






Star Trek: Armada Buttons

In *Star Trek: Armada* a great many functions are triggered by basically clicking on a button, like triggering a construction command in a yard or using a special weapon.

Button Templates/Types

All buttons come in one of the following five different forms:

| Form | Type/Usage |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | Offensive: This type is used for weapons that deal damage to opponents or attack them in some fashion. |
|  | Passive/Defensive: This type is used for special weapons, that deal no damage (by themselves) or might even be beneficial to the target. |
|  | Command: This type is used for functions, that are issued, e.g. moving a unit somewhere or open the construction menu. Everything that is not a weapon of sorts of a construction item should use this template. |
|  | Construction: This type issues the construction of an actual ship or station. |
|  | Construction quadruple: Basically the same as the Construction type, but storing four button images at the same time. Sprites may use them, instead of using the entire image for one button. |

All of them are meant to be stored as **uncompressed** TGA files and of course require some sort of pictograph indicating their function. Their color depth is 24 bit and the size of one button is 64 pixels x 64 pixels (double of course for the quad button files). They are stored in the folder *Textures\RGB*, where you can find examples. Also your modded button image files have to go there.

Creating a Button Image

As said in the above section, buttons require some sort of pictograph, to convey what their function is, or to distinguish them from the other buttons. For Offensive, Defensive and Command buttons, the pictograph is not necessarily something that comes from the game itself. The stock images very often have some sort of pictograph that optically resembles what they do (e.g. the green rays of the [Holding Beam](#)) or use a commonly known symbolism (e.g. the stop sign for making a unit stop moving). These are not described here.

However, the construction buttons in particular are usually following the concept of depicting the unit or station they are supposed to build, including research buttons issuing construction of their corresponding research pod. Specifically for the ships, there are means to create them relatively

easy, by means of [Storm 3D](#) or similar model viewers. For this section it is assumed you use *Storm 3D* and have the SOD file already at hand/finished, including texturing your model and placed in the SOD folder of your Armada installation. You can use other model viewing means, such as actual model editors as well, to get the unit/station image to work with.

1. Start *Storm 3D* and hit the **DEL**, to get rid of the initially shown *Star Trek: Armada* logo.
2. Hit the **F8** to bring up the loading dialog. Navigate to the SOD and load the file *MbgBlack.SOD*.
3. Place it by hitting **SPACE**. This will get you a completely black background. This makes it easier to cut out the unwanted parts of the background later.
4. Load the SOD file of your model and again place it with **SPACE**.
5. You can now turn your model freely in the 3D space. Adjust them:
 - For buttons looking similar to the stock button images, turn ships in a way, that their stern is facing the upper left corner, while the bow is facing the lower right corner. The top of the ship should face the viewer (you can see it's entire top). See examples placed in *Textures\RGB*, e.g. *gbfbl200.tga*.
 - Stations on the other hand are often shown in a fashion where they are tilted slightly towards the viewer, so that you can see a small part of their top while the majority of the seen parts if one of their surface facing sideways.
6. Adjust the team color: Many ships and stations have parts of their model colored differently. This is where the team color will be applied, to make ships or stations of the same kind but different factions distinguishable in terms of faction/team. Hitting **C** will give you a color selection dialog. Use a color that blends in with the rest of the surroundings of the team color indicator.
7. De-select the ship model by pressing **PG UP** or **PG DOWN**. This will select the background instead.
8. Use your OS' means to create a screenshot. That may be the **PRINT** key, or any other means. If the model also uses positioning lights, they will blink. Make sure you take the screenshot in a moment where they are turned off.
9. Paste the image into your favorite graphics editor (or open the resulting file in it). If your are satisfied with the image you have created so far, you can close *Storm 3D*. It is not required for the remaining steps.
10. Crop the image so that the ship is still in one piece, surrounded by a small black border (it should have some padding), **eventually fitting a square**.
11. Resize the image to 48 pixels x 48 pixels. This is just enough to fit well into the button templates from above.
12. If you want to, apply filters, e.g. softening, to improve the image quality (48 x 48 can give a very edgy result).
13. The next step may depend on your graphics editor: Remove the strictly black background. (This is what placing the black background in one of the former steps is helping you with.) Some editors allow for automatic selection of parts of the same color and subsequent deletion or replacement with another color. Others only allow for replacing a specific color with another. The result should be **the ship alone, before a transparent background** or alternatively **only** the ship marked, not it's surroundings, ready to be copied out.
14. Copy the proper button template (see [Button Templates/Types](#)) and give it a name that makes it easy to identify your new button.
15. Copy the just created ship or station image onto the new (still empty) button template. Position it in a way, that it is roughly centered in the white space of the button.
16. Save your resulting image as an **uncompressed** TGA file, to folder *Textures\RGB*. Remember: It should have 24 bit color depth. Default size is 64 pixel x 64 pixels.

You can in theory use higher resolutions here as well (e.g. 128 x 128) but it is uncommon. (But may

yield better results on modern hardware with high resolution settings.) If you do, the above sizes of course have to be adapted. It makes little sense to create a 128 pixel x 128 pixel button image based on a 48 pixels x 48 pixels ship image.

Adding the Sprite

Your new button image is now ready to be used for a button [sprite](#) in file *Sprites\gui_global.spr*. If you are not yet familiar with how sprite files work, check out the article [Sprites](#) first.

Button sprite names are preceded by `b_`, followed by the name of the ODF file of the unit, station or special weapon, that it is used for, but leaving out the *.odf* extension. E.g. when your new ship is defined in the file *fgalaxy.odf*, the button is named `b_fgalex`. The rest follows the general sprite concept. Example:

```
@reference=64  
b_fgalex gbgalex 0 0 64 64
```

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