

## **Principles of Gorn Confederation Starship Construction**

Disclaimer: The following contains assessments made by the author. Some of the conclusions may not be consistent with Star Trek canon and most definitely will not be consistent with the FASA interpretation of the species. Some of the conclusions may require a rethinking of the existing examples of Gorn ships, like the MA-12 and the BH-2. Hopefully, this little essay will provide a stimulus to create more innovative ships for not only the Gorn, but for the other Trek races as well.

### The Species of Gorn

As far as it is known, the Gorn are a race of intelligent reptilian bipeds, significantly larger and stronger than humans, and based on the limited encounters with the race, seem aggressive and extremely territorial. Paleontologists theorize that the Gorn evolved from larger reptilian carnivores, not unlike those that roamed the Earth millions of years ago. Had not the dinosaurs fell extinct to an asteroid impact, the predominant intelligent race of the Earth may not have been unlike the Gorn (some extremist theories speculate that indeed the Gorn have their roots on the Earth, their ancestors having been transplanted by the Preservers before the dinosaur extinction).

Accepting the premise that the Gorn are descended from a large reptile like the terran dinosaur, a few suppositions can be made about Gorn physiology. The Gorn, assuming our encounters represent an accurate sample of the entire species, still retain sharp fangs, great strength and relatively large size. This observation suggests that the ancestors of the Gorn were large, carnivorous reptiles. Most Paleontologists agree that large reptiles (like the terran Tyrannosaurus Rex) were carnivorous scavengers that fed on carrion. Their massive size and strength, used mainly to drag and strip carcasses, were their defense against other predatory species. The Tyrannosaurus traveled in small hunting packs, and was very protective of its immediate territory, a trait perhaps shared by the Gorn ancestors.

It remains unknown how much the Gorn have lost and gained through the evolutionary process without knowing anything about the Gorn home world or its indigenous species. The limited contact with the Gorn, however, supports many of the conclusions proposed by scientists.

### Gorn Construction Philosophy

Gorn ship construction resounds in the general epithet that has carried their species through millions of years of evolution: Size and power. The most prominent characteristic of Gorn ships is their immense size. Thick, dense hull plates, layers of redundant systems, and heavy internal shielding makes these vessels some of the most massive in known space. Several factors substantiate a more pragmatic need for size than just evolution.

First, the lack of efficient shield generators make the need for a strong superstructure essential to withstand the attack of modern ship to ship weaponry. Intercepted Romulan communications from the Gorn border tell that the heralded Romulan Plasma weapon had limited effect on the monstrous ships during border encounters.

Second, Gorn ships serve primarily as massive weapons platforms, hence adding a considerable amount of mass to the vessel. Their construction principles bear little credence for conservation of size, so, Gorn ship borne weapons weigh considerably more than comparable designs of other space faring cultures.

Third, the Gorn, until recently, have always used internal warp power plants and cores, further necessitating the need for heavy shielding from both internal and external damage. Also, without the option of jettisoning a damaged drive, Gorn ship builders try to protect the ship and crew by surrounding the drive with a series of protective blast shields and redundant safety systems.

An interesting note is that Gorn ship designs place their bridge at the center of the vessel, near the ship's main power plant. Integrated with the warp engine's shielding and safety systems, it is nestled in the best-protected area of the ship.

Despite their size, Gorn vessels have spartan accommodations for its crewmembers. The space taken up by all the equipment leaves very little for the ones that must maintain them. It's suspected that the Gorn have a very structured, tribal or militant society that doesn't allow creature comforts for its military service personnel.

### Gorn Technology

Reports from intelligence and races close to the Gorn show a variety of technologies in their starship designs. Certain inconsistencies have been discovered particularly in the reports regarding the ships' weaponry. Later ship weapon designs take leaps in innovation and entirely new weapons appear that can be considered inconsistent with Gorn technological advancement in other areas such as warp design and shielding. This suggests that perhaps the Gorn are acquiring technologies from other races, rather than developing them themselves, which is consistent with their scavenging nature, and would explain sudden appearances of photon and plasma weapon technology. Gorn concentration on offensive weaponry and less on defensive shielding and maneuverability further suggests the notion that Gorn predominately steal technology from other races. It's also suspected that the Gorn seldom design and build new vessels, but consistently upgrade existing types with developed or copied technology.

### Gorn Ship Combat Tactics

Gorn ships are often found alone, and in very rare instances, found in small groups of three to five capital vessels, which is consistent with their scavenger nature. The capital vessels are so large and well armed that they rarely need escorts. Even though the Gorn are surrounded by at least three major star faring races (Federation, Romulans and Tholians) that exhibit superior ships designs and weapons, the Gorn vessels often prevail against superior numbers and technology. Gorn ships produce excessive power and absorb so much damage that once the attacking vessel or vessels come within the Gorn weapons' ranges they're obliterated. In fleet actions, the smaller capital ships try to corral opposing ships into the firing arcs of the larger vessel or distract the vessels until the lumbering ship moves into range.

### Gorn Ship Classes

It is unknown how the Gorn designate their ship classes, and are presented for comparison. Generally, the Gorn Navy does not produce 'small' capital vessels. In fact, Gorn vessels in categorized classes are several sizes larger than their counterparts from other races. For example, Gorn destroyers over class XV would not be unusual. The Gorn Navy doesn't seem to produce support vessels such as escorts and cutters, because it doesn't seem to fit within their construction paradigm. They do, of course, produce shuttles and transports of varying sizes for the private sector and existing designs from subjugated races also exist.

### Gorn Weapons

The Gorn Navy utilizes a wide variety of ship-borne weaponry and incorporate new ones as soon as they are acquired from captured vessels. That is not to suggest that the Gorn do not invent their own or improve upon captured designs. Early encounters showed the Gorn using a plasma torpedo less advanced than the Romulan design, a beam weapon of concentrated radiation, and the common blaster which is still in use. Recent encounters shows newer Gorn ships (or upgrades) mounting plasma weapons, phaser weapons (possibly of Federation or Romulan design), and a primitive version of the photon torpedo. Although many of the newer weapons are of other races' designs, they continue to suffer from the same disadvantage as the older Gorn weapons: Short ranges. Engineers speculate that the Gorn power plants produce an abundant amount of power for these systems, but , their buffers cannot support the delicate systems that give them the superior range and tend to overload them.

### Gorn Shields

Gorn shielding systems are the least advanced amongst all the known races. It may be that their shield generators suffer a similar overload problem as their weapon systems do, or it may be that Gorn design philosophy does not emphasize shielding and concentrate more on stronger hull designs.