The Hows and Whys Of Building A Specialized Combat Fleet

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Introduction

This guide is written strictly to outline how to properly build and tech a specialized fleet. Although certain sections touch briefly on combat, this guide is not designed to provide an in depth explanation on how to properly apply each of these fleets. It presupposes that the reader already has a basic working knowledge of the game's combat mechanics, unit characteristics, and terminology.

Whether you are doing a jump gate crash, recall trap, blob crash, or even any other simple fleet vs. fleet combat, the bottom line it is that it is much more effective to have a lot of one combat unit type rather than having a little bit of everything. This guide includes an example of what I consider to be every type of valid mobile fleet spec option. It explains everything that you need to know about choosing a unit type to specialize in that fits your playing style and how to specialize your research technologies in order to build an optimal performance combat fleet.

All of the suggested fleet compositions in this guide strive to maximize the combat unit percentage of your mobile fleet by minimizing the amount of resources wasted on building non-combat units. Doing so will result in larger and more specialized finisher fleets, which means you can destroy larger enemy fleets for better ratios. The benefit of this strategy is especially useful and noticeable during large scale blob crashes where the likelihood of loosing all of your mobile fleet is very high. A fleet with pure combat units will perform better against a fleet with a large number of non-combat units in it, or against a fleet that has already sent its non-combat units away from the battle for safety.

Now I understand that different players have different experiences and preferences and will tweak their fleets accordingly and that is perfectly ok. Every server and every player and every situation is different. There is really no ultimate authority on what is right or what is wrong, only what is better or worse for certain situations.

Thank you for taking the time to read my guide. Feel free to forward any further questions, comments, concerns, or advice about this guide to me in-game via PM.

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Specialized Fleet Types

Fleet Type:
Fighter Swarm

Primary Purpose:
Fighter Drop
Fighter Swarm

Units Involved:
Fighters, Fleet Carriers,

Ratio of Units:
Mass Fighters with enough Fleet Carriers to transport them all

Unit Rationale:
A Fighter fleet is a good option for any player who has an account with a low production capacity or one who is rebuilding their mobile fleet from scratch. I say this because a Fighter drop is not dependant on fleet size. If player A has 500k Fighters and player B has 5m Fighters, they will both get the exact same ratio when doing a 500k Fighter drop. You do not need to worry about out-producing the competition in order for your fleet to be larger than your target. So even if your fleet is significantly smaller than your opponent's, you are still just as effective a member of the guild as any other player.

A Fighter swarm thrives because they will never run out of profitable targets. Every Jump Gate crash needs Fighter droppers to set up the finishing attacks. Fighter swarms are also the best alternative for killing enemy Frigate fleets and Cruiser fleets (if you have enough) if no Leviathans are available to shield crush them. Lastly, Fighter swarms are amazing at farming by pillaging bases for minimal losses.

The biggest problem with a Fighter Swarm is that less than 50% of the units that you build will actually be combat units. This means that a lot of resources are spent building Fleet Carriers, which gives you much less combat units to play with. It also makes you a very vulnerable target to any enemy shielded units.

The key to being a successful fighter dropper is having an accurate Battle Calculator. I highly recommend learning how to use the KaHaR calculator to calculate the most accurate battle simulations. It even has a feature on it that will auto-calculate how many Fighters you need to drop in order to destroy all of the targets unshielded units with your drop.

Another nice thing about Fighter swarms is that it is easy to re-spec into any other fleet type if you want to change things up a little bit. Any fleet types that you convert to will benefit from the Fighters that you have already built.

Combat Tech Goals:
Armor (35+), Laser (36)

Tech Priorities:
For the most part, it is recommended to research Armor and Laser evenly with each other. They cost the same and since those are the only 2 combat techs that need to be researched, it is easy to get both to a really high level quickly.

Armor is especially important for Fighter swarming in order to reduce your losses the same as any other finisher fleet. And of course, the more Armor you have, the more debris you make.

Laser is equally important for both swarms and drops. Higher Laser means that you will be required to drop less Fighters in order to strip away all of the unshielded units from your target. Higher Laser is especially important when swarming, to penetrate the shields of enemy Cruisers and Carriers better. **It is especially important for a Fighter swarm to reach level 36 Laser to increase its bleed through damage to shielded units.**

Combat Unit Percentage:
40% combat units

Sample Fleet Design:
Fighters (6m), Fleet Carriers (15k), Recyclers (250k)

Fleet Type:
Bomber Swarm

Primary Purpose:
Bomber Drop
Fighter/Bomber Swarm

Units Involved:
Fighters, Bombers, Fleet Carriers

Ratio of Units:
1 Fighter for each Bomber

Unit Rationale:
A Bomber fleet is a good option for any player who has an account with a low production capacity or one who is rebuilding their mobile fleet from scratch. I say this because a Bomber drop is not dependant on fleet size. If player A has 200k Bombers and player B

has 2m Bombers, they will both get the exact same ratio when doing a 100k Bomber drop. You do not need to worry about out-producing the competition in order for your fleet to be larger than your target. Even if your fleet is significantly smaller than your opponent's, you are still just as effective a member of the guild as any other player.

The idea behind a Bomber swarm is to utilize your Fleet Carrier hangars to their fullest potential by filling them with Bombers instead of Fighters. Unlike Heavy Bombers, standard Bombers still only take up only 1 hangar space, but Bombers deal twice the damage that Fighters do. So in theory, by using Bombers instead of Fighters, you are making your Fleet Carriers twice as efficient.

There is some variation in the way that you can balance your Bomber swarm. One option is to fill your Fleet Carriers 100% with Bombers in order to truly double their efficiency. However, doing this will leave your fleet very vulnerable to snipers and Fighter drops and will not allow the option to fighter swarm bases or other small targets.

Like the Heavy Bomber spec, this fleet composition is also very flexible. Bombers and Fighters can work together as well as independently of each other. Together they can be used as a finisher fleet to swarm Cruisers or small Heavy Cruiser fleets. Separately they can be used to drop. If you drop all of your Bombers, you can still drop/swarm with your remaining Fighters. If you drop all your Fighters, you can still participate in missions by offering to drop your Bombers on a separate attack.

I recommend going half and half with Bombers and Fighters. This will still allow you to Fighter swarm bases and other small targets as well as still making better use of half of your hangar spaces. Plus, by using Fighters and Bombers together, if you have enough to 1-shot your target, you can swarm naked Cruiser fleets and small naked Heavy Cruiser fleets for even better ratios than a Frigate fleet could.

So to compare a Bomber swarm fleet to a Fighter swarm fleet, each has its own advantages. A Fighter swarm's first advantage is that obviously they are able to swarm larger targets because they have 2x as many Fighters as a Bomber swarm would have (assuming half and half Fighters and Bombers). The second advantage of a Fighter swarm is that you only have to research Armor and Laser techs. A Bomber swarm needs to research Armor, Laser, and Missiles, and on top of that, Missile is a more expensive tech than Laser is.

A Bomber swarm's first advantage is that it has more dropping potential because Bombers have more firepower per hangar than Fighters do. The second advantage is that Bombers are a bit more versatile than Fighters because you can use Fighters and Bombers together to swarm a Heavy Cruiser target.

The tricky part about using Bombers is to know when to drop Fighters and when to Drop Bombers. Just like Cruiser shields absorb a lot of damage from a Fighter drop, so too do Heavy Cruiser shields absorb a lot of damage from a Bomber Drop. So against a fleet with Cruisers in it a Bomber drop is slightly better, against a fleet with Heavy Cruisers in

it a Fighter drop is slightly better, and against a fleet where the only shielded ships are anything Battleship or higher, they are both equal.

Combat Tech Goals:
Missile (35+), Armor (35+), Laser (30+)

Tech Priorities:
Armor is especially important for swarming in order to reduce your losses the same as any other finisher fleet. And of course, the more Armor you have, the more debris you make.

Missile is equally important for both swarms and drops. Higher Missile means that you will be required to drop less Bombers in order to strip away all of the unshielded units from your target. Higher Missile is especially important when swarming to penetrate the shields of enemy Heavy Cruisers.

Laser is the least important tech for a Bomber swarm, since most of the time you will be dropping Bombers or using Fighters and Bombers together. Higher Laser means that you will be required to drop less Fighters in order to strip away all of the unshielded units from targets. Higher Laser is especially important when swarming, to penetrate the shields of enemy Cruisers and Carriers better.

Combat Unit Percentage:
50% combat units (More if you carry more Bombers than Fighters)

Sample Fleet Design:
Fighters (2.5m), Bombers (2.5m), Fleet Carriers (12.5k), Recyclers (250k)

Fleet Type:
Heavy Bomber Swarm

Purpose:
Drop to wear down a fleet that is too large to be finished off properly.
Drop to kill off fleets over high Command Centers

Units Involved:
Heavy Bombers, Fighters, Fleet Carriers

Ratio of Units:
2 Fighters for every 1 Heavy Bomber.

Unit Rationale:

A Heavy Bomber fleet is another good option for any player who has an account with a low production capacity or one who is rebuilding their mobile fleet from scratch. I say this because a Heavy Bomber drop is not dependant on fleet size. If player A has 100k Heavy Bombers and player B has 1m Heavy Bombers, they will both get the exact same ratio when doing a 50k Heavy Bomber drop. You do not need to worry about out-producing the competition in order for your fleet to be larger than your target. Even if your fleet is significantly smaller than your opponent's, you are still just as effective a member of the guild as any other player.

The primary purpose of this fleet is to provide a large amount of Heavy Bombers to drop to weaken a significantly larger Cruiser or Heavy Cruiser fleet, or one that is parked over a high number of Command Centers. However in a pinch, with a balanced amount of Fighters, this fleet build can also double as a finisher fleet by attacking with the swarm of Fighters and Heavy Bombers together. Since Heavy Bombers have 2x as many hit points as Fighters, I recommend carrying 2 Fighters for each 1 Heavy Bomber that you carry. Similar to a Frigate fleet, this method would be used to finish off Cruiser and Heavy Cruiser (not Battleship) fleets AFTER the unshielded units have already been Fighter dropped off of them for optimal ratios.

The nice thing about this fleet composition is that it is very flexible. Heavy Bombers and Fighters can work together as well as independently of each other. Together they can be used as a finisher fleet. Separately they can be used to drop. If you drop all of your Heavy Bombers, you can still drop/swarm with your remaining Fighters. If you drop all your Fighters, you can still participate in missions by offering to drop your Heavy Bombers on a separate attack.

Combat Tech Goals:

Plasma (30+), Armor (35+), Laser (30+)

Tech Priorities:

Plasma and Armor are the two technologies to concentrate on with a Heavy Bomber swarm. The higher the plasma technology is, the less number of Heavy Bombers need to be dropped. The higher the Armor technology is, the more debris is made, and the less number of units you will lose when finishing with Fighters and Heavy Bombers together.

Laser is important for additional bleed through damage on finisher hits as well as for improving ratios on a Fighter drop/swarm.

Combat Unit Percentage:

54% combat units

Sample Fleet Design:

Fighters (2m), Heavy Bombers (1m), Fleet Carriers (10k), Recyclers (300k)

Fleet Type:
Frigate Fleet

Purpose:
Finisher

Units Involved:
Frigates, Fighters
(Optional: Fleet Carriers)

Ratio of Units:
Mass produce Frigates with all hangars filled with Fighters

Unit Rationale:
Because of how fast they travel, Frigates are a great option for a highly active player who likes to attack often. They can also be a very good option for a person who only has small windows of free time available at a time each day to focus on AE. With a Frigate fleet you have short travel times to your target which makes planning a mission much more convenient and less time consuming.

The purpose of a Frigate fleet is to finish off Cruiser, Heavy Cruiser, and Battleship fleets, AFTER the unshielded units have already been Fighter dropped off of them. Like the Heavy Cruiser and Leviathan fleet builds, Frigate fleets thrive off of their high percentage of combat units. I recommend a pure Frigate + Fighter fleet (no Carriers/Fleet Carriers) in order to maximize your finishing potential because against Heavy Cruisers and especially Battleships, your Frigate count must be very high in order to successfully finish off your target in 1 shot.

With that being said, I do understand that this design will result in you always running out of Fighters well before you run out of Frigates.   If you find this to be too annoying you always have the option of building extra Fleet Carriers to transport some extra fighters. Just keep in mind that more Fleet Carriers means less Frigates. So in effect you are giving up the ability to one-shot larger targets in order to be more effective at killing off multiple smaller targets before having to restock Fighters.

Removing Fleet Carriers from your Frigate fleet design means that you do not need to waste resources researching Warp technology and allows you to focus only on Stellar instead. When it is time to restock your Fighters, the empty Frigates fly back and forth to your bases faster than Carriers or Fleet Carriers ever can.

A Frigate fleet should never contain any Bombers, Corvettes, or Destroyers. Adding extra meat shield units to any Frigate attack will always give you worse ratios than you would get attacking with only Fighters and Frigates.

Combat Tech Goals:
Armor (35+), Missile (35), Laser (30+)

Tech Priorities:
Armor is the most important technology for a Frigate finisher. As with any finisher fleet, the higher Armor you have, the less units you lose per attack and the more debris is made per unit lost.

With a Frigate finisher fleet, Missile technology comes secondary. The higher your Missile tech, the more shield penetration your frigates have, especially against Battleships.

Laser is last, but still an important technology to level. Even though the primary role of the Fighters is to serve as a meat shield for the Frigates, the Fighter's firepower is still important in dealing direct damage to unshielded units, bleed-through damage to shielded units, and as always, the potential Fighter drop/swarm.

Combat Unit Percentage:
90% combat units (Less if you build extra Fleet Carriers)

Sample Fleet Design:
 Frigates (600k), Fighters (2.4m), Recyclers (200k)

Fleet Type:
Cruiser Fleet

Purpose:
Finisher

Units Involved:
Cruisers, Fighters, Fleet Carriers

Ratio of Units:
Build Cruisers and Fighters in a 1:20 ratio (50k Cruisers per 1m Fighters) with just enough Fleet Carriers to carry the excess Fighters

Unit Rationale:
I recommend a Cruiser fleet to be built by one of 2 types of players; either by a player with a very high production capacity who can thrive by out producing others or by players who don't mind simming for long periods of time in order to build up a large fleet.

Traditionally, a Cruiser fleet has been the generic "go-to" fleet type for a lot of players because of how versatile they are. They are a good unit for farming and perma-occing

bases and can pull off positive ratios against just about any target fleet besides capital ships. As true as this is, it is very difficult to build a really great combat cruiser fleet. As a finisher fleet, Cruisers need to be bigger than their target to 1-shot them. However in order to be really effective, Cruisers need a large number of Fighters. To get the necessary Fighters you need to invest a lot of resources into non-combat hangar units. This can make it pretty difficult for a Cruiser fleet to compete against other finisher fleets that do not need to invest in non-combat hangar units. This is not to say that Cruiser fleets should not be built, in fact the opposite. They are one of the most important to have in a guild especially during very large battles

The primary purpose of a Cruiser fleet is to finish off the defending fleet in one big hit, **without fighter dropping first**. Because of this, a Cruiser fleet needs a large amount of Fighters in order to be able to make multiple attacks without running out of fighters. In the heat of battle in large Jump Gate crashes, there is usually not enough time to accurately fighter drop before Frigate finishing. This is why a well balanced Cruiser fleet is so critical.

Since a Cruiser spec needs such a large amount of Fighters in order to be effective, a well built Cruiser stack can also play the role of a Fighter Dropper or Fighter Swarmer against smaller targets.

Although Bombers, Corvettes, and Destroyers can work as a meat shield unit to improve ratios slightly when attacking a target that contains only shielded units, I strongly recommend against building them on a Cruiser spec. Adding meat shield units to your attack against a target that still contains its fighters will actually hurt your ratios instead of improving them. A well built Cruiser fleet will have plenty of fighters to be able to fighter swarm base farms, which makes the meat shield units useless for farming as well. Since so many resources are diverted away from building the actual Cruisers in order to build a sufficient number of Fleet Carriers to move all your fighters, it is not really worth it divert even more resources to build the meat shield units.

Adding 1 meat shield unit = only up to 1.8% less losses against Heavy Cruisers
Adding 2 meat shield units = only up to 2.5% less losses against Heavy Cruisers
Adding 3 meat shield units = only up to 2.9% less losses against Heavy Cruisers

You are better off just building more Cruisers/Fighters instead so that you are capable of finishing off larger targets in one shot instead of only being able to one-shot smaller targets for minimally extra profit.

<u>**Combat Tech Goals:**</u>
Armor (35+), Shielding (25), Plasma (30), Laser (36)

<u>**Tech Priorities:**</u>
Armor tech is your number one priority combat tech. As with any finisher fleet, the more Armor you have, the fewer units you lose per attack and the more debris you will make per unit lost.

Plasma tech is important for increasing killing potential, especially against Dreadnought fleets since the Dreadnought shields absorb a large amount of the Cruisers damage.

Due to the AE combat damage distribution formula, optimal Shielding tech is the tricky for Cruisers. If your shielding tech is too low, too much of the enemy's Fighter damage will pass through your Cruiser shields. If your shielding tech is too high, your enemy's fighter damage will be directed towards your own Fighters instead of being absorbed by your Cruiser shields. Taking into consideration both cost and combat effectiveness, the best thing to do is to keep your Shielding tech level about 10 levels lower than your average target's Laser tech on the server. **Since many people stop researching laser at level 36 on the more developed servers, level 25 is a level for your Shields.**

Combat Unit Percentage:
68% combat units

Sample Fleet Design:
Fighters (3m), Cruisers (150k), Fleet Carriers (6k), Recyclers (200k)

Fleet Type:
Heavy Cruiser Stack

Purpose:
Shield Crush
Finisher

Units Involved:
Heavy Cruisers, Fighters
(Optional: Destroyers, Corvettes, Fleet Carriers)

Ratio of Units:
Mass produce Heavy Cruisers. Fill 50% of Heavy Cruiser hangars with Fighters.

Unit Rationale:
Heavy Cruisers are the most versatile unit in the game any kind of player can excel by using this unit type. There are 2 purposes for a Heavy Cruiser fleet.
The first and most important is a shield crushing. The purpose of this fleet is to annihilate Fighter swarms and other Fighter heavy fleets for minimal losses. Build as many Heavy Cruisers as possible for maximum killing potential. The more Heavy Cruisers you have, the bigger the target you can kill, and the less number of waves you will need to attack to finish off your target. Since your main concern is shield crushing, don't waste resources building extra Fleet Carriers. Filling 50% of the Heavy Cruiser

hangars with Fighters will give you just enough Fighters to protect your recyclers and have some available to make small scale Fighter + Heavy Cruisers finisher hits to farm bases or small fleets. This will also leave plenty of your Heavy Cruiser hangars empty for when you shield crush. If you fill the Heavy Cruiser hangars completely, then shield crush something, you will have Fighters stranded at the end of the battle.

An alternative build type is as a finisher fleet. Heavy Cruisers combined with a large number of Fighters is a very durable and destructive fleet design when it comes to finishing off small/mid sized Leviathan Stacks, Titans, Dreadnought Stacks, Battleship fleets, and even to other Heavy Cruiser and Cruiser fleets in a worst case scenario. The only difference with this design is the necessity for a large amount of Fleet Carriers to provide enough hangars for the necessary extra fighters. The more Fighters you can carry the more deadly your fleet will be. However, **keep in mind that in order to carry more fighters, you need to spend more resources on building the needed Fleet Carriers**, which takes away from your Heavy Cruiser production and reduces the combat unit percentage of your mobile.

With either of these two designs that you choose, it is also optional to build a small handful of Destroyers (and also Corvettes) to improve your ratios on base hits if you farm often or even on larger finisher attacks against targets that have already been fighter dropped. If you do decide to build some extra meat shield units, always build Destroyers first though because they use the same weapons tech as Heavy Cruisers and have higher shielding penetration than Corvettes.

Bombers also work as a meat shield unit to improve ratios slightly in conjunction with Destroyers and/or Corvettes. However, I do not recommend building them because the ratio improvement is minimal and they take up hangar space which should be dedicated to more Fighters instead.

Adding 1 meat shield unit = up to 6.9% less losses against Battleships
Adding 2 meat shield units = up to 10.4% less losses against Battleships
Adding 3 meat shield units = up to 12.5% less losses against Battleships

Remember to include extra meat shield units in your attack ONLY if there are no more unshielded units left if the target fleet. **If you add Destroyers, Corvettes and/or Bombers to your attack against a target that still has Fighters in it, you will make your ratios worse** than using just Heavy Cruisers with Fighters.

<u>Combat Tech Goals:</u>
Armor (35+), Shielding (25), Plasma (30+)

<u>Tech Priorities:</u>
Armor tech is your number one priority combat tech. Higher levels of armor will result it more of your Heavy Cruisers surviving the finishing hit, as well as more profit from debris.

Plasma tech is important for increasing killing potential even though the much of a Heavy Cruiser stack's killing capability is a result of the high % of combat units in the fleet. It is especially beneficial against Leviathan targets in order to pierce their shields more effectively. But remember, the primary purpose of a Heavy Cruiser fleet is still to shield crush fighter heavy fleets. Leave the large Leviathan targets for the Battleship and Ion Frigate fleets to kill.

Shielding is the least important combat tech. Sure, it will keep more of your Heavy Cruisers alive when attacking fleets with Corvettes and Bombers in them, but these types of units are rare in large amounts. Really the only other benefit of researching more Shielding is if you happen to find a base to attack that has many Fighters sitting on 15-20 Command Centers.

Combat Unit Percentage:
90% combat units (Less if you build extra Fleet Carriers)

Sample Fleet Design:
Heavy Cruiser (120k), Fighters (500k), Recyclers (250k)
Heavy Cruiser (90k), Fighters (2m), Fleet Carriers (3.2k), Recyclers (250k),

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Fleet Type:
Ion Frigate Fleet

Primary Purpose:
Finisher

Units Involved:
Fighters, Ion Frigates
(Optional: Fleet Carriers, Destroyers, Corvettes)

Ratio of Units:
Mass produce Ion Frigates and fill all hangars with fighters.

Unit Rationale:
Because of how fast they travel, Ion Frigates can be a great option for a highly active player who likes to attack often. Some people think that as a capital ship killer spec, Ion Frigates have a much more limited list of targets than standard Frigates do so it can be very difficult to find targets, but this is not entirely accurate. It is true that Ion Frigates excel at destroying capital ship fleets. But at the same time they are still capable of destroying Heavy Cruisers and Battleships for great ratios as well, though not quite as

efficient at this as standard Frigates are. What Ion Frigates lack in ratios against Heavy Cruisers and Battleships, they make up for in versatility.

The most important part of an Ion Frigate fleet is to have enough Ion Frigates to 1-shot any Leviathan stack that you come across. After you reach the point where you have enough Ion Frigates to 1-shot any Leviathan stack on the server, you can start adding Destroyers and Corvettes to your fleet in order to provide additional meat shield to your ratio. Adding Bombers will also improve your ratios slightly more, but they take up hangar spaces that are better used towards carrying more fighters so I do not recommend building them.

Adding 1 meat shield unit = up to 6.7% less losses against Leviathans
Adding 2 meat shield units = up to 10.0% less losses against Leviathans
Adding 3 meat shield units = up to 12.0% less losses against Leviathans

If you do decide to build some extra meat shield units, **always build Destroyers first though because they have higher shielding penetration than Corvettes**. Remember to include extra meat shield units in your attack ONLY if there are no more unshielded units left if the target fleet. **If you add Destroyers, Corvettes and/or Bombers to your attack against a target that still has Fighters in it, you will make your ratios worse** than using just Ion Frigates with Fighters.

Combat Tech Goals:
Armor (35+), Ion (25), Laser (30+)

Tech Priorities:
As with any finisher, Armor is the most important technology for an Ion Frigate fleet. The higher Armor you have, the less units you lose per attack and the more debris is made per unit lost.

With an Ion Frigate fleet, Ion technology comes second. The higher your Ion tech, the more Capital Ships you will be able to destroy in 1 attack.

Laser is last, but still an important technology to level. Even though the primary role of the Fighters is to serve as a meat shield for the Ion Frigates, the Fighter's firepower is still important in dealing direct damage to unshielded units and bleed-through damage to shielded units. As always, extra Laser levels will help with the occasional Fighter drop/swarm.

Combat Unit Percentage:
90% combat units (Less if you build extra Fleet Carriers)

Sample Fleet Design:
Ion Frigate (500k), Fighters (2m), Recyclers (250k)

<u>Fleet Type:</u>
Battleship Fleet

<u>Purpose:</u>
Finisher
Shield Crush

<u>Units Involved:</u>
Battleships, Destroyers, Fighters
(Optional: Fleet Carriers, Corvettes, Bombers)

<u>Ratio of Units:</u>
40 fighters, 20 Corvettes, 10 Destroyers, 1 Battleship

<u>Unit Rationale:</u>
Battleships are also a very versatile unit and any type of player can excel by playing with this fleet type. Even a player with low production can build an effective capital killing Battleship fleet. A battleship fleet can almost single handedly destroy a Leviathan stack 2x its' size and can even more easily shield crush swarm fleets much larger as well.

The most important thing with a Battleship fleet is having enough Battleships to 1-shot any Leviathan stack that you come across. After you reach the point where you have enough Battleships to 1-shot any Leviathan stack on the server, you can start adding Destroyers and Corvettes to your fleet in order to provide additional meat shield to your Battleships to improve your ratio. Adding Bombers will also improve your ratios slightly more, but they take up hangar spaces that are better used towards carrying more fighters so I do not recommend building them. If you just build Fighters, Corvettes, and Destroyers at a ratio of 4:2:1 then you will have just the right balance of protection for the number of fighters that your Battleship hangars can carry without the need to waste resources on building additional Fleet Carriers.

Adding 1 meat shield unit = up to 14.9% less losses against Leviathans
Adding 2 meat shield units = up to 22.4% less losses against Leviathans
Adding 3 meat shield units = up to 26.9% less losses against Leviathans

If you do decide to build some extra meat shield units, always build Destroyers first because they have higher shielding penetration than Corvettes. Remember to include extra meat shield units in your attack ONLY if there are no more unshielded units left if the target fleet. **If you add Destroyers, Corvettes and/or Bombers to your attack against a target that still has Fighters in it, you will make your ratios worse** than using just Battleships with Fighters.

<u>Combat Tech Goals:</u>
Armor (35+), Ion (25), Shielding (20+)

Tech Priorities:
Armor is the most important technology for a Battleship fleet. As with any finisher fleet, the higher Armor you have, the fewer units you lose per attack and the more debris you make.

Shielding and Ion technologies come secondary. The higher your Ion tech, the more damage your Battleships do, and the easier it is to kill larger targets in one shot. But because battleships have much higher natural firepower than Leviathans have in shields, you do not need to go overboard on weapons tech to be effective at destroying Leviathans.

The more Shielding you have, the more protected your Battleships are against Frigates and Heavy Bombers. There is really no other need for shielding tech on Battleships. High quantities of Frigates can crush a smaller Battleship fleet, but at the same time, a high amount of Battleships with good shielding tech can semi-shield crush a smaller frigate fleet with poor missile tech. It is up to you whether you think this will be worth it for you to invest the resources into Shielding tech or not.

Combat Unit Percentage:
90% combat units (Less if you build extra Fleet Carriers)

Sample Fleet Design:
Battleships (20k), Destroyers (200k), Corvettes (400k), Fighters (800k), Recyclers (200k)

Fleet Type:
Dreadnought Stack

Primary Purpose:
Shield Crush

Units Involved:
Dreadnoughts, Fighters

Ratio of Units:
Mass produce Dreadnoughts with hangars 50% filled with Fighters

Unit Rationale:
A dreadnought stack is best played by a player who is active and can respond quickly to target opportunities. Although they travel 2x faster than Leviathans, they still move slowly, especially considering that your target of choice is Frigates. A player who doesn't mind simming can also make good use of a Dreadnought stack by building up a large fleet and saving it for some day when there is a big blob crash or recall trap.

A Dreadnought stack is very similar to a Leviathan Stack. The purpose of this fleet type is to shield crush any fleet that consists primarily of any or all of the following: Fighters, Bombers, Heavy Bombers, Corvettes, Recyclers, Destroyers, Frigates, Cruisers (depending on size and tech), Carriers, and Fleet Carriers.

Mass produce Dreadnoughts for maximum killing potential. The more Dreadnoughts you have, the less number of waves you need to kill your target. This saves time which is critical in blob crashes and recall traps. Don't waste resources building Fleet Carriers. Fill only 50% of the Dreadnought hangars with Fighters. This will give you just enough Fighters to protect your recyclers and will leave plenty of your Dreadnought hangars free to shield crush. If you fill the Dreadnought hangars completely, then shield crush something, you risk having Fighters stranded at the end of the battle.

Although Dreadnoughts are not effective against Heavy Cruisers like a Leviathan stack would be, they do have some important advantages. The biggest advantage is that Dreadnoughts travel twice as fast as Leviathans do. This makes a huge impact on target availability because you can get to a shield crushable target twice as fast as a Leviathan stack can.

Dreadnought stacks can also suicide into a Leviathan stack for positive ratios if no other capital killing fleet is available. Especially if your Dreadnought fleet has Fighters to provide a meat shield against the Leviathan target, the resulting ratios will actually be quite favorable.

Combat Tech Goals:
Shielding (25+), Armor (35+), Photon (20), Laser (30+)

Tech Priorities:
Shielding tech is your number one priority in combat techs. Higher levels of Shielding will significantly protect your Dreadnoughts from Cruiser rollover damage.

Armor is important just like any other finisher fleet because it will keep more of your Leviathans alive as well as provide more debris.

Photon tech should be leveled as well but is not as critical as Shielding and Armor are. The majority of a Dreadnought stack's killing capability is a result of the high % of combat fleet compared to your total fleet size and large overall fleet size since you lose few units compared to how many you kill. Obviously higher Photon will increase your fleet's killing potential, but also the bigger your total fleet is, the more killing potential your fleet has.

Laser is not really important for a Dreadnought fleet. The only real purpose of the Fighters is to protect your Recyclers and act as a meat shield is certain cases. Once in a while you may benefit from some extra Laser if, for example, you have to do a small Fighter drop to kill off some Ion units first before shield crushing the rest of the target.

Combat Unit Percentage:
90% Combat Units

Sample Fleet Design:
Dreadnought (6k), Fighters (600k), Recyclers (250k)

Fleet Type:
Leviathan Stack

Purpose:
Shield Crush

Units Involved:
Leviathans, Fighters

Ratio of Units:
Mass produce Leviathans. Fill 50% of hangars with Fighters.

Unit Rationale:
A Leviathan stack is usually a very boring fleet to play. Because they travel so slowly, it is very difficult to get close to your target and shoot it before it moves away. Even if you are a very active player it is not uncommon to go for months without making a successful attack using Leviathans. It takes a lot of patience to run this type of fleet. It is best played by somebody who is active and can respond quickly to target opportunities, but also has other things to do in game to keep them entertained such as being a guild leader or playing a different fleet spec on another server. A player who doesn't mind simming can also make good use of a Leviathan stack by building up a large fleet and saving it for some day when there is a big blob crash or recall trap.

The purpose of this fleet type is to shield crush any fleet that consists primarily of any or all of the following: Fighters, Bombers, Heavy Bombers, Corvettes, Recyclers, Destroyers, Frigates, Cruisers, Carriers, Heavy Cruisers (depending on size and tech), and Fleet Carriers.

Mass produce Leviathans for maximum killing potential. The more Leviathans you have, the less number of waves you need to kill your target. This saves time and repair cash, which is especially critical in blob crashes and recall traps. Don't waste resources building Fleet Carriers. Fill only 50% of the Leviathan hangars with Fighters. This will give you just enough Fighters to protect your recyclers and will leave plenty of your Leviathan hangars free to shield crush.   If you fill the Leviathan hangars completely, then shield crush something, you risk having Fighters stranded at the end of the battle which will go to waste.

You may add a tiny amount of Heavy Cruisers, Battleships, Dreadnoughts, and/or Titans for when you have a precise calculation of the defender's techs. **If you know the target's tech levels and can make a precise calculation on results of the attack, it can often be beneficial to add a few Heavy Cruisers, Battleships, Dreadnoughts, and/or Titans (Fleet Carrier can work for this too) to your waves of attacks reduce your losses slightly**. There is no easy formula to determine how many of each extra unit to add to an attack to maximize your ratios. Test several scenarios using the KaHaR Battle Calculator find the best combination that you can.

Combat Tech Goals:
Shielding (lvl 25+), Armor (35+), Photon (20), Laser (30+)

Tech Priorities:
Shielding tech is your number one priority in combat techs. Higher levels of Shielding will significantly protect your Leviathans from Heavy Cruisers and Fleet Carrier rollover damage.

Armor is important just like any other finisher fleet because it will keep more of your Leviathans alive as well as provide more debris.

Photon tech should be leveled as well but is not as critical as Shielding and Armor are. The majority of a Leviathan stack's killing capability is a result of the high % of combat fleet compared to your total fleet size and large overall fleet size since you lose few units compared to how many you kill. Obviously higher Photon will increase your fleet's killing potential, but also the bigger your total fleet is, the more killing potential your fleet has.

Laser is not really important for a Leviathan fleet. The only real purpose of the Fighters is to protect your Recyclers and act as a meat shield is certain cases. Once in a while you may benefit from some extra Laser if, for example, you have to do a small Fighter drop to kill off some Ion units first before shield crushing the rest of the fleet.

Combat Unit Percentage:
90% combat units

Sample Fleet Design:
Leviathans (300), Fighters (600k), Recyclers (250k)

Hybrid Fleets

A hybrid fleet is any combination of 2 or more fleet types in a single mobile fleet. Building a hybrid fleet is highly discouraged because using 2 finisher units in 1 attack will result in worse ratios than using only 1 type of finisher ship. So it is basically like

having 2 separate small finisher fleets instead of 1 big one. Sure it provides more versatility in target options against small targets, but against anybody your own size or larger than you, you are at a huge disadvantage. **The only way that it might really be more beneficial to have a hybrid combat fleet is if you are already in the top 10 or so fleet ranks on the server**. If you are then it can sometimes be helpful to have a hybrid fleet in order to diversify your target options and/or make your fleet harder to kill during a blob crash, but otherwise, I strongly encourage you to choose one finisher fleet type to specialize in and stick with that only.

The number one justification used to rationalize a hybrid fleet is to add Battleships or Ion Frigates for protection against Leviathans. As true as this may be, I still believe that doing this does you more harm than good. **It is not worth lowering your offensive killing potential just to improve your defensive potential against an attack that may not ever even happen**. That is what you have guild mates for; to fulfill the tasks that your fleet spec cannot. Don't try to make your fleet something that it is not. It is better for your fleet to be able to do one thing really well than to be able to do everything mediocre.

With that being said, I know there are still people out there who will insist on building a hybrid fleet regardless, so for their sake, I will still cover the 4 "valid" types of hybrid fleets. Any other combination of finisher fleets together is pretty pointless since the unit types won't really compliment each other very well.

Fighters, Frigates + Ion Frigates
Adding Ion Frigates to a Frigate fleet provides the ability to destroy small Leviathan fleets and may also discourage a larger Leviathan fleet from attacking you. Since both use Stellar Drive to travel, you can still get away with not wasting resources researching extra levels of Warp.

Fighters, Frigates + Battleships
Adding Battleships to a Frigate fleet provides the ability to destroy small Leviathan fleets, may discourage a larger Leviathan fleet from attacking you. Using Battleships has an advantage over Ion Frigates because it allows you the option of shield raping certain smaller fleets. But on the negative side, Battleships fly more slowly than Frigates and use Warp Drive instead of Stellar Drive, which means another whole research category that you will be required to spend resources on.

Fighters, Cruisers + Battleships
Adding Battleships to a Cruiser fleet provides the ability to destroy small Leviathan fleets, may discourage a larger Leviathan fleet from attacking you, and allows you the option of shield raping certain smaller fleets. Since Cruisers already use warp and Fleet Carriers travel at the same speed as Battleships, there is no speed/travel disadvantage.

Fighters, Leviathans + Cruisers
Adding Cruisers to a Leviathan fleet provides some extra meat shield to protect your Leviathans from enemy Battleships and provides you the ability to farm with your pocket

Cruiser fleet during the long periods of time between Leviathan attacks. Out of these 4 options, the Fighter, Cruiser, Leviathan fleet spec is the most useful. It can almost even necessary for active Leviathan fleet spec players to have an alternative mode of income in order to keep all their queues filled. If your Leviathan stack is already one of the biggest fleets on the server, it is already hard to destroy. Adding Cruisers and more fighters to your fleet will make your fleet even more durable especially during major blob crashes.

General Notes:

Recyclers:
As a general rule of thumb, I recommend that at least 10% of your total fleet size should be recyclers.

Hangars:
I suggest using Fleet Carriers at all times over Carriers for a few reasons. For one, Fleet Carriers are cheaper. They cost less credits for the amount of hangar space they provide. They are also more durable than Carriers are. Fleet Carriers have higher shielding, which protects them from units with lower firepower (Fighters, Bombers, Corvettes, Destroyers) and also allows for the opportunity to shield rape small fleets of these types of units (including Recyclers) if their hangars are empty. Finally, Fleet Carriers have higher firepower than Carriers do, which makes shield raping them with Battleships, Dreadnoughts, Titans, and Leviathans less effective. The only real advantage of Carriers is their speed, but since guild launch times are almost always scheduled at Heavy Cruiser speed, flying at Carrier speed is obsolete most of the time.

Laser Tech:
I suggest Laser level 36 for any player whose fleet composition allows for the potential to Fighter swarm and here is why:

Laser 35 Fighters do 5.5 damage   Laser 36 Fighters do 5.6 damage

When fighting higher shielded units, only 1% of the damage bleeds through

For Laser 35:   For Laser 36:
5.5 * .01 = .055   5.6 * .01 = .056

Numbers in AE are done to the hundredths digit, so the thousandths place is rounded off. .055 is rounded down to .05 while .056 is rounded up to .06

Therefore, when upgrading from Laser 35 to Laser 36, there is actually a 20% increase in the amount of bleed through damage that your fighters deal to shielded units.

Pocket Leviathans

It is a good idea for every player, regardless of your fleet spec to keep 3-5 leviathans in your mobile fleet at all times. If you are able to get them into position when making a large attack, you can add 1 Leviathan to your fleet for the extra 5% bonus firepower and armor which will improve your ratios. This is especially useful during wormhole launches and blob crashes. This same practice can be applied using a Death Star for the 10% bonus instead, though it is more difficult because they cannot use Jump Gates.

Definitions of Terms:

Shield Crush

Most commonly referred to as "shield raping," this is the process of attacking using ships whose Shields are higher than the target ships' firepower. The result of combat will be extremely favorable ratios because only 1% of the target's firepower bleeds through.

Resources

The amount of credits and time that are required to build a unit, structure, or technology

Meat Shield

Any secondary ships that you add to a finisher attack to reduce your losses. Fighters, Destroyers, and Corvettes are the most commonly used meat shield units.

Killing Potential

The ability of your fleet to be able to efficiently destroy an enemy fleet

Swarm

To attack with a swarm of all of your units at the same time. At the end of combat, you will still have units left over after the attack. Swarming most commonly refers to a Fighter swarm but can also refer to other units as well.

Drop

This term is most commonly used when talking about Fighters, Bombers, or Heavy Bombers. In a drop, the attack is usually with a precisely calculated number of ships that will deliver just enough damage to strip the target fleet of certain units in order to set up a separate finishing attack. All of the attacker's units will be destroyed in the battle.

Combat Units

Ships that you attack with

Non-Combat Units

Ships that you do not attack with such as Carriers, Fleet Carriers, and Recyclers

Simming
The process of passively building fleet without actively participating in farming or guild operations

Bleed Through Damage
The 1% of the damage that gets dealt to shielded units when units with low firepower attack units with higher shields.

Rollover Damage
Damage dealt by units whose firepower is just barely higher than the target's shields. The target's shields will absorb most of the damage from the attacking ships, but the extra firepower still "rolls over" the shields. Here are a few examples using base stats of certain ships (no tech levels applied):
(1) Frigates (12 firepower) attacking Battleships (10 shields)
(2) Cruisers (24 firepower) attacking Dreadnoughts (20 shields)
(3) Heavy Cruisers (48 firepower) attacking Leviathans (40 shields)

Shielding Penetration
When a unit's attack power is higher than the target's shielding, it is referred to as shielding penetration. The amount of damage that penetrates the shields is referred to as rollover damage.

Jump Gate Crash
An offensive operation where a group of players attacks another group of unsuspecting players who have their mobile fleets all parked on the same Jump Gate. It is usually safe to assume that the Defenders are offline during a Jump Gate crash because most of the time if somebody sees you coming to attack them they will run away instead of counter attacking.

Blob Crash
Simply put, it is a massive Jump Gate crash that typically involves hundreds of players on each side of the battle. Since blob crashes are usually much anticipated battles, both the attackers and defenders will have most of their players online and active for the fight.

Recall Trap
When your fleet is traveling and there are enemy fleets waiting to attack you at your landing coordinate as well as back at the coordinate that you launched from.

1-Shot
To destroy all of a target in only 1 attack wave

Pocket Fleet
A small amount of ships built in addition to your main fleet spec. A pocket fleet's purpose is to enhance your mobile either by improving ratios or by diversifying your fleet.