

# KEARSARGE

## CLASS LIGHT CRUISER



Intended to help Starfleet reverse its numerical deficit vis-à-vis the Imperial Klingon Defense Forces (IKDF), the *Kearsarge* (CL 1500) class Light Cruiser initially held promise, but was ultimately discarded, though not before establishing a legacy that continues to live on to this day.

Block obsolescence in the 2170's followed by a period of fecklessness, indecision and total paralysis when it came to procurement left Starfleet a shadow of its immediate post-war self. This also prevented starships of the *Baton Rouge* generation from coming into their own and being able to influence the makeup of the fleet. The advent of the Class I era brought with it positive signs of change, but decades of paralysis had made the admiralty timid and complacent and kept the initial production lot of the *Saladin* (DD 500) class Destroyer comparatively low—a mere 20 ships.

What it was left then were these plus comparable or slightly larger numbers of older *Baton Rouge* (CA 1300), *Anton* (CA 1825) and *Detroyat* (DH 1100) class ships. Mixed formations proved capable under pressure or in a pinch, but such reliance was hardly a long-term solution and spelled disaster in the future. While Class I procurement continued, the admiralty appeared exasperated. Their single gesture aimed at ameliorating the situation—hurriedly updating the *Marklin* (DH 1200) class design and rushing it into production as a Class I, rather than *Baton Rouge*-era design—did work initially. Originally intended to replace *Detroyat*, *Marklin* had fighter-like agility and a highly unorthodox 8 torpedo tubes. In the hands of a skilled commander, it proved itself to be a potent weapon on numerous occasions.

The key issues that was holding the fleet back during these years and one that caused much debate and consternation throughout the admiralty was the ratio between Destroyers and Cruisers. The latter was (and continues to be) the centerpiece of fleet strategy. Skewing larger and proving capable in times of peace as well as conflict, they gave the most 'bang for the buck'. They were not without their drawbacks though, their long construction times and relatively small production lots cast an air of prestige around them, making fleet commanders and others in upper echelons reticent to send them on missions that presented outsized measures of risk or danger. The former on the other hand was conceived and designed with a much tighter focus, however slapdash designs and wildly inconsistent performance continued to prevent the category from gaining additional relevance.

Given the continued reliance on *Detroyat*, production of the all-new *Saladin* and rush of *Marklin* into service, fleet planners and others from the ASDB turned their attention to the Cruiser part of the ratio. Here, proposals fell into two general categories—radical upgrades of *Baton Rouge* and/or the smaller *Anton* or designing and constructing a new Cruiser class altogether. This was actually an easier choice to make than it appeared. Though many believe they were denied a fair chance to prove themselves in service, *Baton Rouge* and *Anton* in particular were little loved. When it came to the kind of upgrades that were proposed, applying them to the Romulan War-era *Yorktown* class was much more palatable and popular. A new Cruiser class it was then.

As with *Saladin*, this new class—codenamed *Kearsarge*—featured a relatively simple design centered around a single, saucer-shaped hull section. Given the general mission

of deterrence and expected capabilities that went along with it, the saucer was redesigned from fleet standard—upper and lower structural frames mounted farther apart on strengthened outer stringers contributing to an increased thickness and greater overall diameter. The bridge module sat atop a two-tiered low profile hull section that extended aft. Here was located a minimal engineering compartment, based loosely on that of *Saladin* while two *PB-32-‘S’* series nacelles were attached on canted booms to port and starboard.

Given the difficulties *Saladin* was experiencing with just a single full-size nacelle, the ASDB didn't want to hamper a class of this importance, so instead they chose to cut the *PB-32* down, creating a shortened 'S' model. Internally, they were basically the same, components being adjusted for size only. What kept them able to provide performance that was not only comparable, but actually slightly better than the aforementioned Destroyer was specialized control software programmed to maintain a higher than normal plasma flow through reinforced warp coils.

While externally, *Kearsarge* may have looked like just another member of the slowly expanding Class I family, at its core, it was a much more basic design. The propulsion system and associated control & monitoring software were the most complicated components and took the most time to engineer and integrate. Otherwise, other major components were lifted from other classes (*Saladin* donating its navigational deflector dish and sensor systems). Armament, arguably the central factor behind the class' existence, was patterned after larger ships however. Maximizing the offensive punch, engineers eschewed the use of standard, two-emitter phase 'banks'. One was included at the forward-ventral location, but dorsally, three emitters were grouped together in what were the first phase 'batteries' at the forward, port and starboard locations. An additional torpedo launcher was installed as well at the customary deck 3 location. The reduction in crew compliment allowed for some officers' quarters on deck 4 to be eliminated, replaced by enlarged torpedo magazines (transported up to the launcher tubes on elevated platforms).

This wholesale increase in firepower was tied into the same fire control system used on the *Yorktown* class. Considered highly experimental when the now-elderly Battleship class entered service, it allowed the weapon systems—either phase cannons or torpedo launchers—to acquire, track and engage targets semi-autonomously (based on pre-defined input). As with this, *Kearsarge* utilized a slightly modified version of the deflector shield system from the larger *Detroyat*. Given the increase in power generation capability, the system's rated capacity was only slightly lower (225,790 terrajoules).

Lacking the 9 science labs or rudimentary small craft capability of the Destroyer it was intended to complement, there remained an abundance of room after the accommodations for the 290 officers and crew were factored in. The admiralty's favored measure with early classes such as this, was to use excess space for troop accommodations. With the fleet's logistical capabilities still sorely lacking though, excess space was designed with modularity in mind so that it could be repurposed in the field with a minimum of effort to accommodate troops, cargo or some mixture of the two depending on specific requirements.

A single production lot of 40 ships, all in service by 2235, did much to burnish Starfleet's combat capabilities and boost deterrence. By 2240 however, they had become the most obvious symptoms of the fleet's dysfunction and by extension, had become somewhat derided as well.

Addressing the admiralty's reticence to utilize the *Constitution* class in offensive/defensive roles (as well as boost the fleet's exploratory capabilities), the *Pyotr Velikiy* (CA 1670) class became the new 'tip of the spear', displacing the antiquated *Yorktown*. More notable though was the emergence of the 'Frigate' as a distinct ship type. Typified by the new *Surya* (FF 1850) class, they were not strictly combat vessels, but more 'multi-mission' in a manner similar to *Pyotr Velikiy*. Lacking many of the scientific accretions found on larger Cruisers or smaller Surveyors, these general-purpose workhorses became the new backbone of the fleet's combat effort.

This wasn't to say that Starfleet couldn't use or didn't need *Kearsarge* though. The biggest strength of the IKDF lay in the total number of ships they could field, a number that ran into the hundreds if not markedly higher. So despite the mission overlap, the diminutive Light Cruiser found itself put to work straight away.

In terms of overall fleet planning and deployment, the 'Light Cruiser' and more widely used Heavy Destroyer classifications became interchangeable. *Kearsarge* then was used as an escort, sparsely at first, but more prominently as time went on—mounting losses among the reserves causing *Saladin* to be pulled off the front lines to assume more defensive roles. Present at just about every major battle, it (like the larger *Detroyat* that was used in the same capacity) had a rather unremarkable record in combat when compared to larger vessels.

Typical of this was the Battle of Nozseca VIII in 2247. 4 years prior, 5 *Kearsarges* (*Alabama*/CL 1502, *Repulse*/CL 1503, *Calypso*/CL 1507, *Beowulf*/CL 1509, *Iron Horse*/CL 1513) formed the core of an expeditionary squadron tasked with establishing and supporting an intelligence gathering outpost on that tropical world. With 4 phase cannons surrounding it as well as an impressive array of ground forces (a SFMC Ranger Battalion and a Special Forces Platoon), it was quite well defended. During the war's early years, the only IKDF assets that bothered to test those defenses were mixed formations of *G-1* class Gunboats and *F-5* class Frigates. Though more maneuverable, they were still easy pickings for the Light Cruisers, a pair of *Loknar* (FF 2700) class Frigates and a trio of the fleet's newest *Larson* (DH 4300) class Destroyers.

Unbeknownst to these forces, the target on their backs got bigger and bigger with successive Klingons defeats and the mounting strain on their logistical apparatus. By 2247, they no longer viewed this outpost as an irritant, but rather a serious obstacle to their efforts to establish a beachhead inside Federation space. In November, they sent a squadron of their new *D-7* class Battlecruiser, 2 *D-6* squadrons and multiple formations of other, smaller ships to wipe out the outpost and its support in orbit.

The results as one could imagine, were sadly predictable. Though *Loknar* possessed the strongest shields, *Larson* the best maneuverability and *Kearsarge* the best firepower,

Klingon numbers as well as brute force (heavy armor plating and more powerful disruptors) won out. The majority of the expeditionary squadron was destroyed, save for the *Alabama*, *Chicago* (FF 2738) and *Agincourt* (DD 4314) which were crippled and had begun to drift out of the combat area before reinforcements warped into the area and eliminated the bulk of the Klingon presence.

By this point, Starfleet's reserves were all but eliminated, causing the entire *Loknar* class to be reassigned to defensive roles (augmenting *Saladin* and fomenting the concept of 'active reserves'). Their Destroyer force had also expanded with the introduction of *Kiaga* (DD 820). Armed with powerful pulse phaser cannons, protected by Cruiser-strength shields and featuring fighter-like maneuverability, it reinvigorated the fleet's perimeter-action force. Despite its notable presence at the Nostveg Engagement in February 2248, the class' main objective remained securing and protecting the integrity of the Federation/Klingon border.

In August, 2 *Kearsarge* squadrons joined *Pyotr Velikiy*, *Detroyat*, *Surya*, *Coventry* (FH 1230) and a number of Destroyer squadrons in forming *Task Force Delta*. Led by what little reserves remained (Starfleet electing to not risk putting security of vital territory in the hands of ineffective classes like *Baton Rouge* or *Anton*), their task was to secure Sector 23-H. A backwater area that held no real value on its own, it provided access to other more vital sectors, any of the systems proving to be a tempting target for a Klingon force desperate to establish a beachhead and build up their logistics. Imposing on its own, Starfleet supported the task force with a larger battle group of more powerful classes as a contingency and hid it away in a nearby asteroid field.

For all the sheer firepower assembled, this would turn out to be one of Starfleet's worst defeats yet. The Klingons sacrificed a large number of Gunboats, Frigates and even some *D-5* class Cruisers, but those *D-5*'s were armed with superior disruptors and *D-6* paired those with stronger shields and formidable armor plating. Starfleet's phase cannons could do comparatively little damage and their total task force was quickly hollowed out. Expending the bulk of their torpedo stores, the *Moscow* (CA 1327) and *Tehran* (CA 1321) led the surviving reserves in a snap charge forward, buying their new compatriots time to escape away towards Klaf, 27 light years away, before managing to retreat themselves.

A subsequent defeat at Giso in October (in which ships of a task force were again, either destroyed or routed) served as the impetus for Starfleet to finally develop a replacement for and phase out the woefully ineffective phase cannon. Victories at Kesse in December and then Webirty and Zal Vhros in February of 2249 kept the Klingons off balance and out of Federation space, causing a general lull in fighting and buying time for beleaguered forces to cycle through the front-line shipyards at Thranstor and Beta Antares to receive their new phaser weaponry beginning in March. Though not able to punch through Klingon defenses in a single barrage, preliminary testing showed sustained fire able to defeat these defenses in a fraction of the time and using a fraction of the energy compared to particle-based weapons.

Grouped together in batteries again, phasers automatically increased the relevance of *Kearsarge* and other ships of similar size. With other enhancements such as *PB-32-'S'* series warp nacelles and new duotronic computer systems, the difference between these ships and larger Frigates such as *Surya* shrank to the point where they were nearly imperceptible, the fleet's overall combat power jumping dramatically once refits were complete.

The first test of these new weapons came at Thranstor in July. Desperation in the ranks of the IKDF had nearly reached a fever pitch and they had pinned their last hopes on two massive offensive thrusts into Federation territory. One would destroy Starbase 15 and the other would pacify the Adhara system (both clearing the way for further advances).

Thranstor stood between the Klingons and Adhara though and needed to be pacified first. The site of Starfleet's largest shipbuilding complex outside the core systems, it was heavily defended by a number of fixed installations and other fortifications (weapons platforms etc) and garrisoned by over 200 starships, including two *Kearsarge* squadrons holding station around Thranstor III.

Given extensive sensor masking in place, the Klingons only detected a small reserve force protecting the shipyards upon their approach. Starfleet let the engagement commence before sending forces in from three directions, completely surrounding the Klingons. Protecting the *Resurgent* (FH 1240) and *Auriga* (FH 1241), *Kearsarges* led by the *Grozny* (CL 1516) and *Iowa* (CL 1525) laid down blistering fire, engaging multiple ships at once and accumulating the most kills of the entire battle.

Following this victory, internal political strife—including a coup attempt by a high ranking IKDF Admiral and the defection to Starfleet of another—began to eat away at the Klingon war effort. Soon, Starfleet not only had the advantage in terms of numbers and logistics, but intelligence as well. Before they could carry out their plans to end the war as prescribed in *Operation Argus Redoubt*, they first had to concern themselves with the distant Karag and Grank systems.

The former was a key logistical linchpin for the IKDF, serving as a transshipment point for supplies and personnel 142 light years from the front lines. The latter was the system where the remainder of their front-line forces were concentrated, repairing, rearming and reforming for another offensive push.

Due to Karag's extreme distance, *Kearsarge* was disregarded in favor of larger ships with more specialized supporting capabilities. When it came to Grank however, it played a more significant role. As was typical during larger engagements, larger Frigates, Cruisers and patrol combatants led the way. Given their unique armament distribution, *Kearsarge* and *Marklin* class ships were grouped into 'cavalry squadrons'. Once Starfleet's aggressor squadron (made up of various captured Klingon ships and crewed by volunteers) moved in, relayed force composition & positional data and commenced the battle with an opening salvo of torpedoes, cavalry squadrons led the way with fierce volleys of fire before breaking off and retreating behind their larger, more powerful compatriots.

Severely outnumbered and nearly completely surrounded, the single *D-6* and single *D-7* squadrons were eventually vanquished in their entirety, though not before dealing out heavy levels of punishment and damage to several Starfleet vessels themselves.

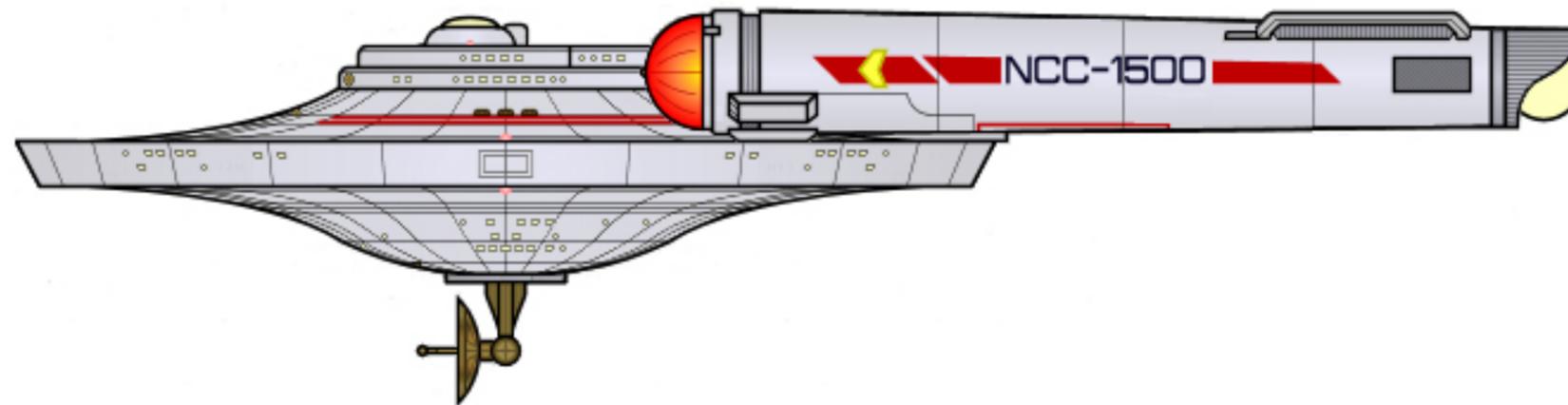
With these victories at Karag and Grank, Starfleet was free to concentrate solely on the fight at Kolm-An in June of 2250. Over 900 starships, 1200 starfighters and 40,000 personnel were marshaled to take on the IKDF who maintained a significant presence 'Kolmana' as it was formerly known. The largest and heaviest classes (also, *Marklin* due to its heavy torpedo armament) were assigned to engage and destroy the stations and other fixed targets. Along with other stalwart classes, *Kearsarge* was tasked with engaging Klingon capital ships, which for the most part consisted of *D-5*, *D-6* and *D-7* Cruiser classes. Despite overwhelming numbers and generally superior weaponry, these tough little ships could not escape as unscathed as in previous encounters—the *Prince Eugen*/CL 1540, *Richelieu*/CL 1519, *Chimera*/CL 1527 and *North Carolina*/CL 1540 all lost to Klingon fire. Once the IKDF forces were eliminated, the remaining ships participated in sterilizing the planet via heavy photon torpedo bombardment.

Following this victory and the Empire subsequently suing for peace, Starfleet began a process of realignment in support of 2 overall goals—defense/rapid response and exploration/scientific study. In support of the former, a unifying 'spherical defense' strategy was developed. The basic premise had Federation space organized in a number of layers, ships in the center layer (in/around the core systems) being the largest and most powerful and gradually decreasing in size until one reached the outermost layer (frontier/rimward systems).

Advances in computer and electronic warfare systems as well as directed energy weaponry (pulse phaser cannons) and deflector shield technology drove the development of a number of new classes, the majority of which would be superseded in decades to come once the 'linear warp revolution' took hold. Though *Kearsarge* looked set to join them, consigned as it was to missions of patrol and interdiction (anti-piracy), its very existence and cumulative combat record convinced Starfleet of the need for a dedicated strike/attack platform larger than *Kiaga* and better able to oppose the IKDF's principal capital ship classes.

From the prototype *USS Decatur* (CSX 2500) constructed in 2267, came a more advanced version in 2269 that by 2270, would become the *Belknap* (CS 2500) class Strike Cruiser. Sacrificing scientific/exploratory capabilities for higher speed and greater endurance, *Belknap* featured the same heavy armament and fire control systems as contemporary Cruisers like the upcoming *Constitution II* (CH 1700) and *Enterprise* (CH 1701) classes and the same exotic sensor, communications and electronic warfare systems as *Akula*, making it a potent offensive tool. Spawning what would become a diverse family of classes that were eventually replaced by one (*Exeter*) towards the end of the 23<sup>rd</sup> century, it is this upon which *Kearsarge*'s legacy rests and it is this which many historians remember her for.

Beginning in mid-2272, ships of the class were uprated to the *Kearsarge II* standard, all being uprated by the end of 2273.



**Class** Kearsarge  
**Classification** Light Cruiser

**Service** 2240-2273  
**Number Active** 0

**Length** 212m  
**Beam** 122m  
**Height** 47m

**Decks** 14

**Mass** 441,100 metric tons

**Compliment** 290

**Armament**

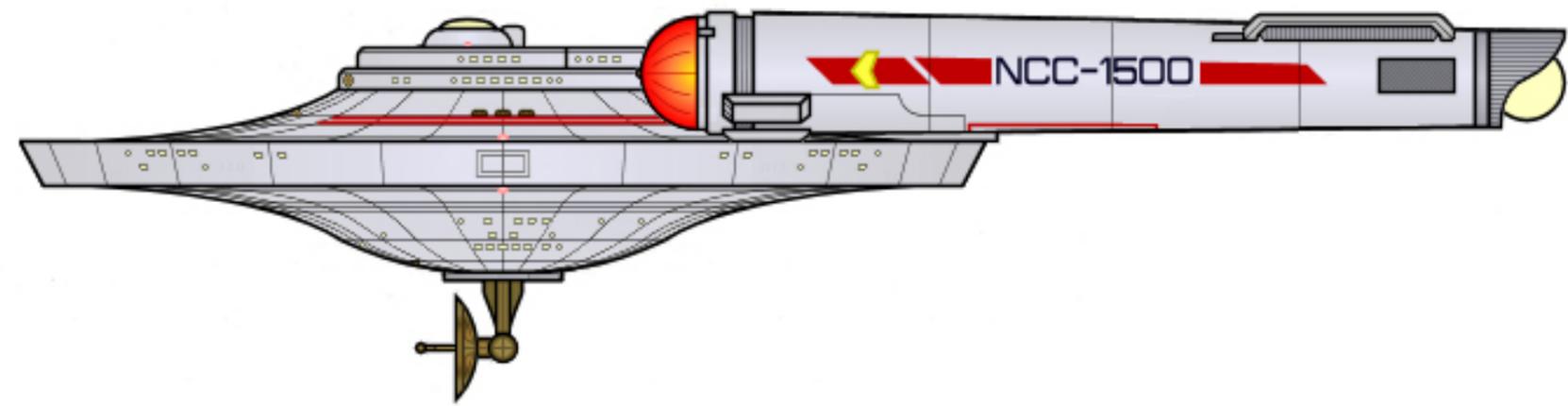
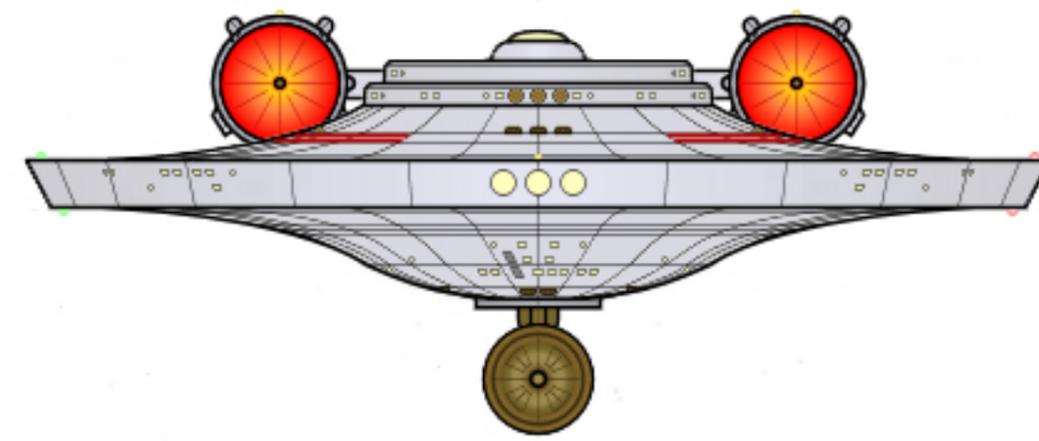
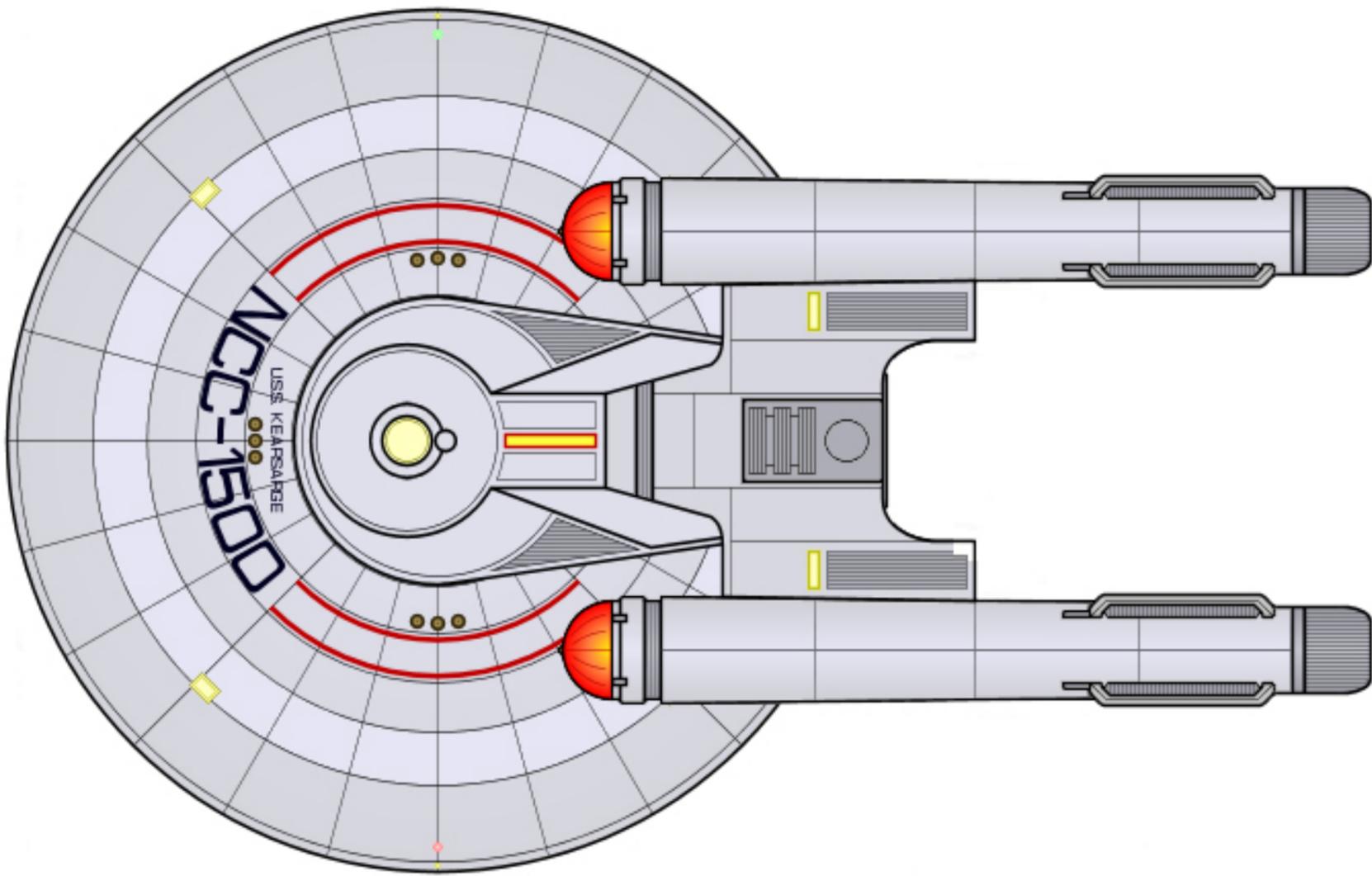
3 Phase Batteries (2240-49)  
 1 Phase Bank (2240-49)  
 3 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Torpedo Launchers (2240-73)

3 Type VI Phaser Batteries (2249-73)  
 1 Type VI Phaser Bank (2249-73)

**Defense Systems**

Standard Deflector Shield System  
 total capacity 225,790 terajoules (2240-61)  
 362,915 terajoules (2261-71)

Heavy Monotanium Single Hull



# Editor's Annotations

Being a Star Fleet Battles (SFB) rather than a FASA design, I didn't really think there'd be a whole lot to do when it came to writing a proper history for *Kearsarge*. Given Starfleet's Destroyer difficulty during these early years though as well as their propensity for favoring more heavily armed ships, fitting it in to my overall Four Years War narrative worked well.

Even though it's somewhat of a placeholder class, something Starfleet came up with in a pinch to improve their combat ability, I didn't want its legacy to be entirely dictated by combat. So that's why I described its wartime activities in a more general fashion (at least compared to *Surya/Coventry*). Given the reason why the class was produced and the manner in which Starfleet used it, I thought ahead and made it the 'genesis' of Starfleet's later strike cruiser family (*Belknap/Dahlgren* – see the last para.). Going further, if one accepts my *Exeter* class CB (a single class which replaced the strike cruisers/dreadnoughts) as being a descendant of *Kearsarge*, then this lineage can be extended well into the 24<sup>th</sup> Century—the *Korolev*, *Akira* and even *Prometheus* classes produced to fill this specific niche.

# Bibliography

Logo—Kristian “Reverend” Trigwell ([Gallery @ Star Trek Minutiae](#))  
Design—Star Fleet Battles/Amarillo Design Bureau, Inc./Steve Cole  
Schematics—Neale “Vance” Davidson ([Jaynz](#))