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STAR TREK™

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U.S.S. EQUINOX™
NCC-72381

NOVA CLASS

SCIENCE VESSEL

LENGTH: 222 METRES

NUMBER OF DECKS: 8

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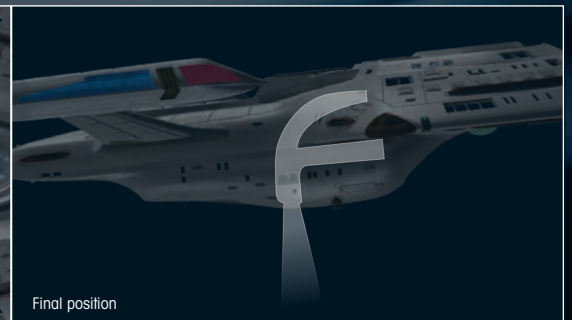
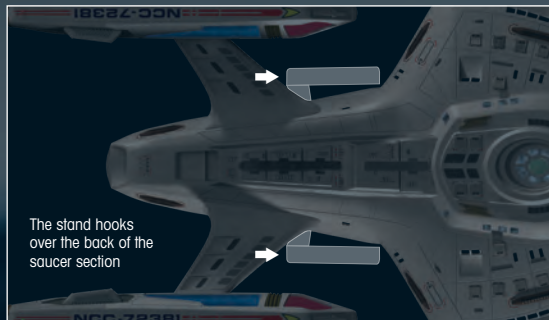
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U.S.S. EQUINOX
NCC-72381

U.S.S. EQUINOX NCC-72381

SPECIFICATION



REGISTRY:	NCC-72381
CLASS:	Nova
CONSTRUCTED:	Utopia Planitia Shipyards
LAUNCHED:	2370
DESTROYED:	2376
LENGTH:	221.74 metres
DECKS:	8
CREW:	80
TOP SPEED:	Warp 8
WEAPONRY:	Type Xb Phasers Photon Torpedo Launchers x 2
CAPTAINS:	Rudolph Ransom III



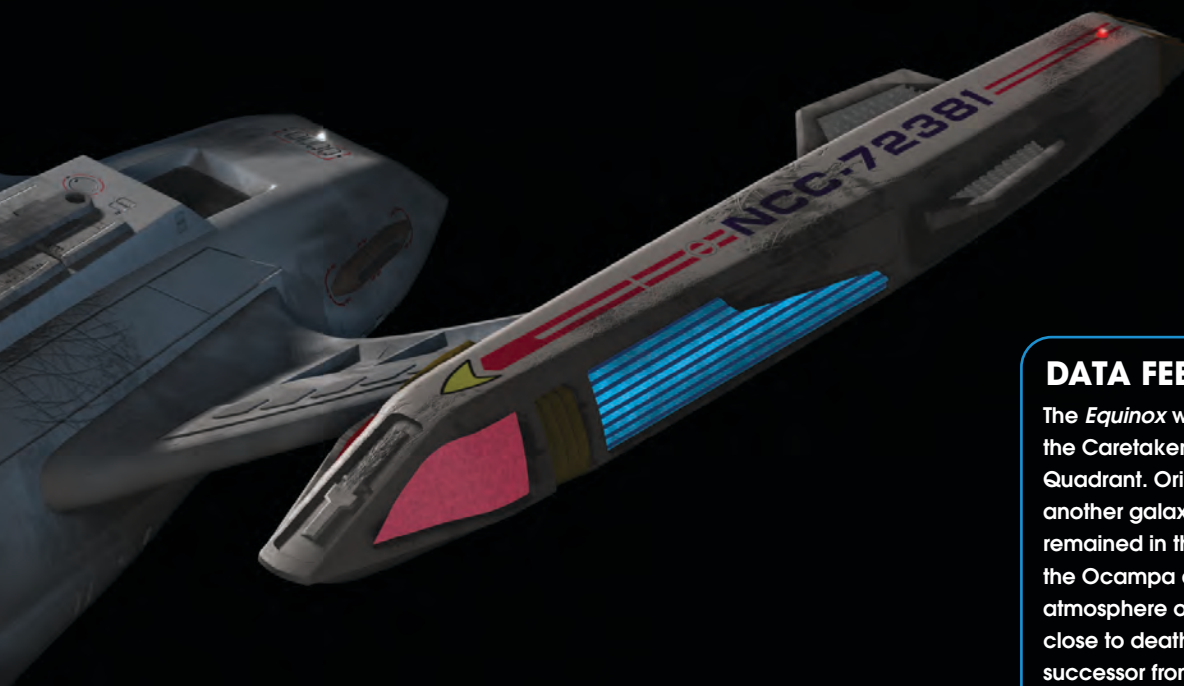
▶ The *U.S.S. Equinox* took serious punishment during its time in the Delta Quadrant, that ultimately led to the deaths of all but five members of her crew.



U.S.S. EQUINOX

NCC-72381

This small science vessel was ill-equipped for survival thousands of light years from Federation space.



DATA FEED

The *Equinox* was one of several ships that the Caretaker pulled into the Delta Quadrant. Originally an explorer from another galaxy, the Caretaker had remained in the Delta Quadrant to care for the Ocampa after accidentally ruining the atmosphere on their planet. Finding himself close to death, he sought to find a successor from anywhere, but abandoned every species that he deemed unsuitable.

The *Nova*-class U.S.S. *Equinox* was built at the Utopia Planitia Fleet Yards and was designed to function as a science and scout vessel, making it perfect for short-term planetary research and analysis rather than long-range tactical missions. As a result the *Equinox* had a top speed of only warp eight and was fitted with minimal weaponry, although it was one of the first ships to be equipped with an Emergency Medical Hologram.

Measuring 221.74 metres in length with eight decks, the *Equinox* was a relatively small vessel. The *Nova*-class spaceframe was originally developed as part of the *Defiant Pathfinder* project which

was established to deal with the Borg threat in the 2360s. However, when the *Defiant* project took a different approach, the *Nova* prototype was reclassified as a science vessel. Four of its torpedo launchers were torn out and replaced with sensor platforms. Additional sensor platforms were located around the perimeter of the saucer section and in the dome on the underside of the saucer. The secondary navigational deflector at the front of the saucer section further enhanced the ship's scanning abilities.

The *Nova* class did however retain several design features from those early days, including a recessed bridge protected from conventional attacks by an outer ring. From here the entire ship could be operated by as few as two officers.

Like *Intrepid*-class ships, the *Equinox* was designed to land on a planet's surface and was fitted with retractable landing struts located in the

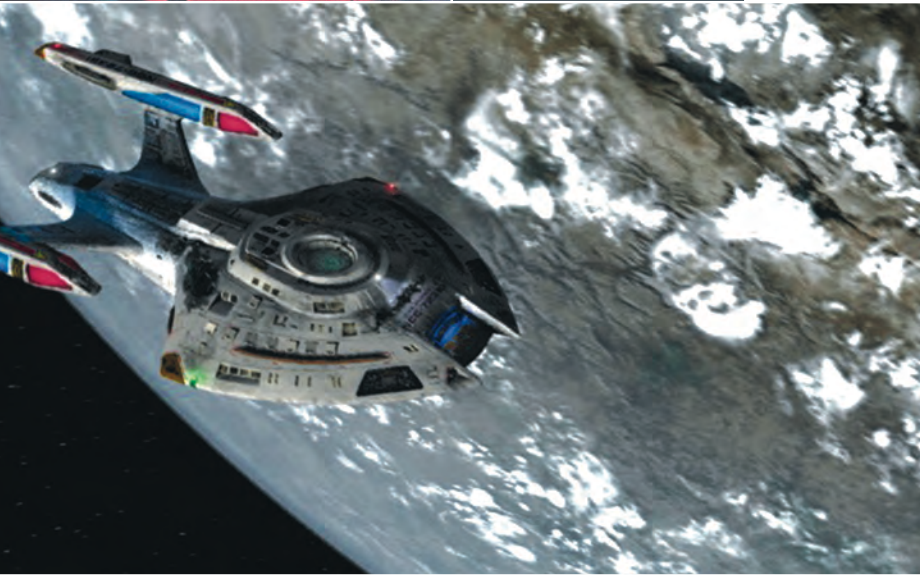


◀ The *Equinox*'s captain, Rudolph Ransom (left), and first officer, Maxwell Burke, broke many of Starfleet's rules in order to survive in the Delta Quadrant. As the ship suffered serious damage they became less and less concerned with morality and eventually resorted to murder to shorten their journey home.



◀ The *Equinox* was commanded by Captain Rudolph Ransom III, a well-regarded officer. However, when his ship was trapped in the Delta Quadrant he made some crucial mistakes that resulted in the loss of many members of his crew.

▶ A meeting with a race known as the Ankari led Ransom to discover a nucleogenic life form.



▲ When *Voyager's* commander, Captain Janeway, discovered what Ransom had done she attempted to arrest him, but he and his surviving crew members took the *Equinox* and hid near a planet with a parthogenic atmosphere that masked the ship from sensors.

lower decks of the engineering hull. The *Equinox* also carried a number of shuttlecraft including a hypersonic *Waverider shuttle*, which was docked on the underside of the saucer section. Similar to the captain's yachts on *Galaxy-class* vessels, the *Waverider shuttle* was designed to operate within a planetary atmosphere and could reach speeds in excess of Mach 5.

LOST IN THE DELTA QUADRANT

The *U.S.S. Equinox* was commissioned on Stardate 47007.1 and placed under the command of Rudolph Ransom III, a well known and admired exo-biologist who, after making first contact with the Yridians, a species previously thought to be extinct, was promoted to the position of captain. In 2371 the *Equinox* was one of a number of vessels that was pulled into the Delta Quadrant by the entity known as 'The Caretaker', who abandoned

the crew 70,000 light years from Earth.

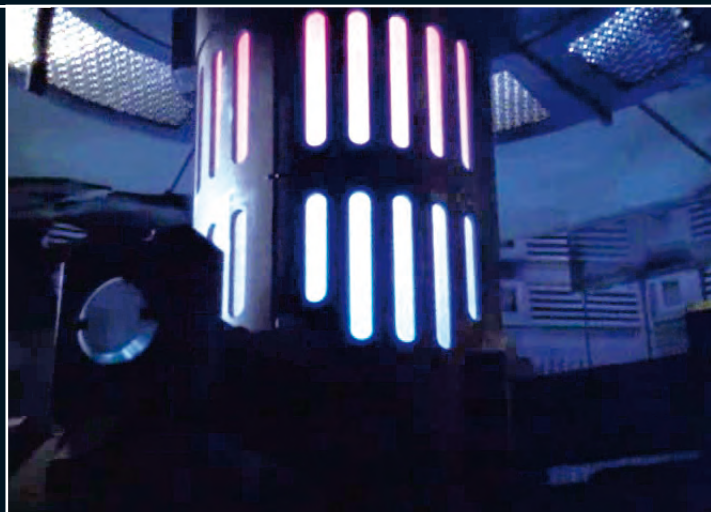
Even travelling at its top speed of warp 8, it was clear it would take decades for the ship to reach home. Nevertheless, Ransom set a course for Earth. Within a matter of days the *Equinox* had unwittingly entered an area of space controlled by a species known as the Krowtonan Guard who ordered them to leave their territory. However, since a detour would add six years to their journey, Ransom opted to maintain course. The Krowtonan Guard launched a series of vicious assaults that resulted in the loss of half the *Equinox* crew and severe damage to the ship. Although the *Equinox* survived, she was not equipped for long-term survival away from Starfleet support facilities, and within a few years the ship was on the point of collapse with the remaining crew facing starvation.

The ship managed to enter orbit around an M-Class planet, whose inhabitants known as the



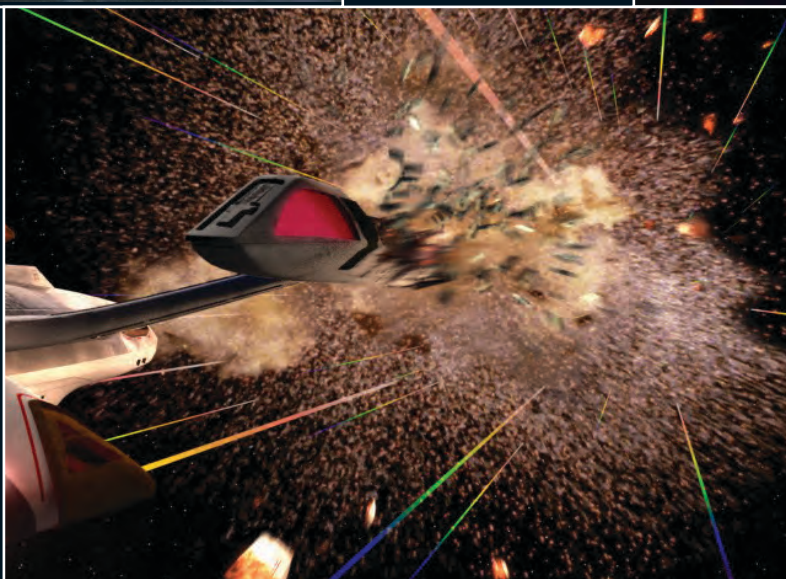
◀ Ransom and his crew hoped to study the nucleogenic life forms, and summoned one but their attempts to keep it in normal space went wrong and resulted in its accidental death.

▶ The remains of the nucleogenic life form provided an incredibly efficient fuel source, that allowed the *Equinox's* engines to reach the high warp 9.9s.



◀ When the *U.S.S. Voyager* came to the *Equinox's* assistance, the nucleogenic life forms started to attack both ships, convinced that there was no difference between the two crews. *Voyager* eventually managed to communicate with the life forms and promised to punish Ransom.

▶ Janeway pursued Ransom and in the ensuing battle *Voyager* inflicted serious damage on the *Equinox*.



Ankari summoned their 'Spirits of Good Fortune' to bless the crew. Discovering that the spirits were in fact nucleogenic life forms who emitted high levels of antimatter, Ransom and his crew captured and accidentally killed one of the aliens. They used the remains to enhance the *Equinox's* warp drive.

Quadrant. Accepting *Voyager's* help, Ransom hid the reason behind the alien attacks. When the truth was exposed, Janeway attempted to arrest him and his crew and to make peace with the nucleogenic life forms. The *Equinox* fled and in the ensuing battle, Ransom realised what he had done, beamed his crew to *Voyager*, and destroyed the *Equinox*, with himself aboard.

▲ Ransom was willing to surrender but his first officer, Maxwell Burke, wasn't. Ransom elected to destroy the ship, killing both himself and Burke. The five surviving crew members joined *Voyager's* crew.

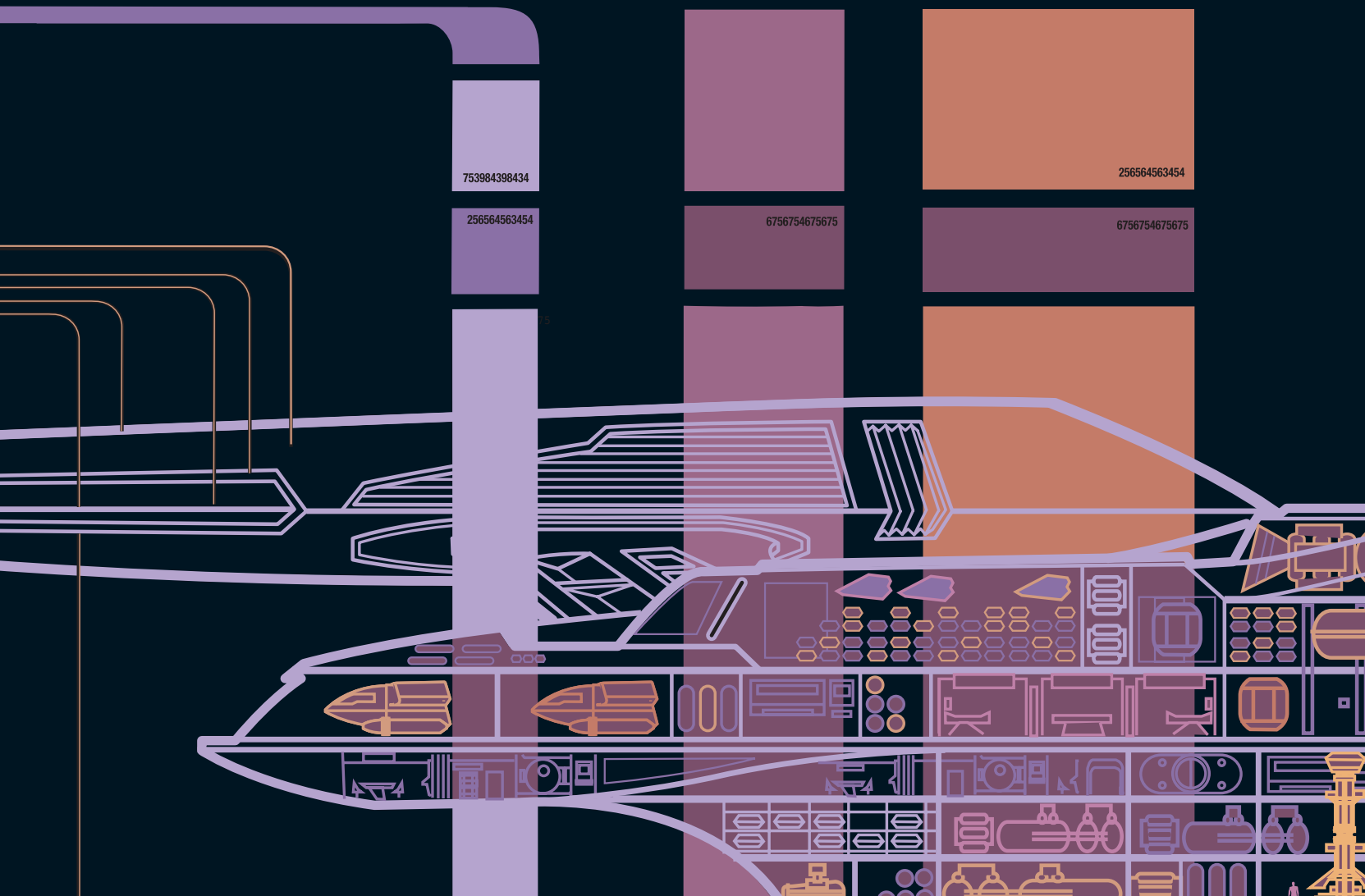
MORAL SHORTCUT

The new power source enabled the ship to travel over 10,000 light years in just two weeks. Ransom and his crew continued to capture and kill the aliens in a bid to shorten their journey to Earth. However, the aliens retaliated by attacking the ship killing many of the remaining crewmembers. In early 2376, after one such attack left the ship almost crippled, Ransom sent out a distress call, which was picked up by the *U.S.S. Voyager*, another Starfleet vessel trapped in the Delta



DATA FEED

In one version of the future, Harry Kim was the captain of the *U.S.S. Rhode Island*, a design of Starfleet vessel that had clearly evolved from the *Nova* class. The most obvious difference was that it had a "filled-in" nose section.

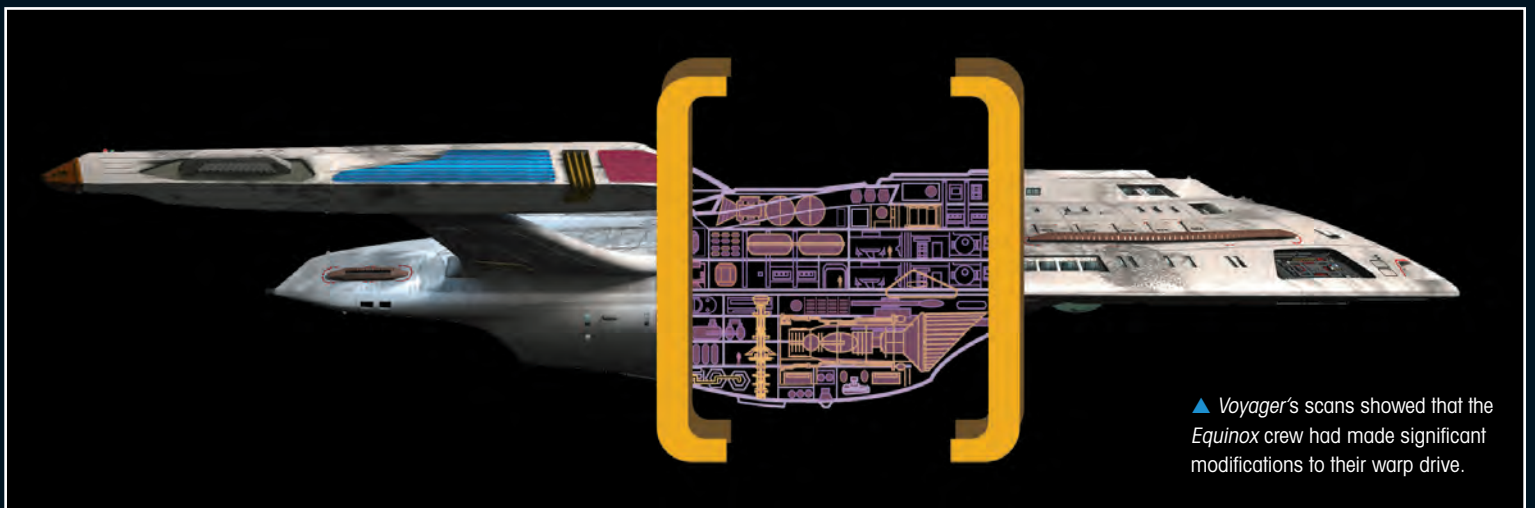
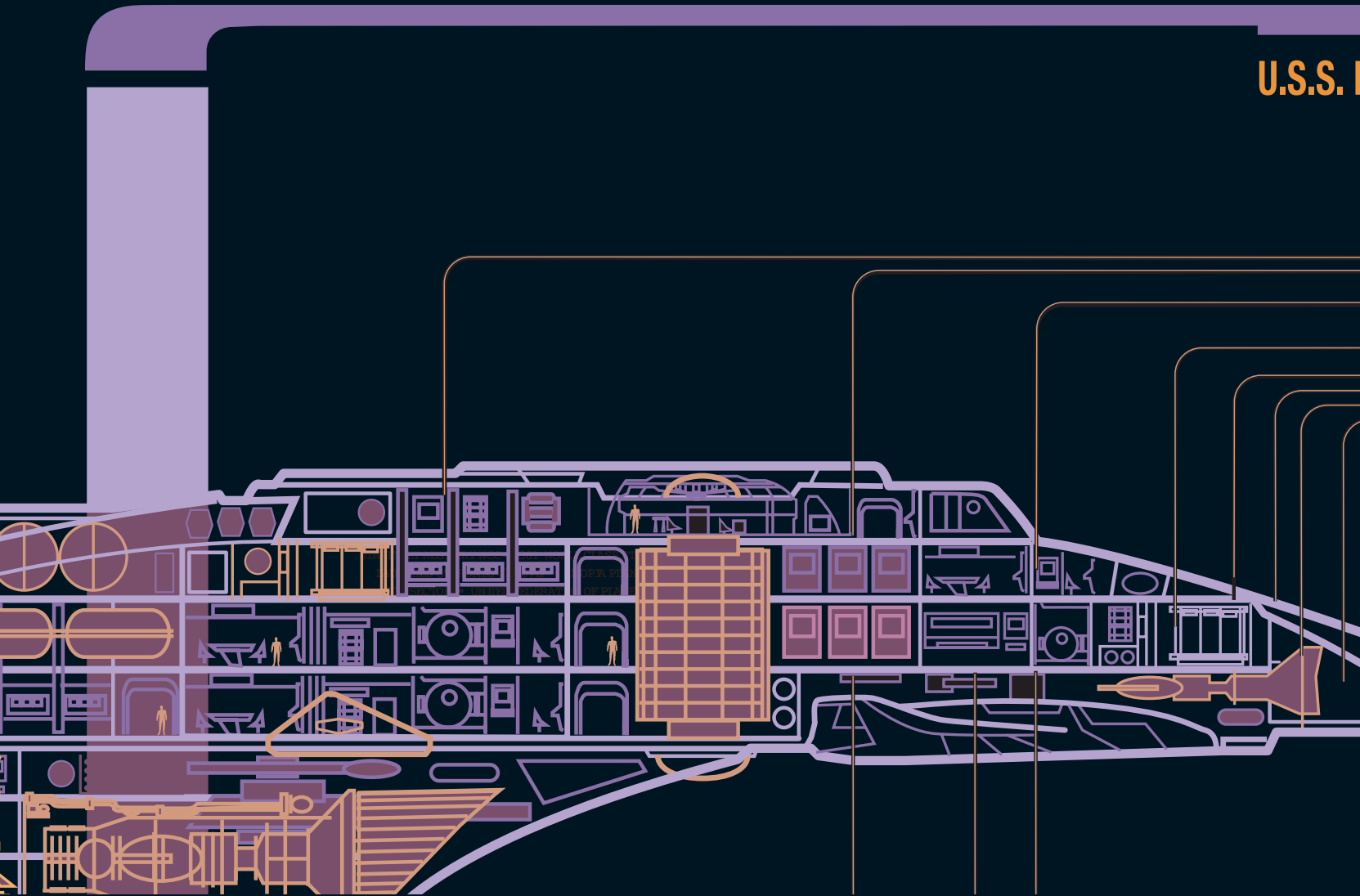


Master Systems Display

The *Equinox* was a small vessel that was designed for relatively short-range scouting and scientific survey missions. Her eight decks provided quarters for a crew of 80, which were located on the upper decks. The lower decks in the engineering hull were largely taken up by the navigational deflector, which crossed Decks 6 and 7 and main engineering, where the vertical warp core ran between Decks 5 and 8, with a hatch in the bottom of the hull allowing

it to be ejected in an emergency. The impulse engines were on Deck 2 at the rear of the saucer section. The main computer core was also located in the saucer section and ran between Decks 2 and 4. The *Waverider* shuttle was docked just forward of this on Deck 4, where it nestled into the ship behind the secondary deflector dish. Other shuttlecraft were housed in a shuttlebay at the rear of the ship on Deck 3, which also housed a variety of science labs.

U.S.S. E



▲ *Voyager's* scans showed that the *Enterprise* crew had made significant modifications to their warp drive.



ADVANCED PHASERS

The *U.S.S. Equinox* may have been relatively lightly armed, but it was fitted with the most advanced form of phasers available to Starfleet. The Type Xb phasers were an advance on the Type X phasers that were in use on *Galaxy* and *Intrepid*-class starships. This improved design had a new hot-standby feature where a low power pulse was constantly running through the central EPS conduits. The design of the Type X phaser had been further refined by the time the *Prometheus* class was being tested. This class of ship was fitted with Type Xc phasers, where the hot-standby filament was exposed to space, and ran at a higher power level.

Ship's registry



Warp field grille

Shuttlebay

Phaser strip

Formation light



Secondary navigational deflector

Bussard collector

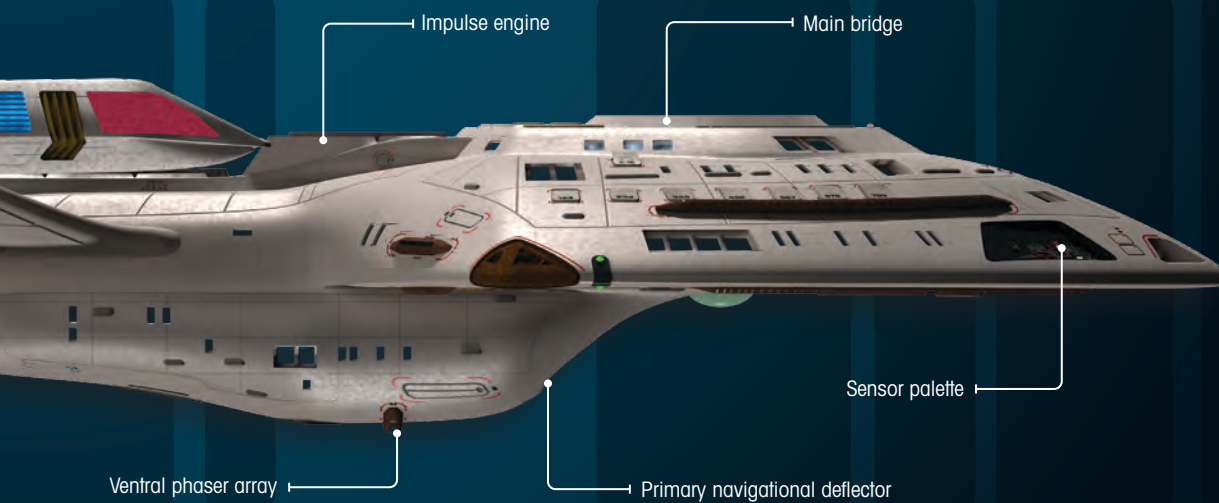
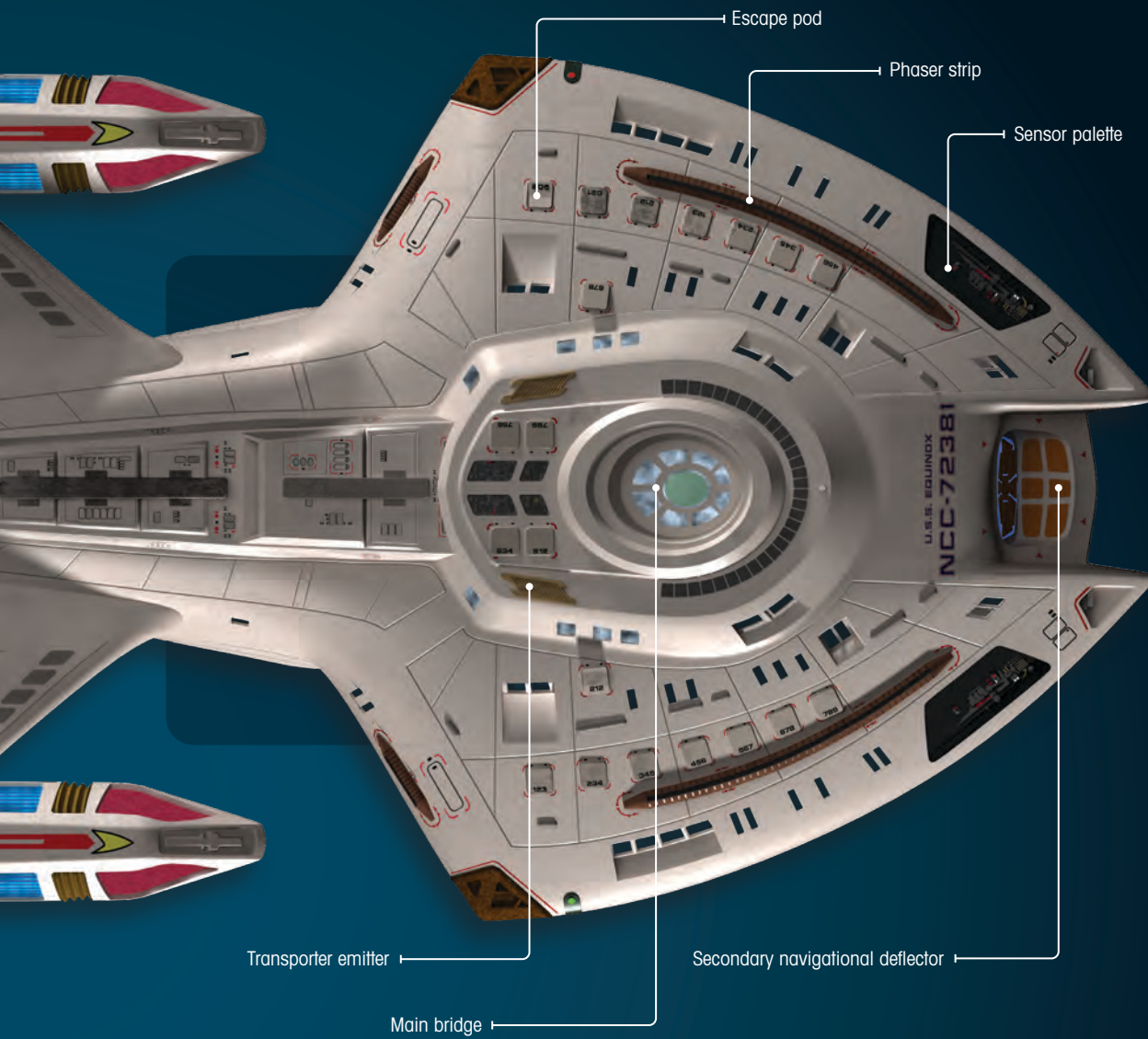


Formation light

Primary navigational deflector

Warp field grille





SICKBAY

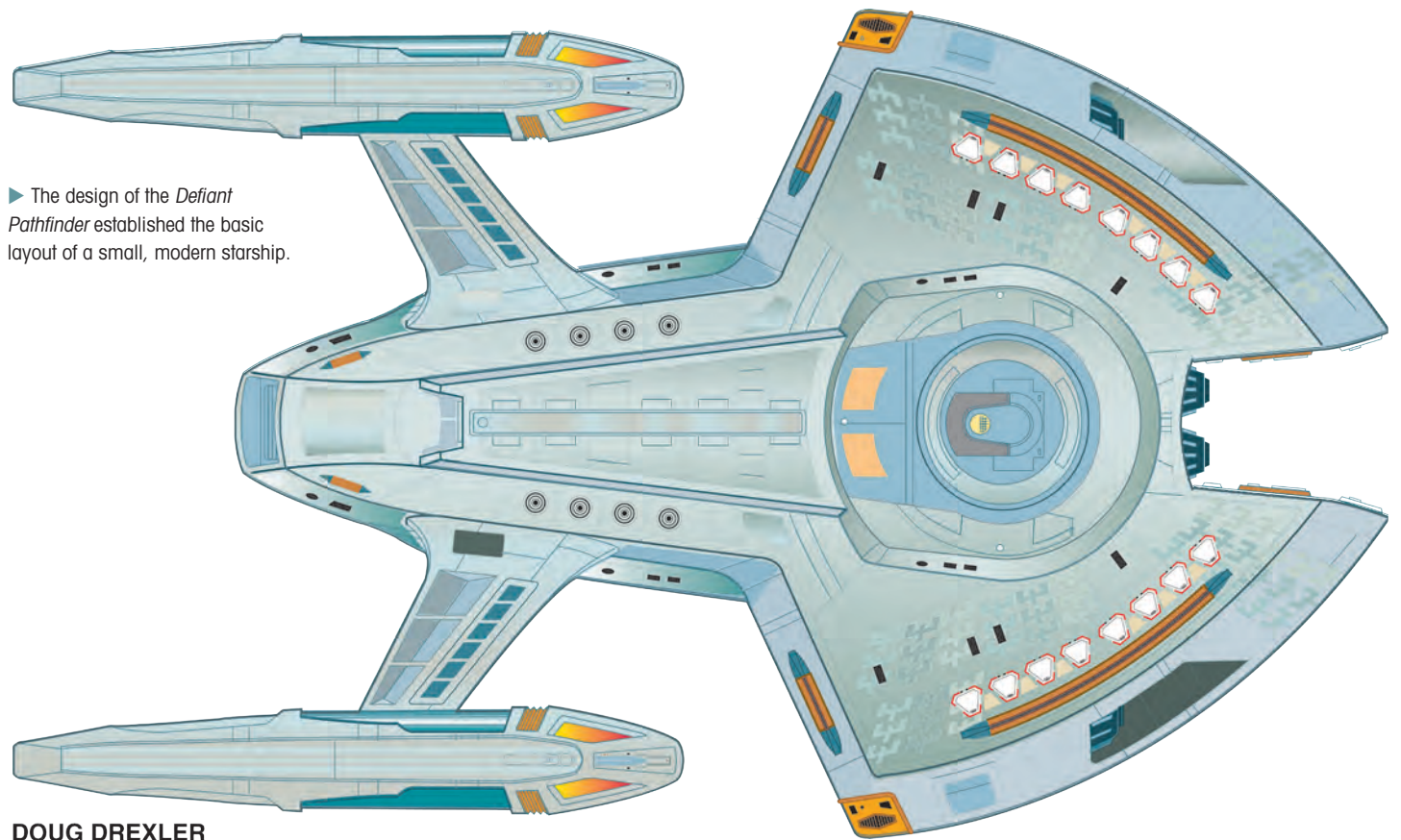
The majority of the experiments on the nucleogenic life forms were carried out in the *Equinox's* sickbay on Deck 4 and were performed by the ship's EMH, who only cooperated after Ransom deleted his ethical subroutines.

SHIELD MODIFICATION

The *Equinox* crew were able to defend themselves from the alien attacks by establishing a network of multiphasic force fields around the ship that prevented the aliens moving in and out of normal space.

WAVERIDER SHUTTLE

The *Waverider* shuttle was an auxiliary craft docked to the underside of the saucer and accessed from Deck 4. It was designed for medium-range missions and was larger and more comfortable than a standard shuttle.



► The design of the *Defiant Pathfinder* established the basic layout of a small, modern starship.

DOUG DREXLER

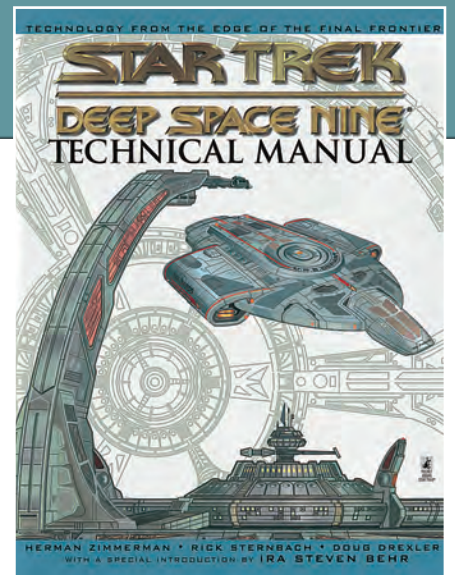
DESIGNING THE EQUINOX

The *U.S.S. Equinox* started out life as another, very different, tough little ship...

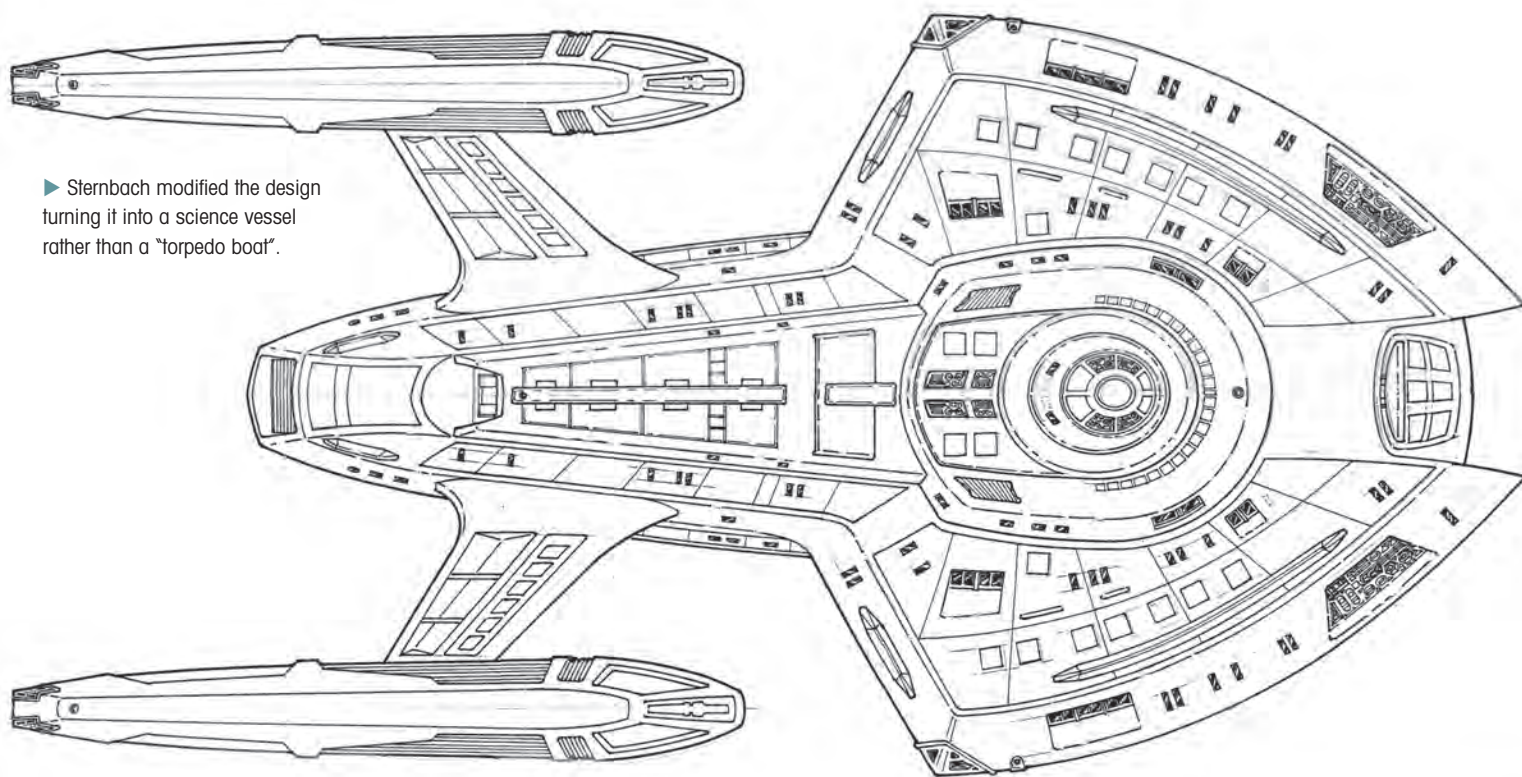
The script for *Equinox* called for something that had never been seen in *STAR TREK* before: a small scientific vessel that would have been built around the same time as *Voyager* so Rick Sternbach knew that to come up with an appropriate design he would have to start from scratch. As he recalls, there was one vessel that provided him with some inspiration. "I began roughing out some basic shapes using the *Oberth* class as a starting point. That was a

small Federation starship used as both a scout ship and research vessel, but as it was at least 80 years old, it didn't look as modern as I knew the *Equinox* needed to be. So I started thinking about other small ships that I could study instead and then it dawned on me that I'd actually already designed a ship that fit the criteria and which had never been used before."

The ship in question was the *Defiant Pathfinder*, which Sternbach had



▲ The original design appeared in the *STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE Technical Manual*, and was illustrated by Doug Drexler based on Sternbach's concept. The *Technical Manual* is one of the few books that is accepted to contain canon information about the *STAR TREK* universe.

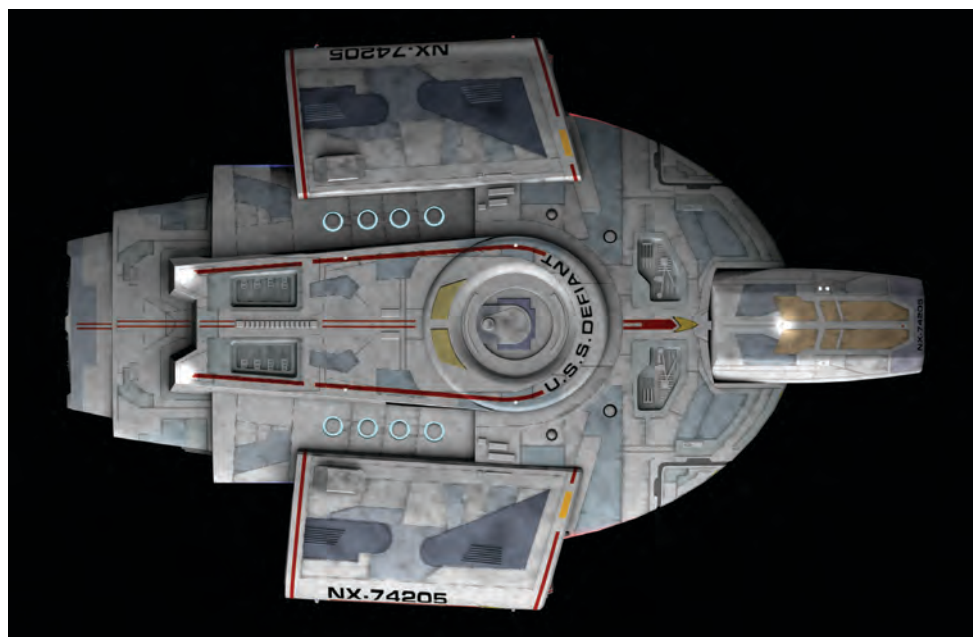


► Sternbach modified the design turning it into a science vessel rather than a “torpedo boat”.

sternbach 3:99



► The design for the *Defiant Pathfinder* was reverse engineered from the finished *Defiant*, and Sternbach deliberately retained elements such as the protective wall around the bridge.



developed whilst writing the *STAR TREK DEEP SPACE NINE Technical Manual*. He had wanted to come up with a backstory explaining how the design of Starfleet’s first warship had evolved. So, working backwards from Jim Martin’s finished design, he had created a new prototype version that had a more conventional shape with two nacelles.

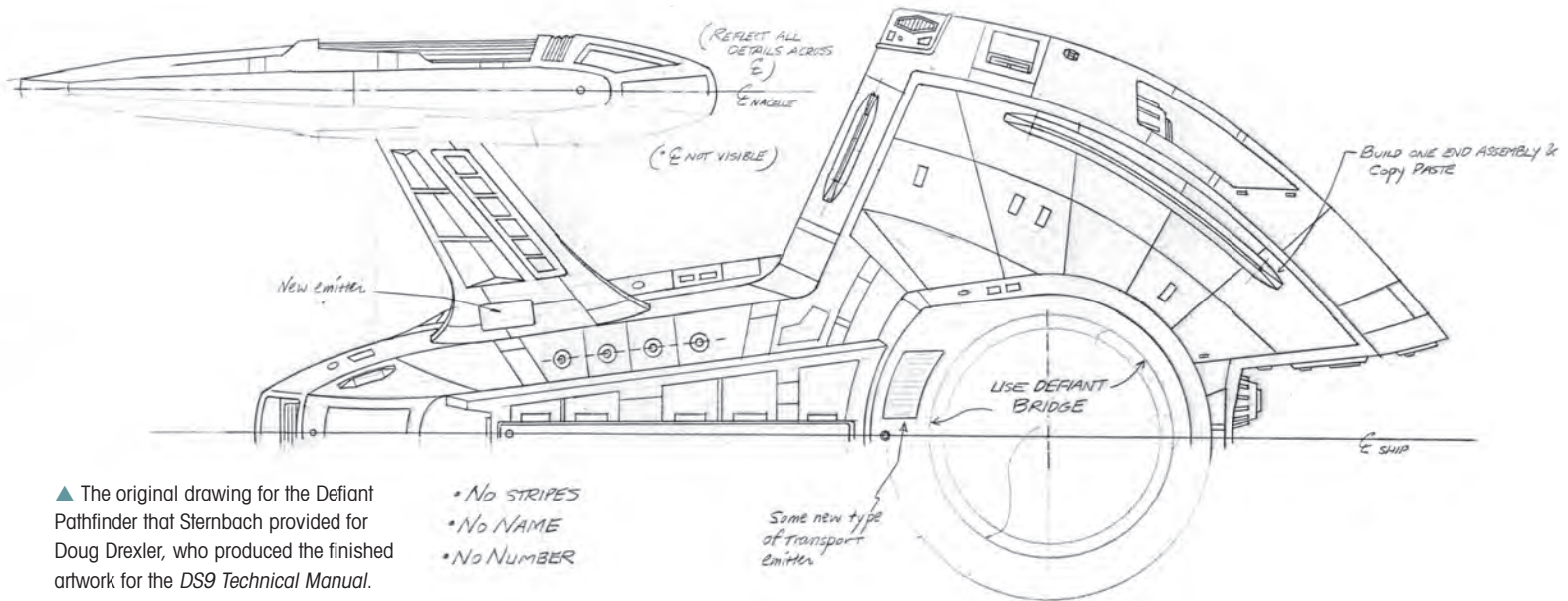
BORG BUSTER

“I’d held onto some of the well-known shapes from the *Defiant*, such as the two rows of circular widgets behind the bridge, the bridge area itself, and the forward curve of the hull just behind the

nose extension. At the same time I’d theorised that the admirals in the Advanced Starship Design Bureau needed a fast torpedo ship, something along the same lines as the ‘Borg Buster’ we heard the writers were at one time looking for. At some point in the process the mission requirements changed. The basic specs were sound but modifications were needed to protect

the ship from massive weapons fire, hence the tucked in look of the nacelles and the big shells around them on the finished *Defiant*.”

Deciding that the size and shape of the ship made it the ideal starting point for the *Equinox*, Sternbach now needed supervising producer Peter Lauritson to sign off on the idea. Taking a photocopy of the *Defiant Pathfinder*,



▲ The original drawing for the Defiant Pathfinder that Sternbach provided for Doug Drexler, who produced the finished artwork for the *DS9 Technical Manual*.

- NO STRIPES
- NO NAME
- NO NUMBER

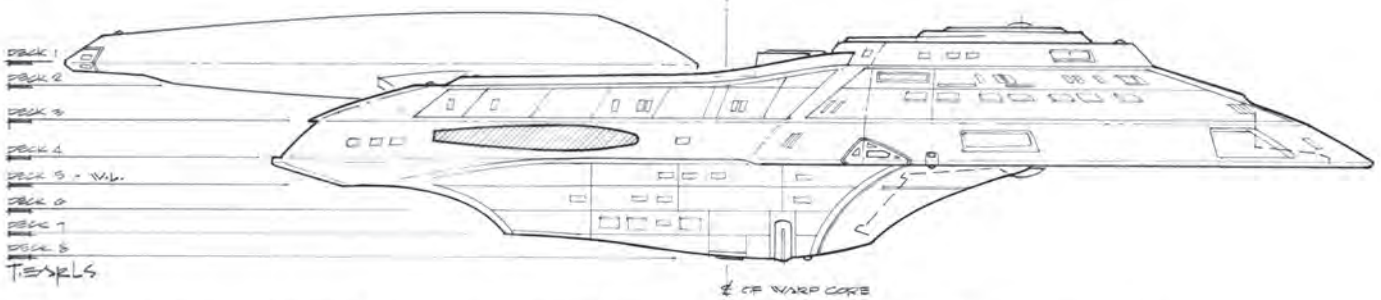
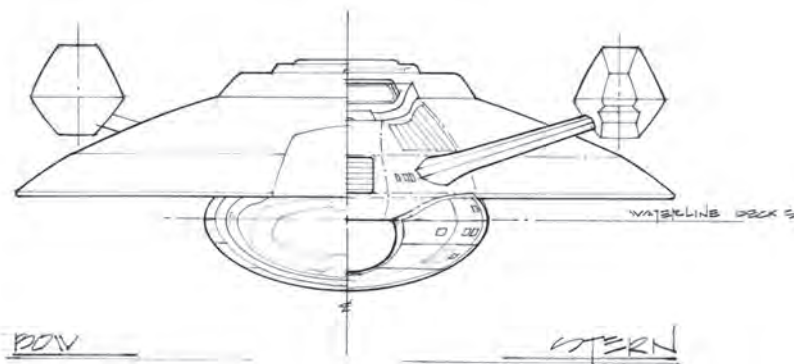
Sternbach placed it next to a top view of the *Voyager* in scale and presented it to Lauritson, who quickly gave it his seal of approval. It was now left to Sternbach to turn his design for a heavily armed warship into a science vessel. It proved to be relatively simple process, mainly involving replacing the six torpedo launchers with the large

sensor arrays commonly found on science ships. However, Sternbach opted to leave in place the recessed bridge, which on the *Defiant* was protected by a circular wall. That done, he turned his attention to the underside of the ship which in the original drawings contained very little in the way of detail.

"I decided to continue the trend of

giving some Starfleet ships a large shuttle-like embedded craft, such as the captain's yacht on the *Enterprise-D* and the aeroshuttle on *Voyager*," says Sternbach. "I placed an arrow-shaped craft on *Equinox's* underside which was known as a hypersonic *Waverider shuttle*, a highly fuel efficient vehicle at Mach 5 and above."

▼ Tim Earls provided this drawing that shows the front and side elevations, which had not been worked out for the *DS9 Technical Manual*. He also calculated the size of the ship, giving it eight decks.



U.S.S. EQUINOX NCC-72381 - PROPOSED STARBOARD ELEVATION

Once the changes had been made, it was then the turn of Digital Muse to turn Sternbach's sketches into a computer generated model.

"Orthographic views were definitely needed to build a CG model of the ship, so I worked those up on tracing vellum," recalls Sternbach. "All the typical Starfleet hull parts were called out, and colours and lighting specs were furnished to visual effects. Eddie Robinson from Digital Muse built the model based on my drawings, and after a couple of over-the-shoulder sessions, and discussions on colours and markings, the ship came out of LightWave almost exactly as it went in."

IN THE WARS

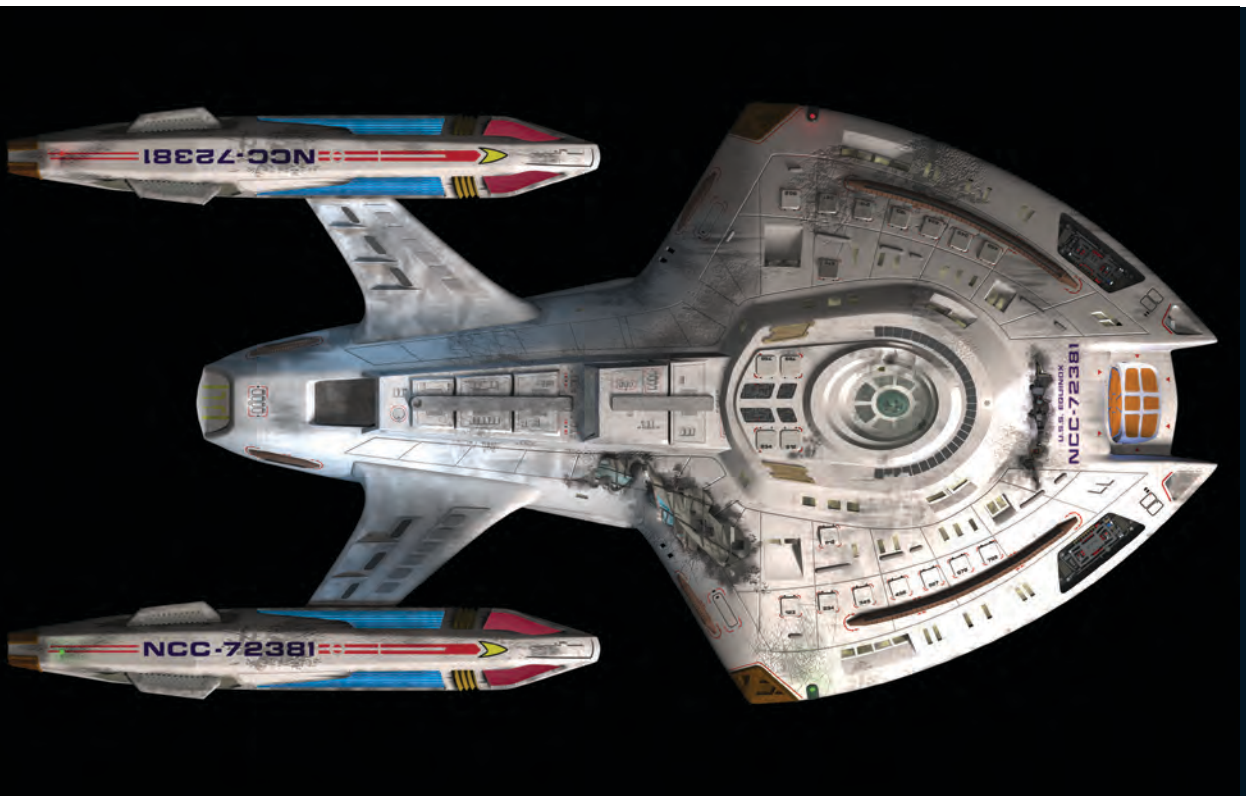
Sternbach and the VFX team were then faced with one final challenge - to take a pristine looking ship and smash it up. It had to look like a vessel which had been under attack for a long time and, while looking battle scarred, was still able to make its way through space.

Fortunately, according to Sternbach, as far as CG programming was concerned creating the right kind of damage was child's play. "From what I've seen," Sternbach explains, "in LightWave you can remove or distort groups of polygons until they look twisted, vapourised and so on."

Understanding that some fans might wonder how a prototype warship and a science vessel could end up looking so similar, Sternbach went to the trouble of creating a backstory that linked the *Equinox* and the *Defiant*.

"To my way of thinking, Starfleet looked at a number of possibilities for the *Nova*-class science vessel and dug out the design for the *Pathfinder*. Then maybe some ASDB officer said, 'Say Bob, since you're not going to use this one, can I have it for the *Nova* development cycle?' That being the case, both the *Nova* and *Defiant* classes could have been in service in plenty of time for Ransom to take command and get yanked into the Delta Quadrant."

▼ The final CG version of the *Equinox*, complete with the damage it suffered on its journey through the Delta Quadrant.





VOYAGER'S

▲ On several occasions *Voyager* was able to use forms of subspace corridors that allowed it to cover vast distances at great speed.



JOURNEY

The 70,000-light-year journey back from the Delta Quadrant should have taken a lifetime, but *Voyager* made the trip in seven years...

When *Voyager* was stranded in the Delta Quadrant 70,000 light years from Earth, the crew had to face the uncomfortable truth that even travelling at their top speed it would take at least 70 years to reach home. But thanks to a number of stellar phenomena and alien technologies they were able to make the journey in just seven years.

The first major advance came in 2374 when they had been in the Delta Quadrant for three years. Kes began evolving onto a different plane of existence and, finding her new powers

posed a threat to the ship, she took the painful decision to leave. But before her departure, she was able to propel the ship more than 9,500 light years closer to Earth, knocking 10 years off their journey.

QUANTUM SLIPSTREAM

Later that year, *Voyager* acquired an advanced propulsion system known as a quantum slipstream drive, which worked by creating subspace tunnels. The drive was part of a trap set by an alien called Arturis to exact revenge on Captain Janeway for her role in the

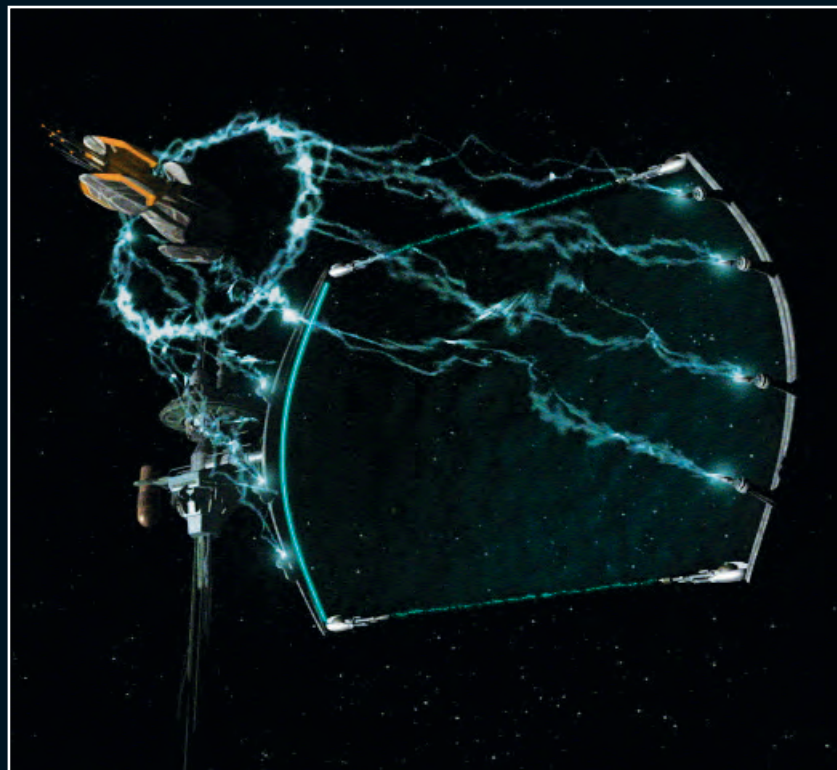
Borg's assimilation of his world. Following a number of modifications, *Voyager's* crew was able to use the slipstream technology to travel 300 light years closer to Earth. Several months later, they managed to use the slipstream again, this time to travel another 10,000 light years. Unfortunately, the slipstream collapsed and it was decided that the technology was simply too dangerous for repeated use so the decision was taken to dismantle it.

Voyager's run of good luck continued in 2375 when it entered a



◀ More than once *Voyager's* journey was shortened by unusual means. Kes propelled the ship through the heart of Borg space when she gained almost Q-like powers

▶ The crew used Tash's catapult to create a graviton surge that sent the ship into null space to re-emerge 30 sectors nearer home.



dead area of space known as the Void. The crew came across a spatial vortex – literally a doorway that linked two points in space. However a race known as the Malon were using the vortex to dump anti-matter waste that was poisoning the native inhabitants. Keen to use the vortex to leave the Void and to put an end to the pollution caused by the Malon, Janeway hatched a plan to destroy the vortex by deploying photon torpedoes inside it. By hastily jumping to warp when the torpedoes were detonated, the ship was able to

ride the resulting shockwave to the other side of the Void.

BORG TECHNOLOGY

Soon afterwards the crew managed to steal a transwarp coil from a Borg sphere. Like the slipstream drive, the transwarp coils opened corridors in subspace and the stolen coil allowed *Voyager* to travel 20,000 light years, eliminating another 15 years from its journey. Then a graviton catapult, built by an alien called Tash as a means of travelling around space, helped the

crew cut another three years off their journey. And even Q popped up to provide a more efficient route as a thank you for Janeway's help in dealing with his wayward son.

The final leap came about after a visit from Janeway's future self, who had travelled back in time to change the course of history. She persuaded the crew to access a transwarp network that the Borg used to travel between all four quadrants. The hub was protected by at least 47 Borg cubes, and Janeway worked alongside her future self to destroy the entire network by infecting the Borg Queen with a pathogen that caused the Queen to lose control of the shielding around the manifolds. *Voyager* was then able to destroy the manifolds by firing transphasic torpedoes as it travelled through the transwarp conduits. This set off a chain reaction that resulted in the collapse of the entire network. The shockwave enabled *Voyager* to exit the conduit less than a light year away from Earth bringing about an end to its journey, 63 years ahead of schedule.



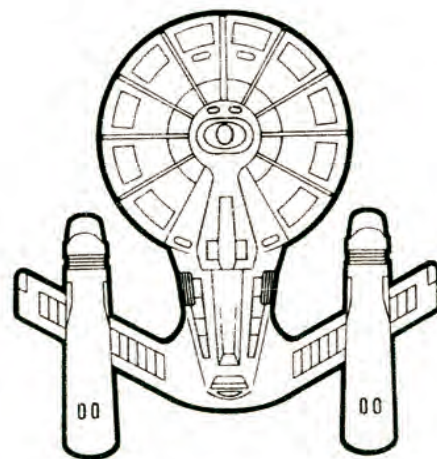
▼ *Voyager* finally made it back to Earth in 2378 after the ship covered 30,000 light years by using a Borg network of transwarp conduits.

ON SCREEN



TRIVIA

At the end of *Equinox, Part II* five members of Ransom's people joined *Voyager's* crew. Janeway stripped them of their rank and privileges and told them they would work under close supervision. Only one of them ever appeared again: Brian Soffin made a brief appearance in *Repentance*, where he was seen working for Neelix as a guard.



The *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION Technical Manual* has an appendix that shows early concepts for a design of ship that could replace the *Galaxy-class Enterprise-D*. The drawings, produced by Rick Sternbach, are labelled *Nova class*, but have nothing in common with the eventual design of the *Equinox*.



The *Equinox* is the only ship of this exact design that has appeared on screen. A very similar ship, the *Rhode Island*, appeared in the last episode of *VOYAGER*, but it is clearly an upgrade of the *Nova class*. The CG model of the ship had been rebuilt by Rob Bonchune, who took the opportunity to tweak the design.

FEATURED TV SERIES:	STAR TREK: VOYAGER
FIRST APPEARANCE:	Equinox
MOVIE APPEARANCES:	None
FINAL APPEARANCE:	Equinox, Part II
DESIGNED BY:	Rick Sternbach

KEY APPEARANCES

'Equinox, Parts I and II'

The crew of the *U.S.S. Voyager* detects another Starfleet ship that has been stranded in the Delta Quadrant: the *U.S.S. Equinox* NCC-72381. When they track it down they discover it is under attack by mysterious alien life forms, who are materialising on the ship from another dimension and killing the crew. *Voyager* extends its shields around the *Equinox* to protect her but it is only a temporary solution. Within a matter of days the aliens will break through the

shields and wipe out both crews.

The *Equinox* was also brought to the Delta Quadrant by the Caretaker, but her crew have had an even harder time than Janeway's. Their ship wasn't designed for long-range missions, but somehow they have travelled just as far as *Voyager*. To her horror, Janeway discovers that they have only done so by 'harvesting' the alien life forms, and turning them into an extremely powerful fuel source. The aliens are attacking in revenge, and after so much slaughter have no interest in peace...

COMING NEXT

FERENGI MARAUDER

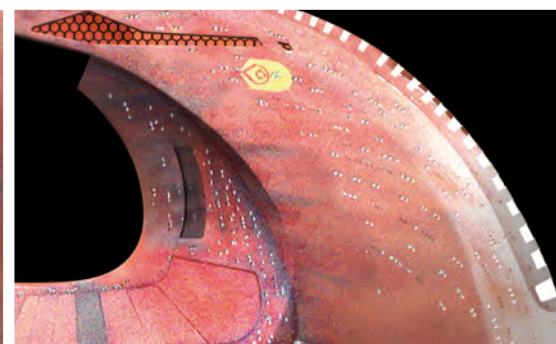
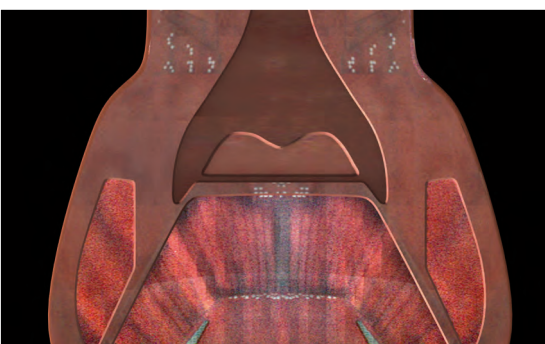


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