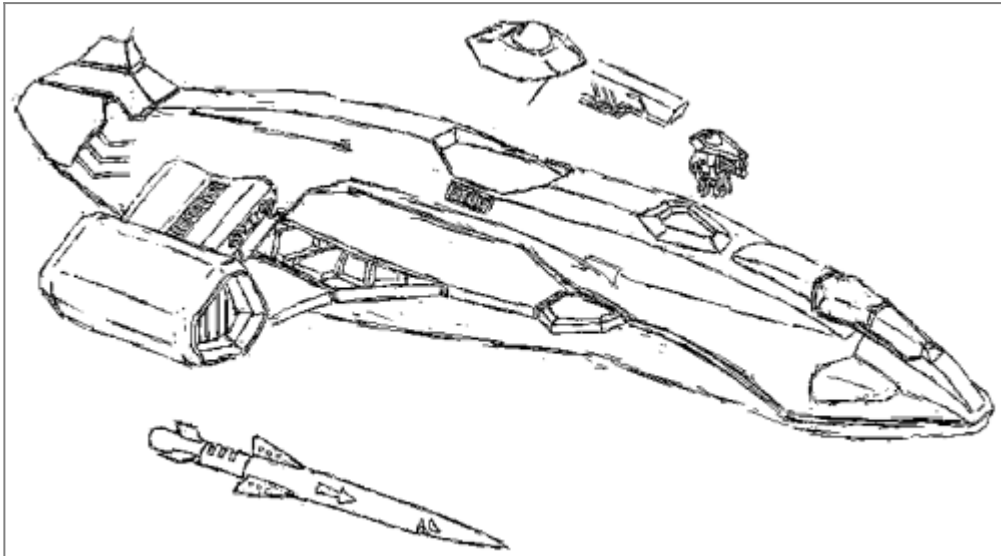


Phantasm Gunship



Note: Incomplete concept art. Click to zoom.

“The galaxy blesses us with virtually infinite energy in the form of stars, vast electromagnetic generators whose fruits are ripe for the harvest. If life gives you lemons, you brew lemon cider. If life gives you starlight, building antimatter reactors or plasma drives seems kind of redundant, doesn't it? How odd the ways of these aliens. Or, perhaps it is we who are odd; perhaps lightriding comes so naturally to us that we won't even begin to consider anything else.” - **Spacecase Hex Five Nine 59-1372-5684 The Art of Never Again, Chapter 770: On Sails of Crystal Light**

About the Phantasm

The Phantasm is a drone gunboat model which is essentially the bastard child of an aerospace fighter and a starship; based on the idea of squeezing starship-grade weaponry into a high speed weapons platform. The chassis uses inertial dampening technology to reduce the effective mass of the vessel, making it far more agile than typical vessels of its size class. It can reduce its mass to maneuver like a light fighter under its gravimetric propulsion, or reduce it even further to “float” on magnetic fields or solar energy, used in conjunction with energy sails. Large packs of these vessels and their variants can be seen drifting in Free State territory as pilots playfully ride solar flares, or slingshot around stellar bodies in competitive races.

With its extreme agility and low profile comes some difficulties in operating this vessel. Pilots must know when to increase the effective mass of their vessel lest they be pushed off the battlefield by from a single weapons hit, or reduce effective mass to “ride out” the concussion from an explosion and avoid the brunt of the blast. Adjusting energy sail position and strength to maneuver in combat situations is a task unto itself, and course corrections brought on by weapons fire add a whole new degree of complexity to navigation. As such, its longevity comes more from its unpredictable flight patterns than its sheer agility.

The name Phantasm derives from the passive propulsion of the ship. Since they lack the emissions of powerful reactors and maneuver drives, they are difficult to detect at long ranges, even while maneuvering. When combined with their active stealth shielding they can spoof themselves as anything from other vessels to asteroids. This gives them a unique ability to leap from ambush, or provide

reinforcement, without warning.

Phantasms receive all their power by absorbing ambient energy; either from stars themselves, or from energy weaponry. Unless accompanied by a vessel to power them, Phantasms are incapable of prolonged deep space travel, though they may store enough energy for shorter missions.

History and Background

Small high speed solar sailing vessels have been used for all of recorded history by the Freespacers. Solar skiffs were used in everything from exploration to interplanetary races – the largest sport in the Free State.

With the technological aid provided by Nepleslia and the realization for military forces, the call for combat vessels was set forth. Following the decentralized policy of anarchist doctrine, it was opted that many smaller high speed vessels were preferable. The solar skiff schematic was given a serious overhaul, and the result was the Phantasm.

Statistics and Performance

Organizations Using This Vessel: The Free State Type: Stealth/Fast Attack Craft Class: Id-E23-1A Designer: Polysentience, Intelligent Design Node Manufacturer: The Free State Production: Mass production Crew: Autonomous; Two crew if manually operated Appearance:

Dimensions

Length: 15 meters Width: 20 meters (including wingspan) Height: 10 meters Decks: 1 Mass: 0.00000001~150 Tonnes

Propulsion and Range

Speed (STL): 0.35c **Speed (Hyperspace Fold):** 0.2 ly/m Range: Unlimited Lifespan: Thirty years Refit Cycle: Five years

Inside the Ship

The vessel itself, being designed as a [SI](#)-piloted vessel, lacks many of the common features of inhabited vessels. There is no life support, no resting areas, no food stocks, and no washrooms. The assumption is that if passengers do need to board they will only be inside for a short while, so pressure suits should suffice.

Cockpit

The so-called cockpit is no more than a cramped closet whose walls are covered in a confusing mess of wiring and maintenance panels and internal computing systems. The only item of note is several computer monitors, with a pair of makeshift seats (which are actually little else than a pair of spare part crates). However, there is a neural jack access that will allow a Freespacer to pilot the vessel, and another to operate peripheral equipment.

Main Compartment

The vessel is a single open corridor that spans the entire length of the vessel. To each side are the bulk of the vessel's internal equipment; peripheral support systems, capacitors, and secondary computational equipment. To the common eye it appears to be little else than a nightmare of circuitry and machinery, but drones can navigate and find whatever they are searching for with little trouble. Several (1x1 foot) small maintenance tunnels branch off from this hall which are used for smaller maintenance drones.

Drone Bay

At the rear of the bay is a small cargo compartment containing a pair of [Junker](#) drones, which when activated will seek out damage and automatically repair it. In addition to housing many cabinets containing spare parts, there are two charging platforms where Junker drones remain idle until needed.

Ship Systems

Inertialess Drive

In place of traditional propulsion system is an inertialess drive, which is essentially a souped-up model of the combined inertial dampener and artificial gravity systems used inside most starships. The device generates an antigravity field that reduces the gravity and the effective mass of a starship. This allows for less energy to move the entire mass of the ship. By manipulating antigravity the device can also be used as an engine, [pushing] away from other objects in space in order to propel the ship.

This device may also double as a FTL engine; the ship propels itself at speeds many times the speed of light by generating continuum distortions and nesting them to create asymmetric peristaltic fields. This allows the ship to travel thousands of times the speed of light. Distortion-based systems allow the ship to stop or move nearly instantly because the ship has not "moved."

Prism Shield-Sails

Directional force fields are used to 'catch' magnetic fields or stellar energy, allowing a vessel to ride

them. Additionally, energy-based attacks can be filtered and refracted in such a way that part of the energy is let through to be absorbed by high-capacity Starlight Cell clusters. Though this means it can reduce the total strain on shield emitters, while simultaneously recharging itself during combat.

When running quiet a Phantasm can use its Prism Shield projectors on a low power setting to manipulate the way it absorbs and reflects ambient energy in order to disguise itself as debris or an asteroid on sensors, or even mimic the sensor signal of other vessels. This system can also be used to achieve partial cloaking, and when used in conjunction with its emissionless propulsion system and high agility, can make these vessels very hard to track. This low power setting can also be used to generate energy mirriors, which are use to concentrate greater solar energy onto Starlight Cells and increase energy harvesting rate.

Shield Rating: Standard Shielding

Starlight Cells

In an unusual twist for a combat vessel, the Phantasm receives its power totally from ambient energy. Composite voltaic cells of polymers and nano particles are used to form a multispectral radiant energy cells. Centuries of refining solar harvesting methods means that Starlight Cells can absorb most conceivable types of radiant energy, and with exceptional efficiency.

Due to reliance on ambient energy Phantasms can only hyperspace into systems with stars to replenish its energy post-jump, and generally must keep its operational area to a well-lit region of space. When accompanied by another class of vessel Phantasms may also absorb ambient energy from energy weapon blasts, or absorbing electromagnetic communication signals, thus giving a steady supply of energy. This function usually ensures vessels will almost never “die out” during combat, except in the unlikely chance they are fighting an opponent that uses only kinetic weapons.

10 Structural Points

Starlight Capacitors

The energy harvested from Starlight Cells are stored in four very high density capacitor banks located at the mid port and bow of the vessel. Normally capacitors of this density would be prohibitively heavy for any lighter craft, but thanks to the Inertialess Drive this is no longer an issue. Each of these is shielded by a buckypaper Faraday cage, which both shields their energy signatures from external sensors while shielding the vessel itself from the EM pulse that a capacitor might create if overloaded.

At full charge power reserves last for 96 hours of low-intensity shield use (passive sailing or running silent), or alternatively 2 hours of high-intensity shield use (combat mode), recharge rate not withstanding. Hyperspace jumps require at least two-thirds of a full capacitor charge. In high orbit around a star's corona, with mirror a full capacitor recharge takes only three hours.

Savant Computers

A pair of dedicated S.I. constructs, or [Savant Computers](#) act as the pilot and gunner for the vessel itself. These constructs are usually, but not always, self-aware entities with developing personalities. These can be disabled on manned versions of this vessel, but can be reactivated at any time - through whether the possibly angry S.I. will help you is another matter entirely.

Evanescent Wave Coupler

The Evanescent Wave Coupler standard means of FTL communication by the Freespacers, allowing the transfer of huge quantities over long distances or the coordination of fleet maneuvers. This system is backed up by secondary radio and laser communication systems.

The EWC may also be used to sap energy from compatible wireless energy transmitters, meaning these units have effectively unlimited energy assuming there are enough support vessels in proximity to power them.

Jumpbombs

Along the outside of the hull are inert combined counter-weight nuclear charges, the fissile fuel of which only becomes activated once exposed to a neutron trigger. When detonated these cause the ship to suddenly "jump" in a given direction. Though these may damage the ship's hull, the general consensus is that this is a much better alternative than a direct hit from an enemy fire. There are twelve of these bombs per gunship; two stored side-by-side at the center of each dimension (top, bottom, left, right, front, and rear) of the vessel.

Weapon Systems

The Phantasm mounts four small point-defense turrets, as well as a pair of identical main turrets (one on top, one on the bottom). While the point-defenses are generally fixed, the turret systems can be swapped with different weapons as needed. Unarmed versions of these craft are also available for use as interstellar light crew transports.

Modular Weapon Hardpoints

Note: Only two main turrets may be mounted at the same time, one above and one below the hull.

Pseudoflare

Location: Main hull turret (2) **Primary Purpose:** Fire Support **Damage:** Starship DR 3 **Range:** 1 AU

Rate of Fire: 30 rpm Payload 450 The 280mm Pseudoflare Artillery turret is designed to fire 30kt nuclear shells that can be set on either proximity or contact fuses. These weapons pack quite a punch in themselves, but are fitted with special additions to increase their deadliness; either HE-style rounds with depleted uranium shard shrapnel bursts, or HEAT shells whose contact detonation will melt an alloy payload, and turn it into a hypersonic jet of plasma. **===Red Mercury Blaster===** Location: Main hull turret (2) **Primary Purpose: Multirole** Damage: Starship DR 3 Range: 3 AU Rate of Fire: 20 rpm Payload 400

The Red Mercury blaster is actually a focusing assembly of multispectral radiation mirrors and a detonation chamber, reinforced by a structural integrity shield. A small fusion warhead is loaded into a blasting chamber, then injected with a canister of ballotechnic solution (chemicals that react readily when subjected to extreme pressures) called Red Mercury to act as a trigger catalyst. The device detonates, and both the thermal and electromagnetic energy is funneled and refracted out the barrel. This nuclear-pumped design results in a very intense burst of high frequency radiation, but at the unfortunate cost of being unable to maintain a steady beam like lower-powered systems.

Starjammer

Location: Main hull turret (2) **Primary Purpose: Anti-starship** **Damage: Starship DR 4** **Range: 1 AU** **Rate of Fire: Continuous** **Payload Unlimited** The Starjammer is a free electron laser that behaves like most traditional electromagnetic beam weapons. However, unlike traditional systems such as lasers these weapons do not use chemical or solid-state power sources. Rather, a relativistic electron stream is used in place of a focusing crystal or conductor, allowing it to generate a beam of a much wider frequency range than most directed energy weapons. These include frequencies such as those of microwaves, infrared radiation, visible light, ultraviolet radiation, and x-rays. This ability to change it's frequency to suit its target is obviously a tactical advantage that can be used to exploit an enemy's weaknesses. **====Fixed Weapon Hardpoints====** **====Warding Rune Autocannon====** Location: One on each corner of the craft (4) **Primary Purpose: Point defense autocannon** Damage: Starship DR 1 Range: 0.1 AU Rate of Fire: 8000 rpm per turret Payload 72000 rounds per turret

The Warding Rune is a twin-barreled 20mm point defense system utilizing a hybrid firing system (chemical propellant and magnetic acceleration). This system fires an anti-armor tungsten alloy penetrator encased in a ferrous alloy shell.

Baby Nuke EMP Torpedo

Location: One on each side **Primary Purpose: Anti-starship** ****Damage: Starship DR 4** **Range: 0.5 AU** **Payload 2**

A powerful multi-gigaton nuclear warhead originally designed for demolition purposes. These weapons are tampered for maximum ionizing effect so as to wreak the most havoc upon both smaller craft and larger ones through electronics disruption on top of the normal destructive effects of a nuclear device. Each torpedo is self-guided, possessing a [Savant Tactical/Guidance Construct](#) for navigation.

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