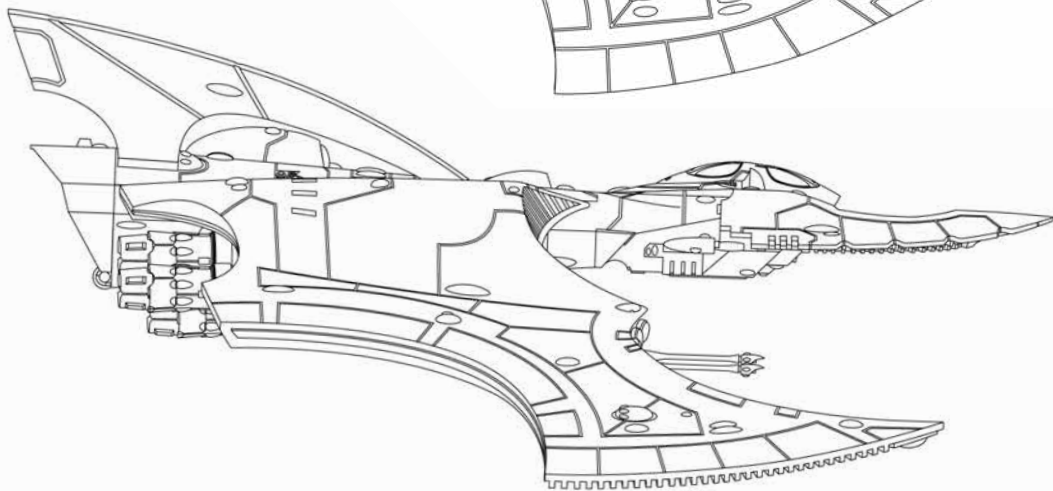
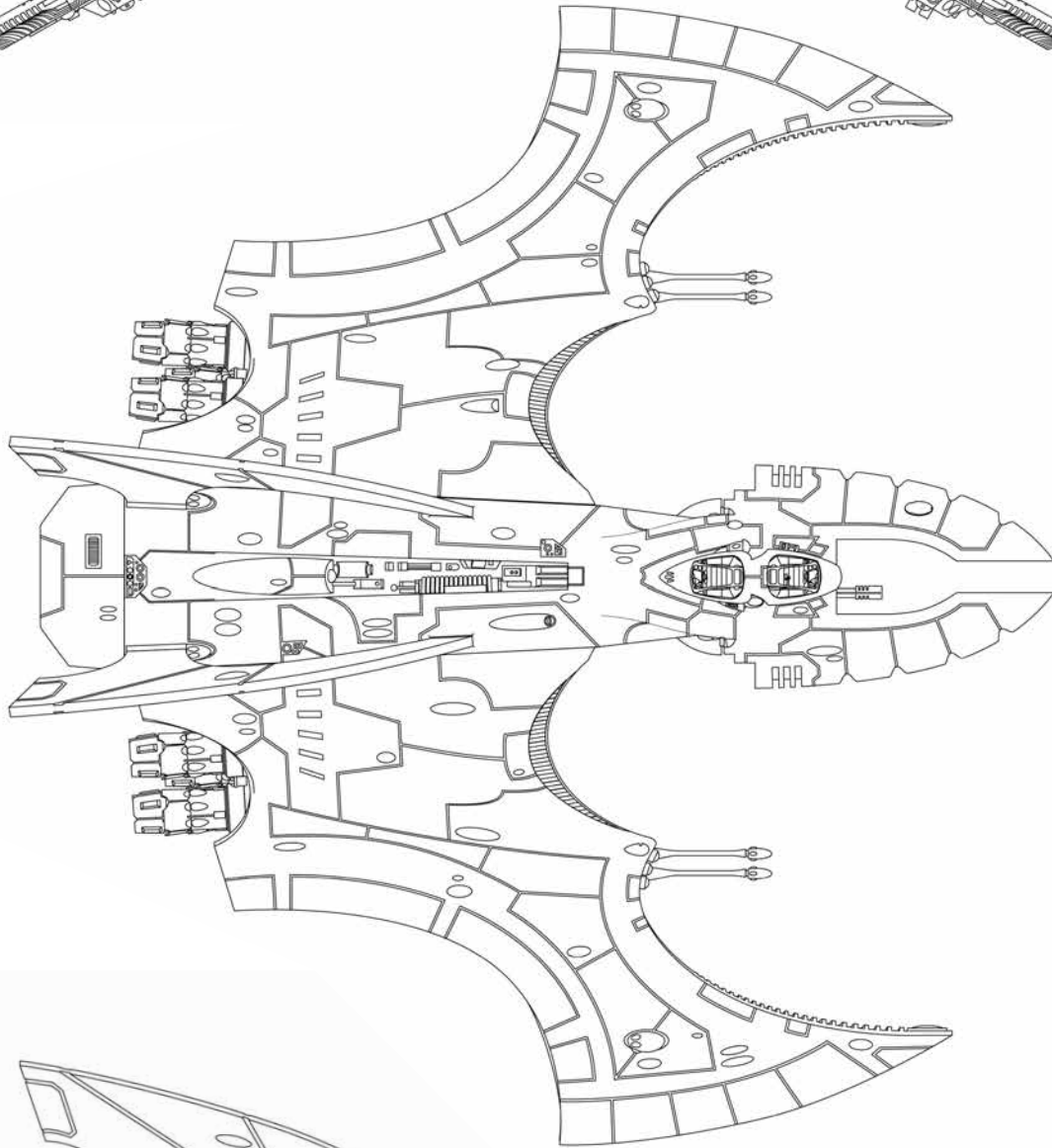
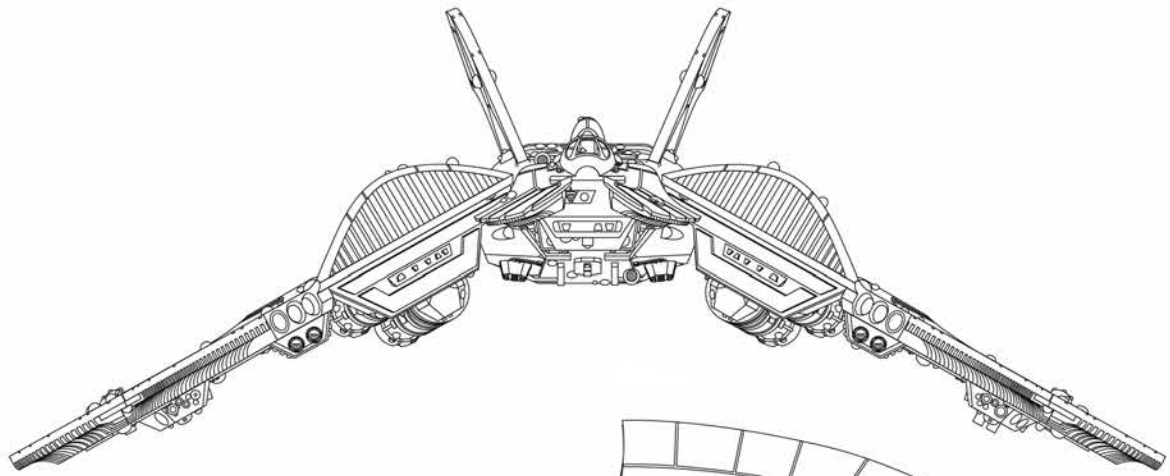
**Powerplant:** Unknown.

**Performance:** Maximum speed 3100kph (1930mph) at 5,000 feet; cruising speed 1900kph (1180mph); range unknown.

**Weight:** Approx 56 tonnes (empty).

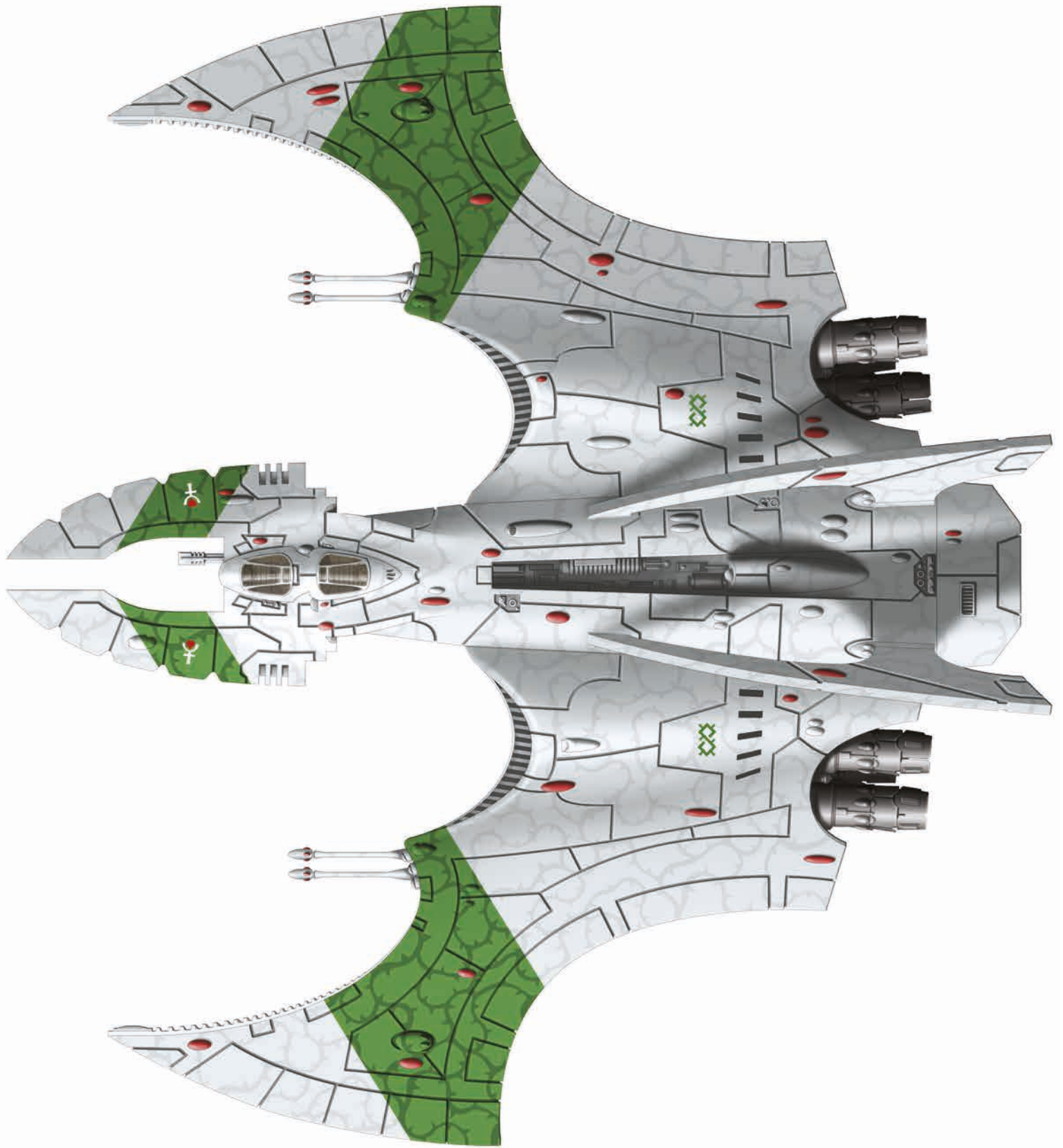
**Dimensions:** Wingspan 13.2m; length 26m; height 7.1m.

**Armament:** One nose-mounted scatter laser, four wing-mounted pulse lasers.





Vampire Raider of Iyanden craftworld during the devastation of Assyri.



Vampire Raider of Biel-Tan craftworld engaged against Ork forces of the Overfiend of Octarius.

# VAMPIRE HUNTER



## BACKGROUND

The Vampire Hunter is a variant of the Vampire Raider, converted for use as a heavy ground attack bomber rather than as a troop shuttle. It foregoes any transport capacity for additional heavy armament, and carries massive pulsars and multiple missile launchers. The Vampire Hunter is a super heavy gunship, capable of taking on the heaviest enemy units, including Titans, and is only deployed onto the fiercest battlefields against large targets. They fly on missions to engage specific enemy targets, such as an attacking Titan, and each Vampire Hunter will usually have its own Nightwing fighter cover to support their attack runs and keep enemy aircraft at bay. Vampire Hunters are not a common aircraft, and their specialised role means they are only deployed during large Eldar operations.

The Hunter is just one of several identified variants of the basic Vampire, usually carrying different armaments, which are used by different craftworlds and corsair bands. Despite its heavy weapons load, the Hunter retains the Vampires amazing manoeuvrability and speed for such a large aircraft, and like all Eldar aircraft, is protected by a holofield.

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Type:** Ground attack bomber.

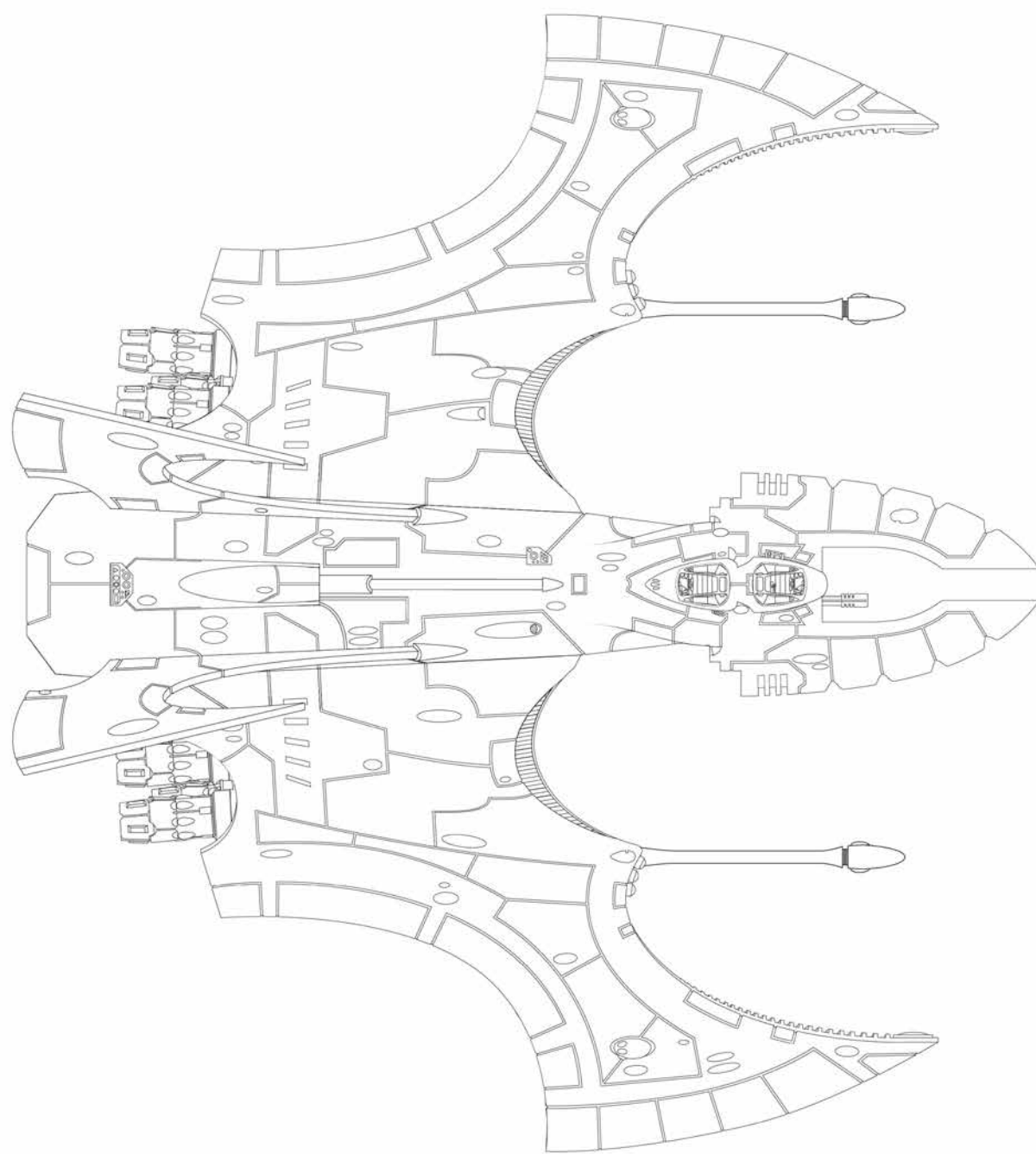
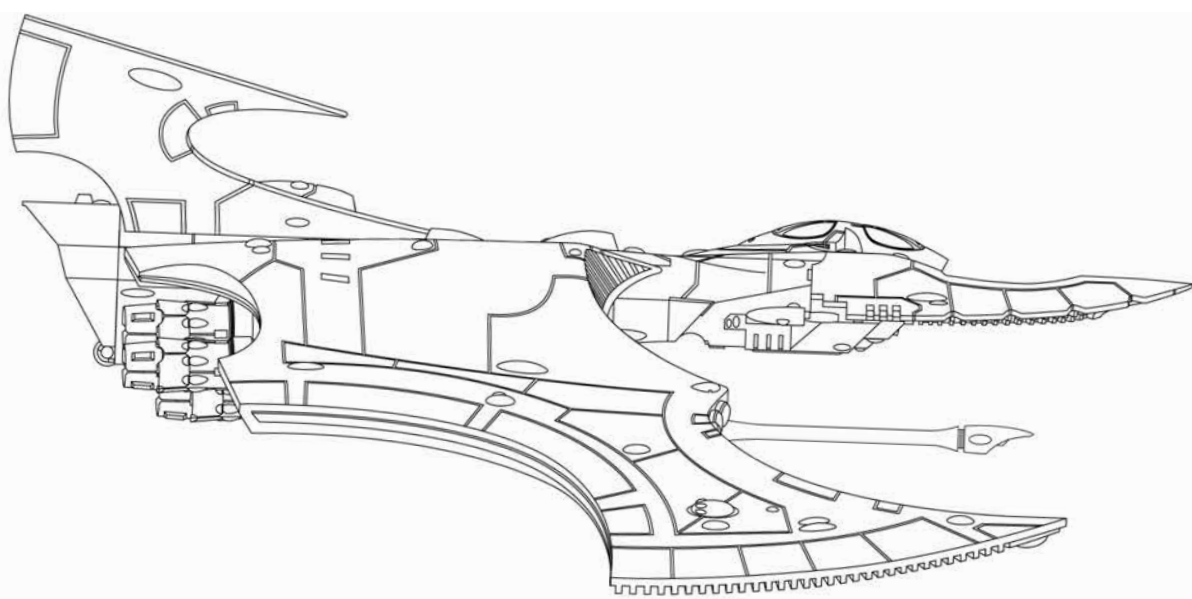
**Powerplant:** Unknown.

**Performance:** Maximum speed 3100kph (1930mph) at 5,000 feet; cruising speed 1900kph (1180mph); range unknown.

**Weight:** Approx 57 tonnes (empty).

**Dimensions:** Wingspan 13.2m; length 26m; height 7.1m.

**Armament:** One nose-mounted scatter laser, two wing-mounted pulsars, two under-fuselage missile launchers.





Vampire Hunter of Ulthwe craftworld, supporting the Belial strike force.

# CHAOS AIRCRAFT



# HELL BLADE



## BACKGROUND

Secret Ordo Malleus reports speculate that hidden within the Eye of Terror there lies a traitor forge world, a hellish place run by renegade Adeptus Mechanicus Techpriests, the so called Dark Priesthood. Codenamed Xana II, it is believed that this forge world churns out infernal war machines and weapons for the heretic legions of the Warmaster of Chaos, Abaddon the Despoiler. When Abaddon's legions spew forth from the warp to raid Imperial worlds, they are often accompanied by daemonically powered war machines and aircraft created on Xana II.

The Ordo Malleus believe that the Hell Blade is a product of Xana II. Its slim form races through the skies issuing horrific shrieks, wails and screams as it dives and climbs. They are flown with reckless abandon by corrupted servitors, cursed souls who are hardwired into the cockpit and may never leave.

A Hell Blade is fast, agile and well-armed with quad autocannons under its fuselage for its role as an interceptor. They are designed to engage other aircraft in dogfights, leaving the ground attacks to the larger Hell Talon.

During his massive assault on the Cadian Gate, Abaddon's 13th Black Crusade, Hell Blades became a common sight in the dark skies over besieged Imperial worlds. Again and again heavily outnumbered Imperial Navy fighter squadrons engaged swarms of small, darting Hell Blades in desperate swirling dogfights. Throughout the crusade, aerial battles saw heavy losses on both

sides. Claims of over 2,000 Hell Blades destroyed over Cadia alone have not been confirmed, and Imperial Navy losses are still being calculated by Departamento Auditors. Who knows how many daemonically powered aircraft are being stockpiled within the Warp for the Warmaster's next assault?

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Type:** Fighter/interceptor.

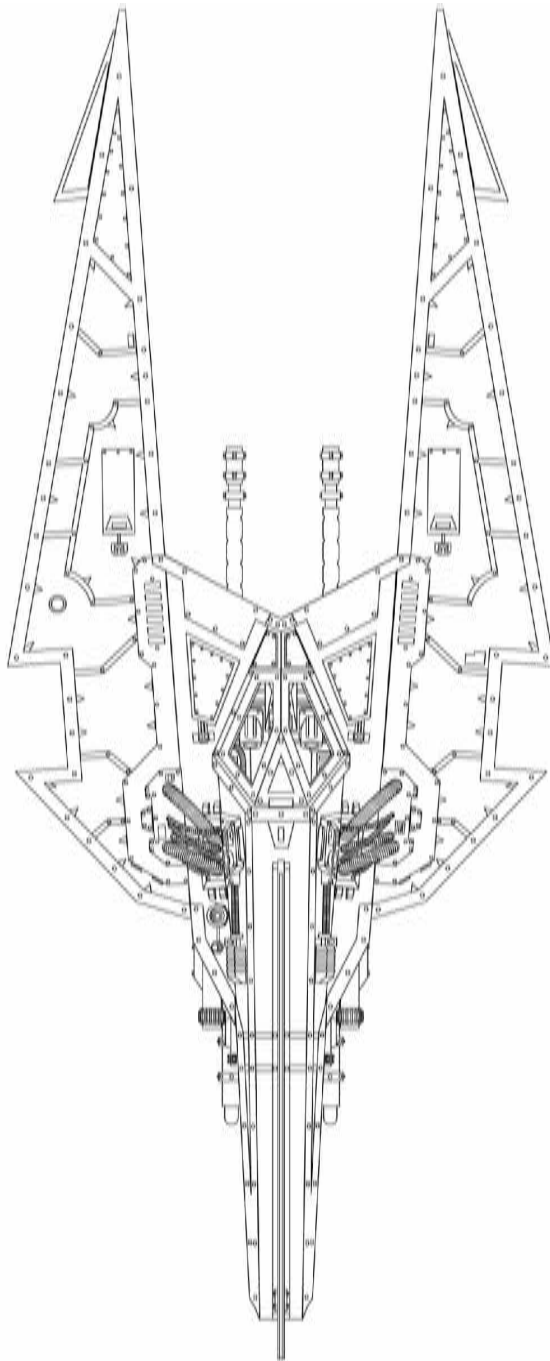
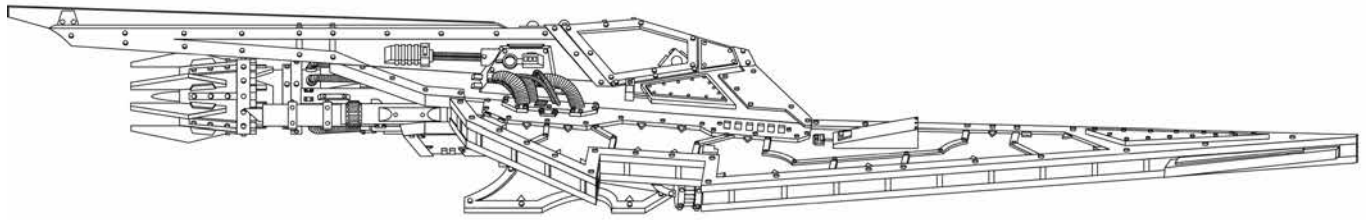
**Powerplant:** Unknown.

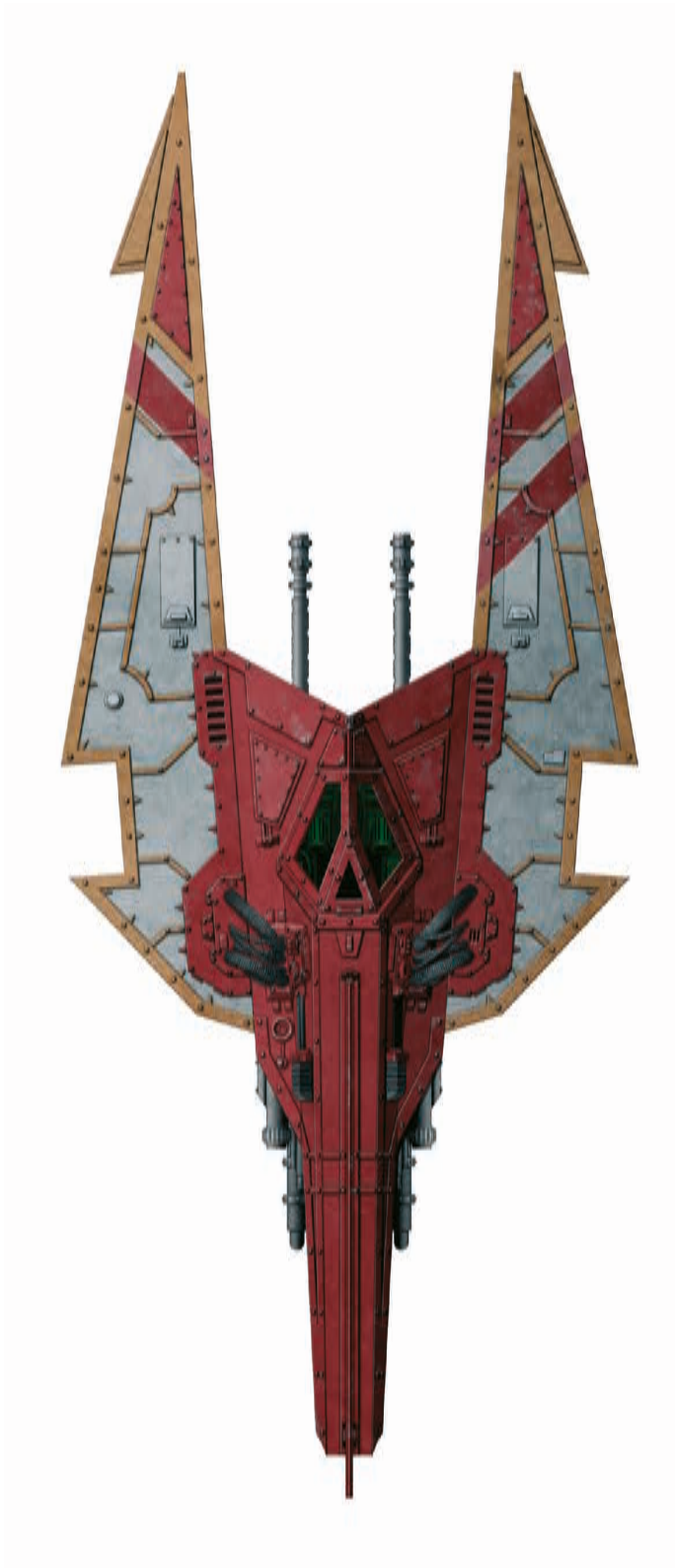
**Performance:** Maximum speed 2800kph (1750mph) at 5,000 feet; cruising speed 2000kph (1250mph); range unknown.

**Weight:** Approx 3.5 tonnes (empty).

**Dimensions:** Wingspan 5.6m; length 13.8m; height 1.65m.

**Armament:** Four autocannons.





Hell Talon of an unidentified Chaos legion, encountered over Cadia, 13th Black Crusade.



Hell Talon supporting the Night Lords warband of Lord Verdelet during the scourging of Agripinaa.



Hell Talon dedicated to the Chaos God Khorne, supporting the World Eaters warband, encountered on St Josamine's Hope.



Hell Talon dedicated to the Chaos God Nurgle, encountered on Belis Corona during fighting against Typhus' warband.

# HELL TALON



## BACKGROUND

The Hell Blade's larger cousin is the Hell Talon, a heavier aircraft used in the fighter-bomber role, and capable of carrying a large under-wing payload of incendiary bombs. The Hell Talon swoops in low, bombing and strafing, whilst the Hell Blades cover them, by intercepting enemy fighters. As well as up to eight bombs, the Hell Talon is also armed with lascannons and an autocannon under the fuselage.

It is thought that the Hell Talon was created upon the orders of Abaddon himself, as part of the preparations for his 13th Black Crusade. Upon the traitor forge world of Xana, the corrupt adepts of the Dark Priesthood used their heretical knowledge to meld machine, man and daemon into a single war engine. The blasphemous processes used to create such horrors are beyond the bounds of the Adeptus Mechanicus' knowledge, regarded as the worst of heresies against the machine god and the path to eternal damnation.

The Hell Talon is flown by three Chaos servitor which are all hardwired into the cockpit. As it flies, the Hell Talon issues wails, screams and groans – the tortured screams of those sacrificed to awaken the daemons within the aircraft. The Hell Talon's daemoniac spirit seemingly tears through the very fabric of the sky, accompanied by crackling lightning and black storm clouds as the Warp leaks through into reality in the wake of the aircraft's passage. Literally, the skies darken when the Hell Talons fly.

During Abaddon's massive assault upon the Cadian Gate, Hell Talons became a common sight over besieged Imperial worlds. The defenders of Doas were bombed for 22 consecutive days by Hell Talons. The fires started created a firestorm that razed it to the ground and tens of thousand died in the conflagration which still smoulders to this day.

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Type:** Fighter-bomber.

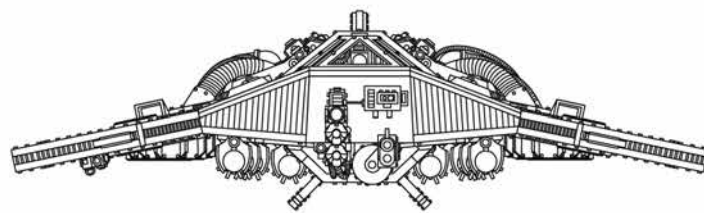
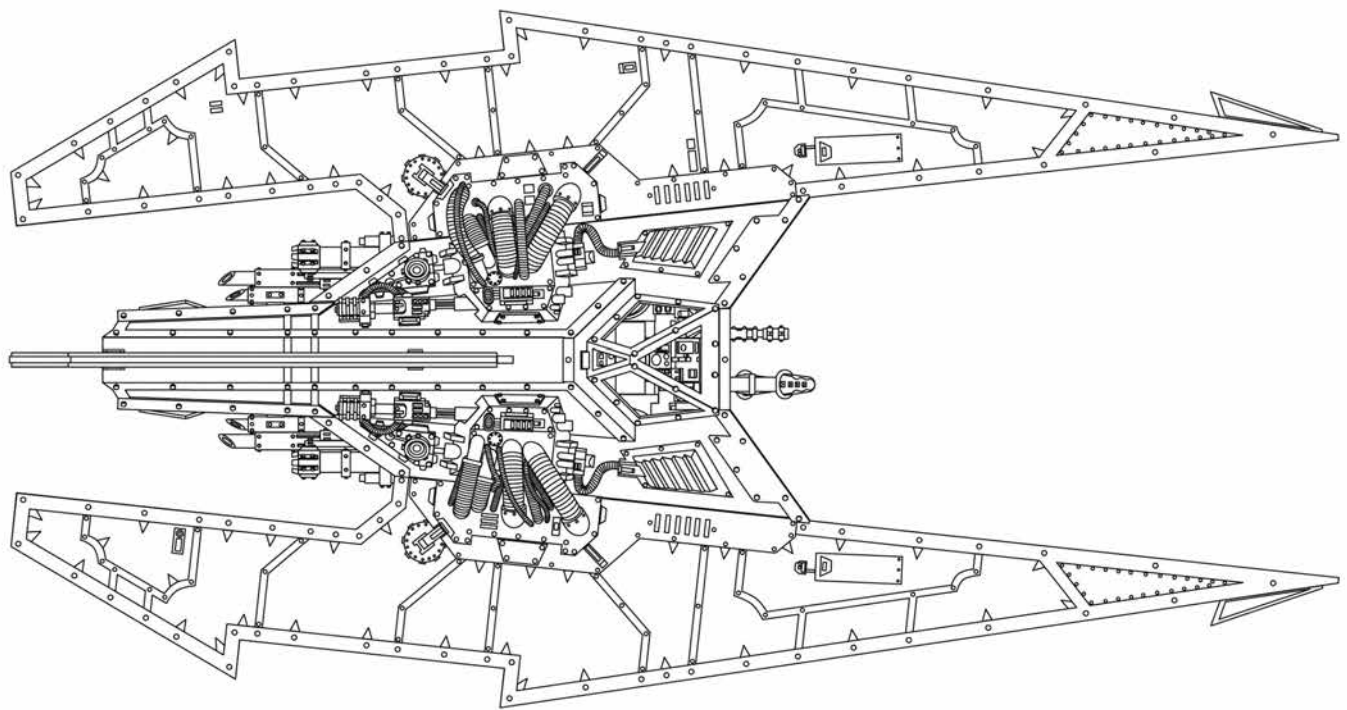
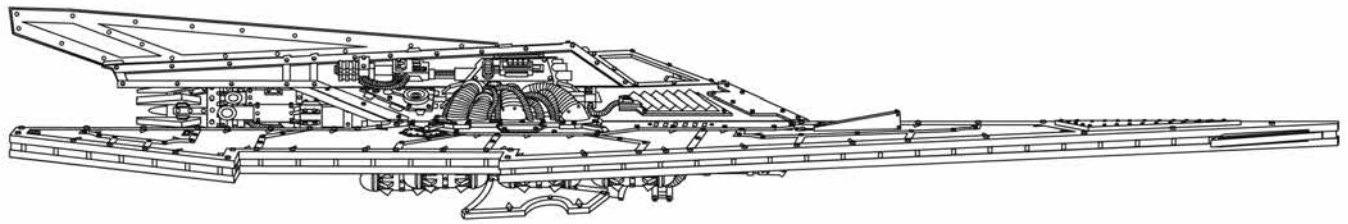
**Powerplant:** Unknown.

**Performance:** Maximum speed 2350kph (1500mph) at 5,000 feet; cruising speed 1700kph (1050mph); range unknown.

**Weight:** Approx 17 tonnes (empty).

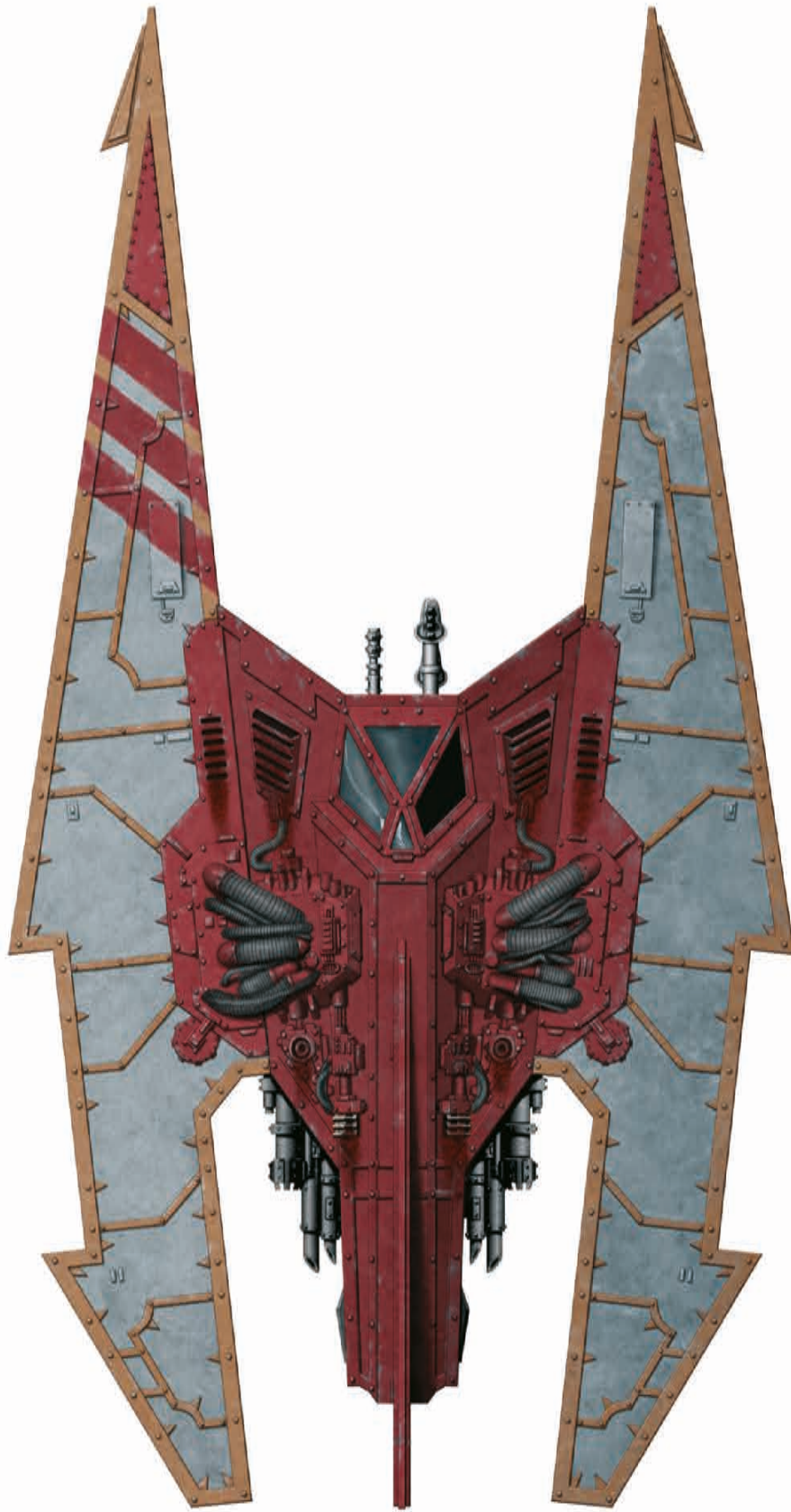
**Dimensions:** Wingspan 10.4m; length 20.3m; height 3m.

**Armament:** Two lascannons, one autocannon and up to eight incendiary bombs.

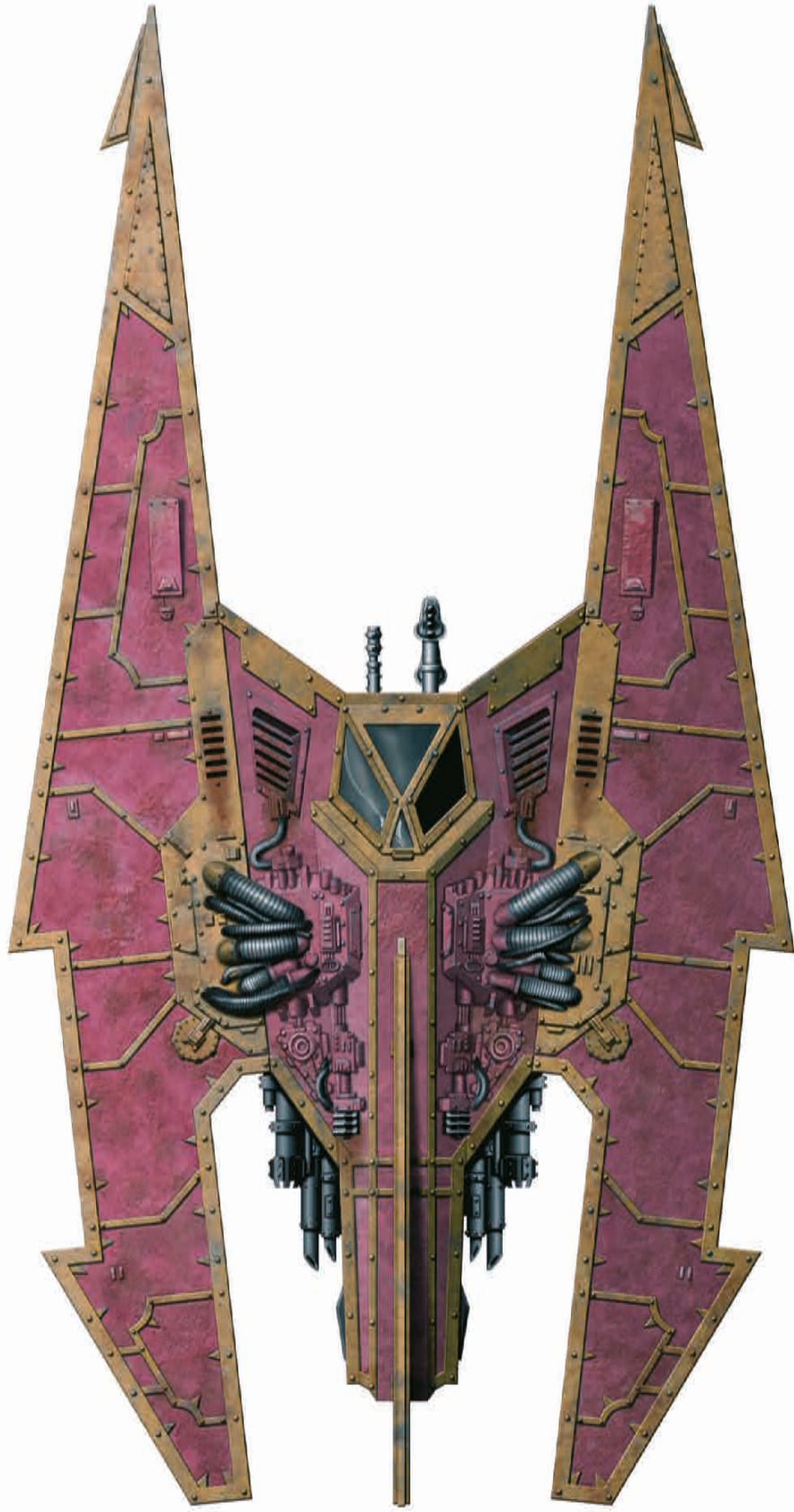




Hell Talon encountered during the siege of Vraks. This may be part of an Iron Warriors warband, but this cannot be confirmed.



Hell Talon of an unidentified Chaos warband, encountered during Lord Creed's counter-attack, Operation Chrysos, on Cadia.



Hell Talon of the renegade Emperor's Children warband of Lord Vexcarnel 'the Butcher of Sherilax', during the Sherilax uprising.

# APPENDIX

## THE AERONAUTICA IMPERIALIS HOBBY

*As well as a tabletop wargame of aerial combat, Aeronautica Imperialis is also a wider hobby, which involves other aspects aside from playing the game on the tabletop. There are model aircraft to collect, build and paint. There is also ground targets and terrain to collect, build and paint, as well other modelling details like explosions and aircraft damage markers which you can make to improve your games.*

### COLLECTING A SQUADRON

To start with you'll want to collect your own squadron with which to play games. The best way to start a collection is to start small and build up over time. First choose which squadron you would like to play, Imperium, Orks, Tau, Eldar or Chaos. Next, choose which aircraft your squadron will include.

Eventually, you will want to increase the size of your model collection to allow more flexibility in your games, but to start with, just choose some basic fighters, a few bombers and a few ground defences and then build up from there.

A small Imperial Navy squadron.



A large Ork squadron of Fightas and Fighta-Bombers.

## BASIC PAINTING

You will want to paint your squadron. What colour scheme you use is up to you, but we have provided many examples of aircraft colour schemes throughout this book to inspire you, or for you to simply copy.

Once your aircraft model has been carefully constructed, start by undercoating the model. Use either a black, grey or white spray paint as undercoat. The undercoat will provide a good base for the following paint to adhere to. Which colour undercoat you use will depend on the final colour scheme that you are planning to paint. Lighter colour schemes work best over a lighter undercoat. Use a white or grey undercoat if you intend your final models to be mostly white.

After undercoating start on the base coat. Simply block in the areas with flat colour. Try to keep the painting neat and tidy, and do not use too much paint on your brush. Too much paint will be difficult to control, and will dry so thickly as to obscure the small model's finer detail.

Once the entire model has been base coated, you can move on to the highlighting and detailing. These are the final touches which help bring the model to life. Finally, you can also add details (such as identification numbers, stripes or letters). These are important to help identify your model during games.



1. Undercoated in Chaos Black spray paint.



2. A neat basecoat.



3. Highlighting and details added, as well as a camouflage scheme and number.

## BASING

Once a model is painted you will need to base it. For Aeronautica Imperialis you will need to base each aircraft on the special Aeronautica base. Each base is supplied with a clear plastic stem. Players might like to vary the angle of their aircraft to be climbing, diving and/or banking. This just adds interest and prevents all your models from looking exactly the same.



You can also replace the plastic stem with plastic or copper rod painted black. This will allow you to vary the height of each aircraft.



## ADVANCED PAINTING

As your painting experience develops there are further techniques you might want to use. There are many techniques used by modellers for painting their models, such as dry brushing, blending and washes. Combining these techniques will allow you to improve your painting and help add extra detail, such as weathering and damage. The photos below show some well-painted models using advanced painting techniques.



Thunderbolt



Lightning



Orca



Valkyrie



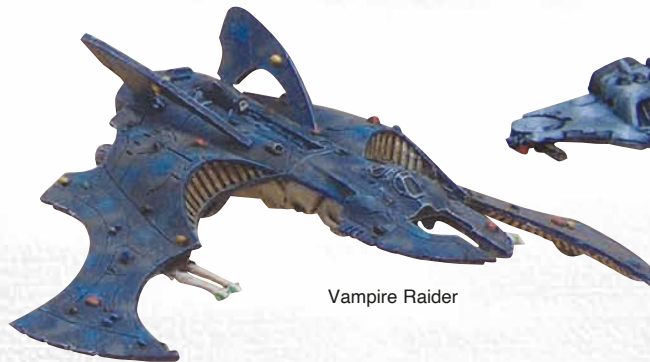
Arvus



Tiger Shark



Vulture



Vampire Raider



Barracuda

## MODELLING DAMAGE AND EXPLOSIONS

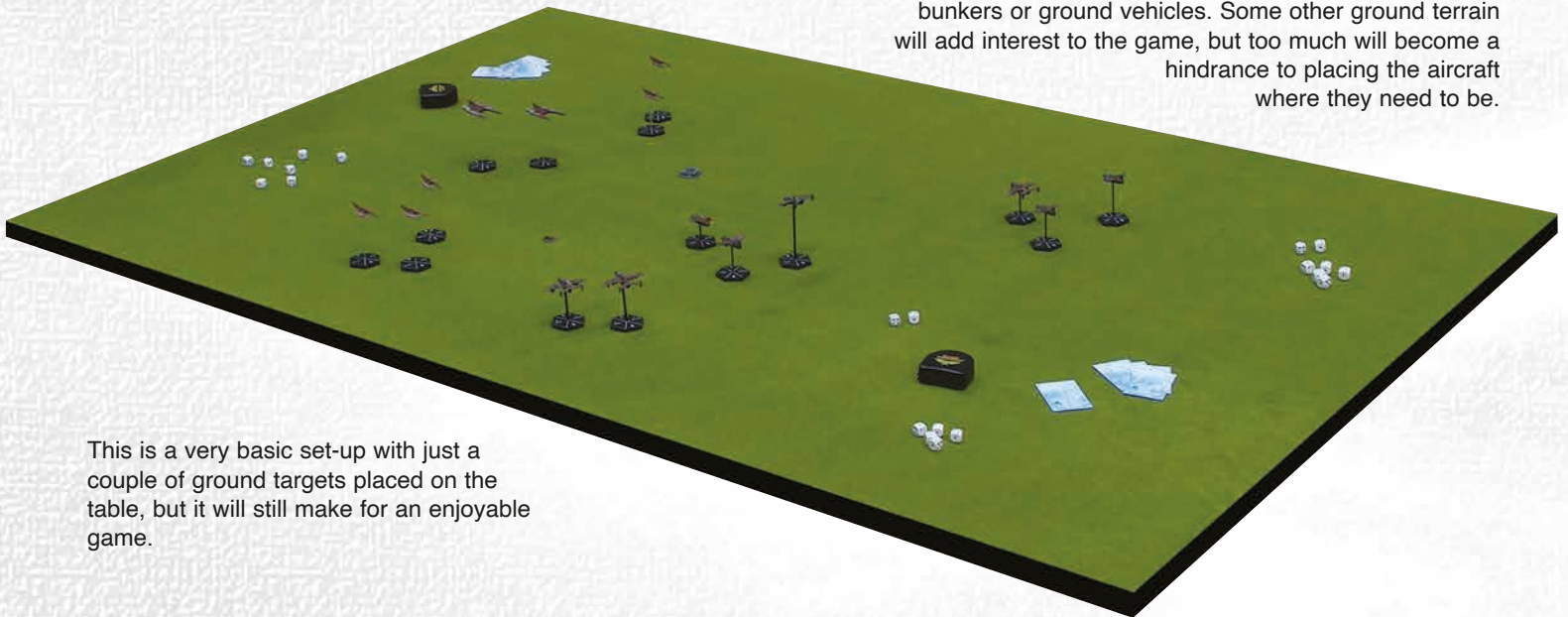
You can enhance your games further by including modelled markers for aircraft damage and explosions. Damage markers are placed on an aircraft to show when it has been seriously damaged. The easiest method is to use black or grey hamster bedding, arranged to represent smoke trailing from an engine. More advanced damage markers can be made by using wire wool threaded over a piece of fuse wire for strength. Spray the wire wool black and add flames by dipping one end in plaster, allow it to dry then painting the plastered area as flames.



Explosions are used to mark ground targets that have been destroyed. They can be made from wire wool, glued to a metal washer and sprayed black. For flames, paint around the base of the explosion white, then over paint the white with yellow and red.

## BASIC TERRAIN

Being a game of aerial combat, *Aeronautica Imperialis* does not require much terrain. For your first game you could get away with no terrain at all. Otherwise, you will need models for ground targets, be it buildings, bridges, bunkers or ground vehicles. Some other ground terrain will add interest to the game, but too much will become a hindrance to placing the aircraft where they need to be.



This is a very basic set-up with just a couple of ground targets placed on the table, but it will still make for an enjoyable game.

## GROUND TARGETS

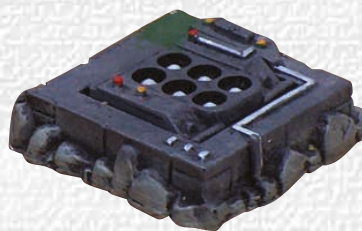
As well as your squadron you will need a collection of ground targets – these can be vehicles from our range of Epic scale models. You will also find a few buildings, bunkers, weapon emplacements and the like useful as targets. Very ambitious players can build entire airbases or supply dumps to attack. Here are a few examples of ground targets.



Ammo dump



Communications bunker



Missile silo



Ruin



Large building

# THEMED TERRAIN AND SQUADRONS

## Deserts of Taros



Probably the best looking games are played on themed terrain with themed squadrons. Above is a desert board, complete with desert airbase. Note that the Imperial and Tau aircraft colour schemes have all followed the desert theme as well.

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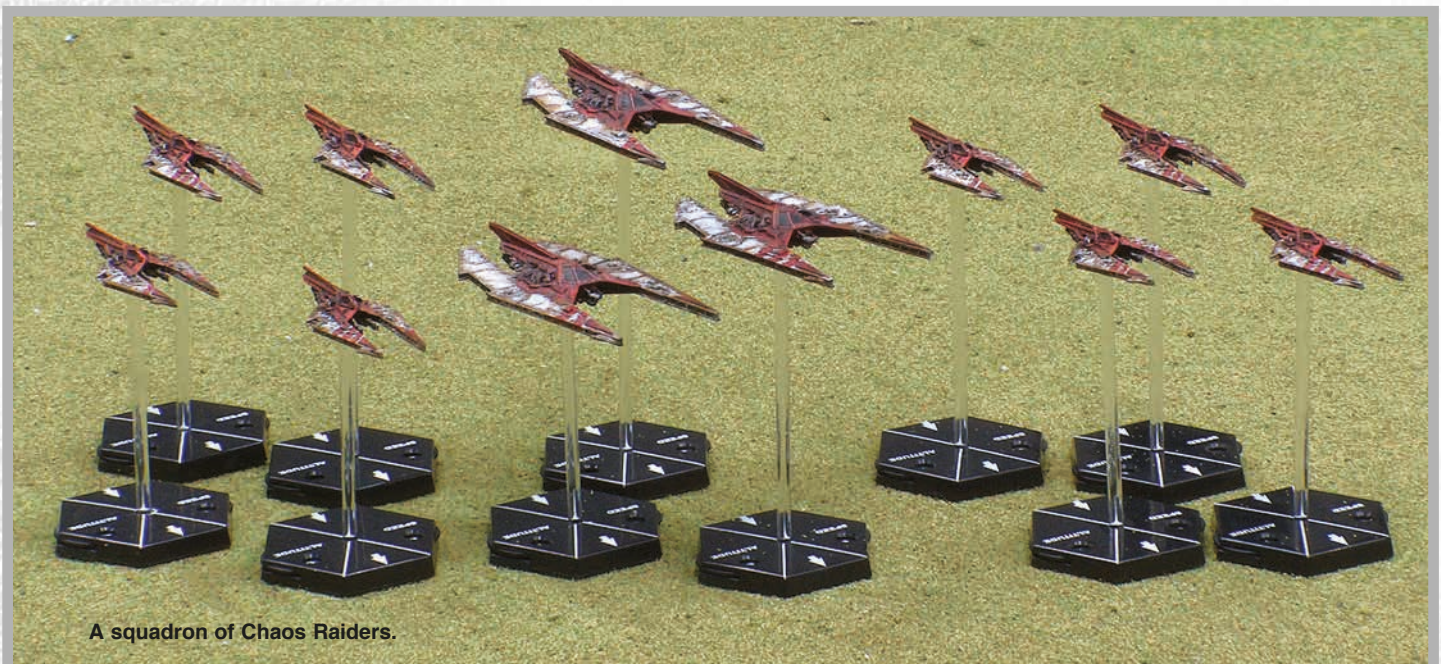
## Oceans of Lyyr-Prime



This game is being played between the Eldar and the Orks, over an ocean board, with all the targets on islands. Here an Ork airbase is under attack.



A Tau Air Cadre.



A squadron of Chaos Raiders.



An Eldar Sky Host of Biel-Tan craftworld.