V’MELAK CLASS WARBIRD

The successor to the first ‘warbird’ launched by the Imperial Navy—the Imperial Hawk—the V’Melak class was created at the behest of the mad praetor Dralath after the Tal’Shiar gained intelligence regarding the Federation Starfleet’s Ambassador class Heavy Cruiser. A powerful and intimidating class in its own right, it soon became the most infamous class commissioned after ships of the class participated in both the Battle of Narendra III (destroying a Klingon outpost and the Federation Starship Enterprise/CH 1701-C) in 2344 and the Khitomer Massacre (exterminating the Klingon colony of 4000 on that world) in 2346.

Development on the V’Melak is estimated to have begun shortly after the ambitious and violent Dralath ascended to the praetorate in 2325. A career soldier in the Imperial Legion, Dralath was cunning, bloodthirsty and notoriously unpredictable. His random, unprovoked killing of a senator on the floor of the Imperial Senate furthered speculation by many, that he was responsible for the assassination of his predecessor Aratenik 8 months prior to his ascension.

While in the Imperial Legion, he became something of a military historian and studied the tactics and strategies of both native and alien military commanders. After reaching his new position as leader of the Empire, he used this knowledge to shape both the Legion and the Imperial Navy into potent tactical tools.

While the Klingons had continued their predictable pattern of building large ‘flying fortresses’ that were overgunned and armored to the hilt (ex. K’Vort) and the Federation continued to try and maintain the delicate balance between peaceful exploration/diplomacy and tactical supremacy (ex. Korolev, Ambassador) in its Starfleet, Dralath’s policies attempted to position the Imperial Navy between its two traditional rivals by emphasizing the Navy’s traditional strengths of speed, stealth and maneuverability.

To that end, V’Melak emerged from the drawing boards smaller than the Imperial Hawk, but still larger than previous designs. To aid in maneuverability and warp field dynamics, the basic design was highly streamlined, with many of the Imperial Hawk’s sharp angles smoothed out considerably with newer, larger warp engines installed between the split hull sections.

Perhaps the most distinct attribute about the V’Melak was its power source. Abandoning the traditional matter/anti-matter reaction systems that were in use by nearly every spacefaring race, the Romulans opted to use an entirely unconventional technology—a forced quantum singularity. It held the promise for nearly unlimited power—with no fuels or other supporting substances needed.

This distinction also proved to be the V’Melak’s biggest weakness. Romulan engineers had long ago learned how to find tune the propulsion and power generation systems of traditional M/AM based ship designs so they would be undetectable to all but the most complex, finely tuned sensor arrays. With this new design however, new pieces of technology known as nullifier cores were needed to keep the radiative emissions of the ship’s engines in a precise, finely tuned balance.

The technology was untested and highly complex. Several notable failures led to the class as a whole being unfavorably compared to the KDF’s D-12 Bird-of-Prey sub-class, which suffered similar defects with its cloaking system.

It is unknown when the class was finally withdrawn from service, but given the large number of D’Deridex class warbirds in service at the outbreak of the Dominion War (2373), this can be estimated be around 2368-71.
Despite the age of the class overall, it proved just as adaptable as its much larger successor to upgrades and refits. Given the Imperial Navy’s shift towards smaller, swifter vessels there have been rumors a substantially upgraded version of the V’Melak could re-enter service, but it is not known if, or when this will happen.
**V'Melak**

**Class:** Attack Cruiser

**Mass:** Unknown

**Compliment:** 410 (est.)

**Armament:**
- 5 Standard Disruptor Cannons
- 2 Heavy Disruptor Cannons
- 2 Torpedo Launchers

**Defense Systems:**
- Standard Deflector Shield System
  - total capacity 2,129,000 TerraJoules
- Heavy Duranium/Trititanium Double Hull plus 2cm High Density Armor

**Service:** 2330-Unknown (est.)

**Number Active:** 0

**Length:** 346m

**Beam:** 140m

**Height:** 93m

**Decks:** 36
Logos—Kristion “Reverend” Trigwell (Gallery @ Star Trek Minutiae)
Design/Visuals—Raven Night’/LC Amaral/Starforce Productions (Star Trek: Bridge Commander Model)
Editor’s Annotations

This wasn’t originally one of the ships I was going to include in the Imperial Navy loadout, but after seeing [this video](#) of one talented artist’s take on the Battle at Narendra III, there was no doubt in my mind I had to include it—not to mention the fact that as it was, there was a substantial gap between the TOS/TMP era ships and those from the TNG/DS9/VOY and Future eras. The V'Melak, with its sleek yet menacing design provided the perfect link to bridge the gap.

‘Dralath’ comes from the Lost Era novel “Vulcan’s Heart”. There is very little background information on this character, so I chose to take my own path—crafting him into something of a cross between US Gen. George Patton and characters like Dukat, Shinzon and Grand Admiral Thrawn (from Star Wars). From here, I kept going a bit until I had crafted what I felt was the perfect astro-political backdrop for this ship.

Also, in terms of technology, I pegged V’Melak as the first vessel to use a forced quantum singularity as a power source—this technology (first seen in TNG) in my mind being too exotic to have a place on any vessel of the TMP era. With no dimensions given by the original creators/modelers, I came up with these here right off the cuff and described the ship in this proper size context—bigger than a destroyer or frigate, but still smaller than the heavy cruisers and larger leviathans like D’Deridex.

Also, with the Navy’s move towards smaller, swifter designs (i.e. Norexan), I left open the possibility for V’Melak to re-enter service (albeit heavily updated).