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U.S.S. PROMETHEUS™
NX-59650

LAUNCHED: 2374

MAX SPEED: WARP 9.99

LENGTH: 126 METERS

MULTI-VECTOR ASSAULT

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U.S.S. PROMETHEUS NX-59650

SPECIFICATION



REGISTRY:	NX-59650
CLASS:	PROMETHEUS
CONSTRUCTED:	BETA ANTARES SHIPYARDS
LAUNCHED:	2374
LENGTH:	126 METERS
DECKS:	15
TOP SPEED:	9.99
WEAPONRY:	TYPE-XII PHASERS PHOTON AND QUANTUM TORPEDOES
FEATURES:	MULTI-VECTOR ASSAULT MODE



U.S.S. PROMETHEUS NX-59650

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The *U.S.S. Prometheus* NX-59650 was a prototype vessel that was launched from the Beta Antares Shipyards in 2374. It was one of Starfleet's few warships; it was developed in response to the Dominion threat and was designed specifically for deep-space tactical assignments. It was larger and more powerful than the *Defiant*-class vessels and thanks to four warp nacelles, which gave her a sustainable cruising speed of warp 9.99, it was the fastest ship in the fleet, a title previously held by the *Intrepid*-class vessels that were capable of a warp speed of 9.975.

EXPERIMENTAL WARSHIP

At the time of her launch, the *Prometheus* was so highly classified only four people were trained to operate the bridge. Even access to most onboard systems, including communications, was restricted to personnel with level-four clearance.

U.S.S. PROMETHEUS NX-59650

This experimental vessel was designed to split into three to mount a devastating attack.

► Since the *Prometheus* was designed to operate as three individual warp-capable ships, it had to have six warp nacelles, four of which were visible in joined mode.





► When *Voyager's* crew made contact with the *Prometheus*, they were able to transmit their EMH. Most of the ship was fitted with holoprojectors and this allowed the EMH and his counterpart on the *Prometheus* to travel to all parts of the ship, including the bridge.

▼ The *Prometheus* was fitted with the latest defensive technologies including regenerative shields and ablative armor.



► *Voyager* contacted the *Prometheus* after the crew found an ancient network of subspace relays. After their initial attempts to contact the ship failed, they sent their EMH through the network. When he arrived he discovered the Starfleet crew were dead but managed to work with the *Prometheus's* EMH to regain control of the ship.



▲ Once the *Prometheus* had separated into three, it was designed to mount a combined assault on an enemy target. All three component vessels were heavily armed and pre-programmed with a variety of attack patterns. The first time the system was operated in field conditions, the ship was under Romulan control and attacked the *U.S.S. Bonchune*.

The high level of security was necessary due to the *Prometheus* being equipped with a number of cutting-edge systems. These included regenerative and metaphasic shields augmented by a polaron modulator, ablative hull armor (an outer layer that vaporizes under weapons fire, dissipating energy and protecting the ship's interior), and multiple Type-XII phaser arrays, together with photon and quantum torpedoes.

ASSAULT SQUADRON

But its most impressive feature was the multi-vector assault mode. By using advanced compartmentalization and automaton systems, the *Prometheus* was able to split into three separate vessels. All three sections were warp capable, with each having independent maneuvering and attack capabilities. The *Prometheus* could then operate as a mini squadron, able to launch a

coordinated three pronged assault on a target.

By default, each section was remotely controlled by the ship's sophisticated tactical computer, which was based on the main bridge of the main hull. Once the ship had separated, the computer requested an attack pattern and a target. Alternatively, an experienced Tactical Officer could control all three sections either semi-manually in emergency combat situations, or each section could be manned by a skeleton crew. The decoupling could be achieved in a matter of seconds and reintegrated just as quickly.

The ship boasted fifteen decks, comprised of officers' quarters, engineering and shuttlebays. The sickbay was packed with state-of-the-art technology including the latest incarnation of the Emergency Medical Hologram – the Mark II programme. This improved version of the EMH had an updated subroutine that gave it a friendlier

and more approachable bedside manner. It also featured advanced security features.

Thanks to holographic emitters dotted throughout the vessel, the EMH had the ability to operate outside of sickbay, so it was able to reach any area of the ship in order to treat injuries sustained during battle.

HOLOGRAPHIC RESCUE

This aspect of the design was crucial in recovering the ship when, during a test shortly after its launch in 2374, Romulan hijackers took command of the *Prometheus* and, using the multi-vector system, were able to successfully disable the *Nebula*-class *U.S.S. Bonchune*. The *Prometheus* was eventually recaptured by two EMHs who disabled the attackers and destroyed a *D'deridex*-class Romulan warbird before Starfleet managed to recover the ship.



DATA FEED

The *Prometheus* was field-tested on the edge of Federation space in 2374. During the tests a team of 27 Romulans, led by Commander Rekar, took control of the ship and killed the Starfleet crew. They were pursued by the *U.S.S. Bonchune* but used the *Prometheus's* untested multi-vector assault mode to overpower it. Rekar then planned to enter Romulan space and hand the *Prometheus* over to the Romulan secret police the Tal'shiar. However, before he could do so, the *Prometheus's* EMH disabled his team with neurozine gas. The EMH, working with his *Voyager* counterpart, then used the automated systems to destroy one of the Tal'shiar's Warbirds forcing them to retreat.

DATA FEED

All three sections of the *Prometheus* were fitted with state-of-the-art weapons, including Type-XII phaser arrays and photon and quantum torpedoes. During battle they were linked to a central tactical computer which coordinated their attack pattern to inflict maximum damage on their target.



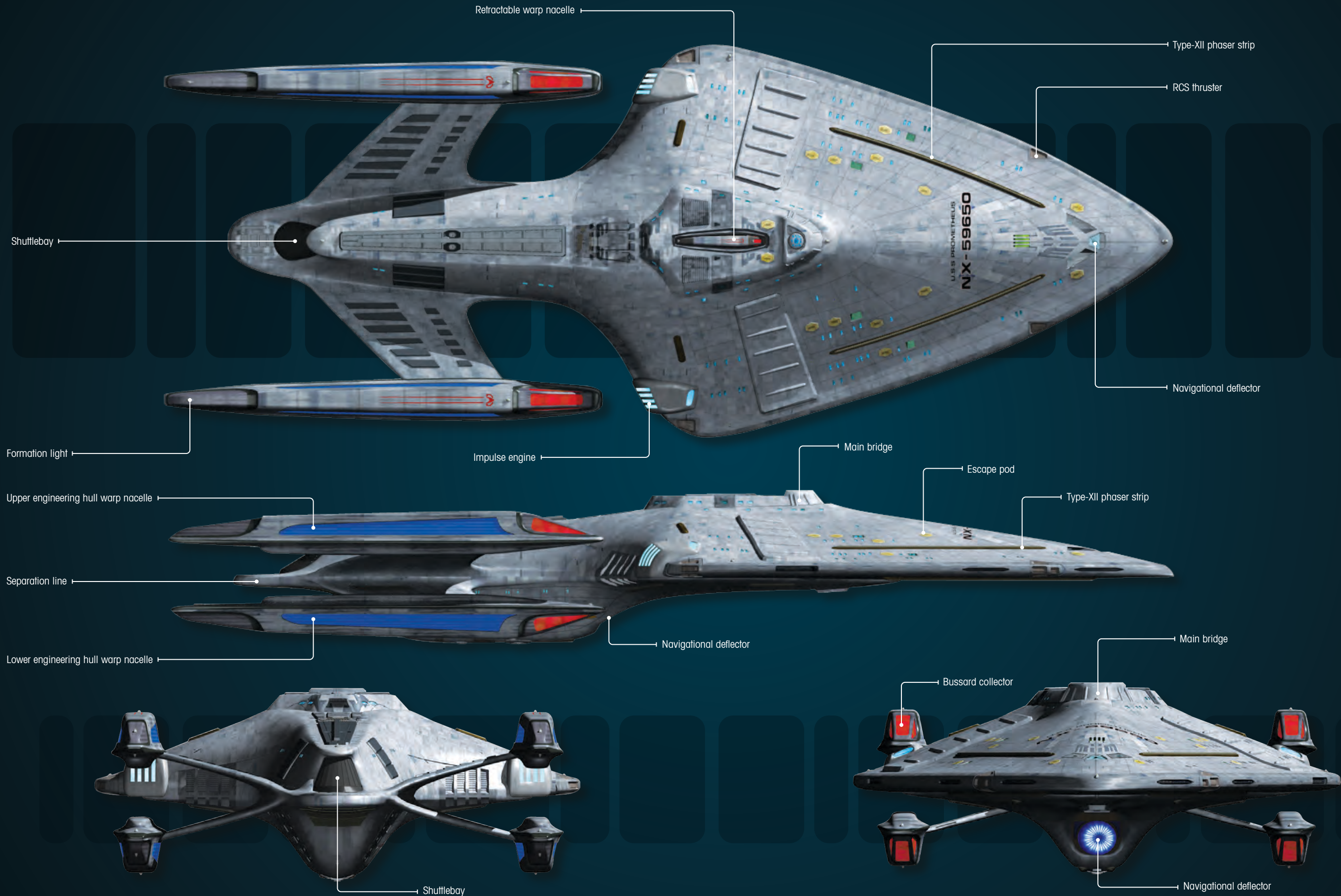
Ship Separation

The *Prometheus*'s ability to split into three required Starfleet's ASDB to radically rethink her design. Vessels had been designed to split into two for many years, but in those cases the intention had always been to effectively use the saucer module as an enormous escape module. For the *Prometheus*, the intention was to create three independent warships.

The biggest challenges involved the design of the Warp Propulsion System (WPS). The system required three reaction chambers. In the engineering section, which split into two, this was achieved by using a unique design of warp core. During normal operation, matter was fed in at the top of the core and antimatter at the bottom. The fuel streams then passed

directly through upper and lower reaction chambers before continuing to their meeting point in a conventional central reaction chamber. The central reaction chamber lay on a separation plane, which was shut down when the ship split. Additional matter and antimatter feeds were then activated to feed the now independent reaction chambers.

When separated, the primary hull operated using an independent, horizontal *Defiant*-style warp core, which was kept in hot standby mode until it was needed. While the combined engineering WPS was able to operate on an efficiency level comparable to and, in fact, in excess of any contemporary starship, in separated mode it lost a degree of efficiency but could still maintain high warp speeds.



EFFICIENT SYSTEM

It took the *Prometheus* just over 10 seconds to decouple the three sections. While it was in the process of decoupling, warning lights flashed blue throughout the ship.

SAUCER NACELLES

The main hull - or 'saucer' section - used twin retractable warp nacelles that were positioned above and below the hull rather than on the sides. Only the upper nacelle was visible when the ship was in joined mode.

ABLATIVE ARMOR

The *Prometheus* used ablative armor, which was first fitted to the *Defiant* class in 2371. A similar technology was also employed by the Borg.



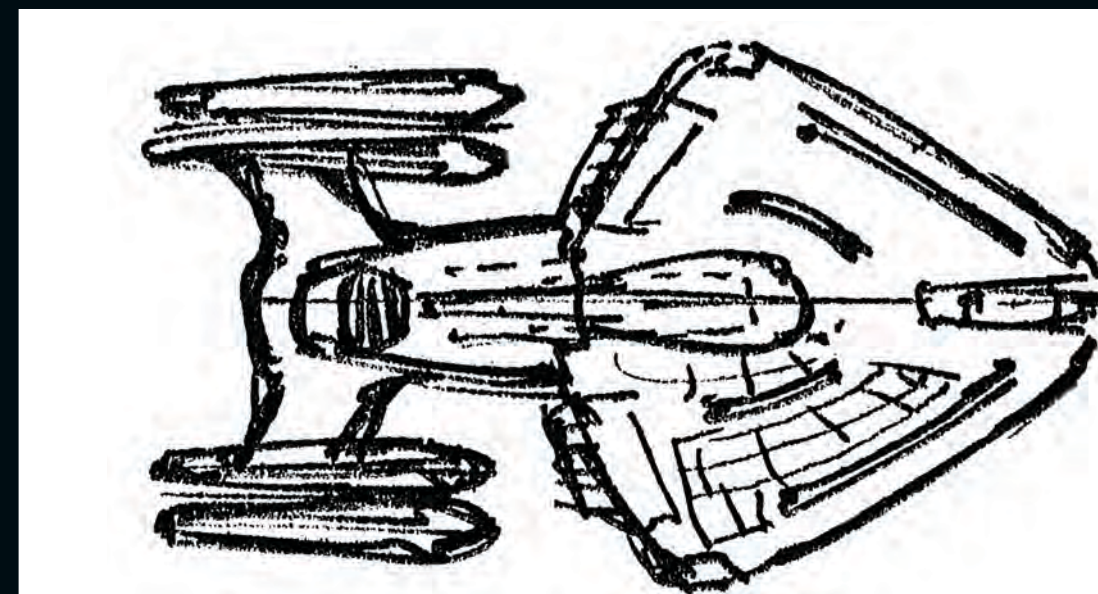
DESIGNING THE PROMETHEUS

Designing the *Prometheus* was complicated enough but the original plans called for something even more ambitious...

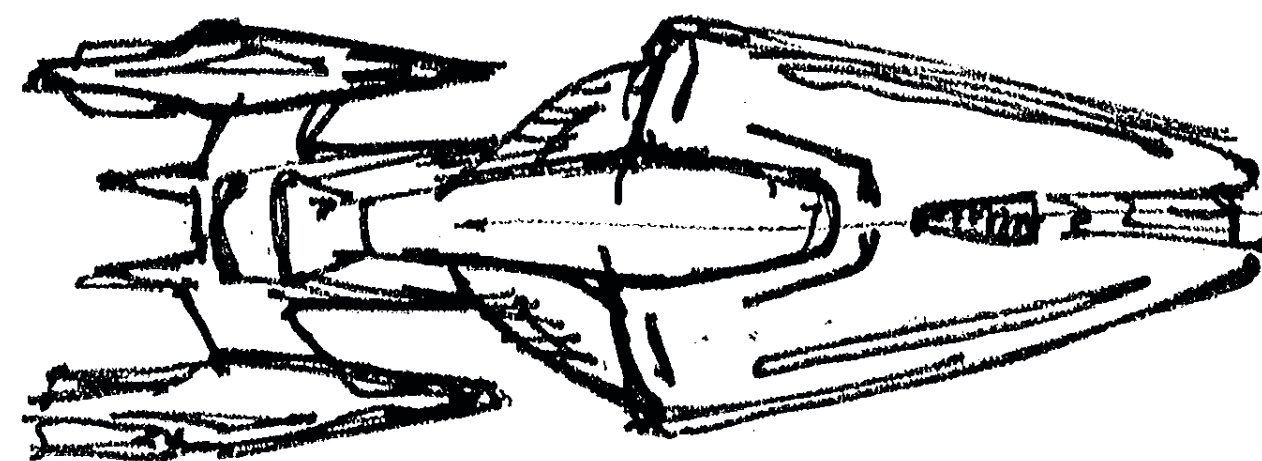
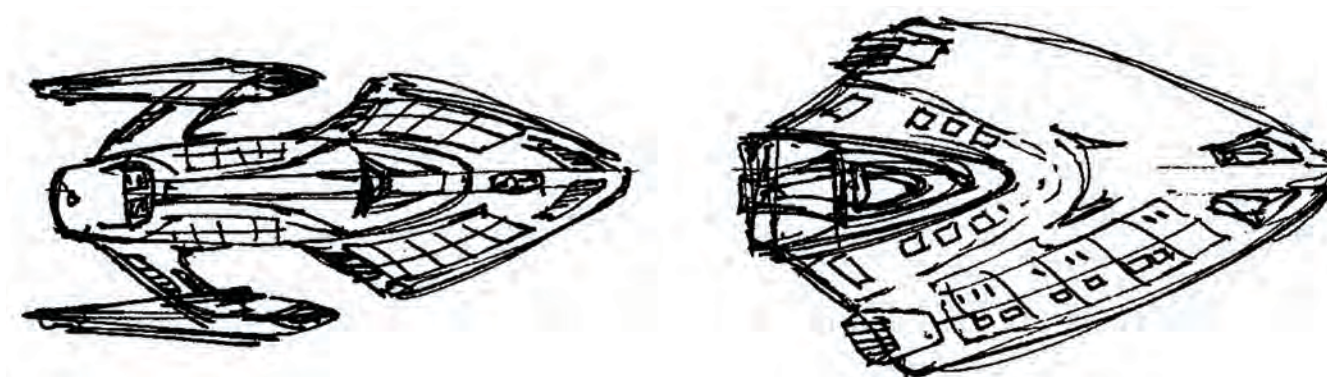
Designing the *U.S.S. Prometheus* posed Rick Sternbach with several unusual challenges. The script for 'Message In A Bottle', described a Starfleet ship that "possessed a multi-vector assault mode, making it capable of separating into five autonomous pieces." It was also a prototype vessel so it had to look

extremely advanced. Somehow Sternbach had to design a ship that looked good in joined form, but could also split up into five small ships that looked just as good on their own and, since this was *STAR TREK*, he was determined that the basic science made sense too. That meant that each of the five ships would have to its own

warp core, impulse engines, and so on. He started playing around with various doodles and computer sketches, mostly concentrating on the standard saucer and nacelles setup. Eventually he settled on a more streamlined design, which he saw as being a sort of evolution of *Voyager's* lengthened 'saucer' and wing-like



◀ Sternbach's earliest sketches show that he rapidly settled on an elongated design with four nacelles. It was a given that the saucer would separate in much the same way as it had on the *Enterprise-D*, but the question was how the rest of the ship would break up to create five independent vessels.

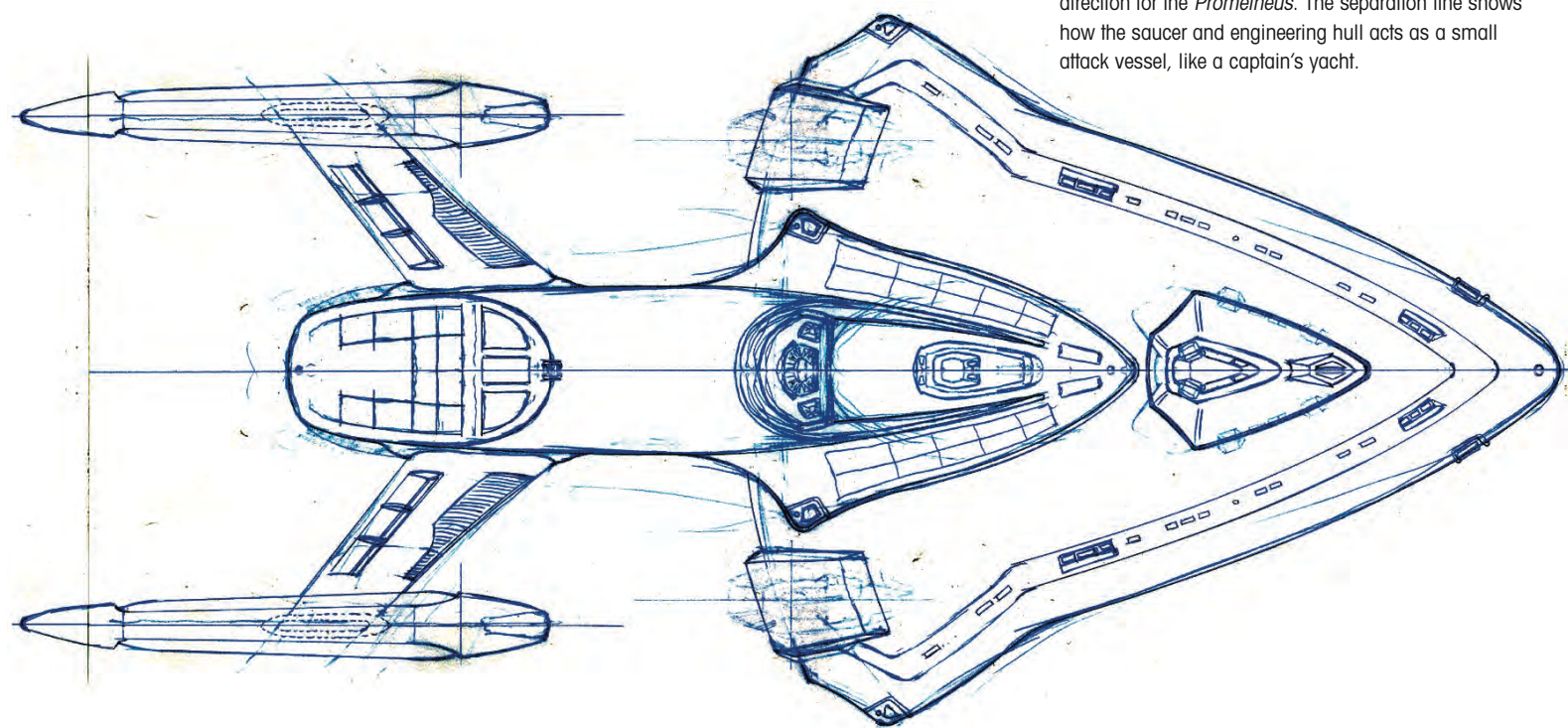


pylons. But, deciding on a basic shape was only the starting point – before anything else, Sternbach had to work out how to make the ship divide into five separate parts.

"I worked out that the aft body, that is normally the engineering hull, could be split into two, horizontally, each

section sporting two warp nacelles," he recalls. "In the sketches they were known as the Upper Warp Hull and Lower Warp Hull. This immediately required the *Prometheus* to have two separate warp cores, and more likely five matter/antimatter reactors if all parts had to do combat at warp! We

knew that even small shuttlecraft have warp engines so the small attack ships would be no problem, but the big question would be how small groups of coils would be able to drive the big forward hull? On top of that, would they also need to be hidden, to fool the bad guys?"



▼ This blue pencil sketch established the basic design direction for the *Prometheus*. The separation line shows how the saucer and engineering hull acts as a small attack vessel, like a captain's yacht.

Sternbach continued with his doodles and sketches and one of his first 'close' blue pencil drawings included a dart shaped main hull with single winglets. This saucer section then split up again, with smaller craft breaking out of the top and bottom. Many of the usual Starfleet details were penciled in; impulse engines, phasers, navigational deflector, RCS thrusters and tractor-beam emitters. It was at this point that it began to dawn on him that replicating all those parts five times was going to result in a very complicated vehicle. Luckily, around the same time, the producers announced they'd decided to have only three ships instead of the original five. Armed with this new information, Sternbach returned to the drawing board.

"Working primarily on the main hull, the first thing I did was remove the two little attack darts and add a pair of warp nacelles, which were on the top and bottom of the 'saucer'," recalls Sternbach. "In that way the engineering hull could then be split along a

horizontal line. The next round of drawings then refined the major shapes, and included a starboard-elevation cutaway. The *Prometheus* worked out at 15 decks, and we populated the outline with lots of standard cut-and-paste elements, like corridors, shuttlecraft, tanks, sensors and turbolifts. Of course many bits came in triplicate, like the computer cores, while, outside, the nacelles and pylons were styled to reflect some of the look of the *Enterprise-E*, which was being developed at the same time."

FINAL DETAILS

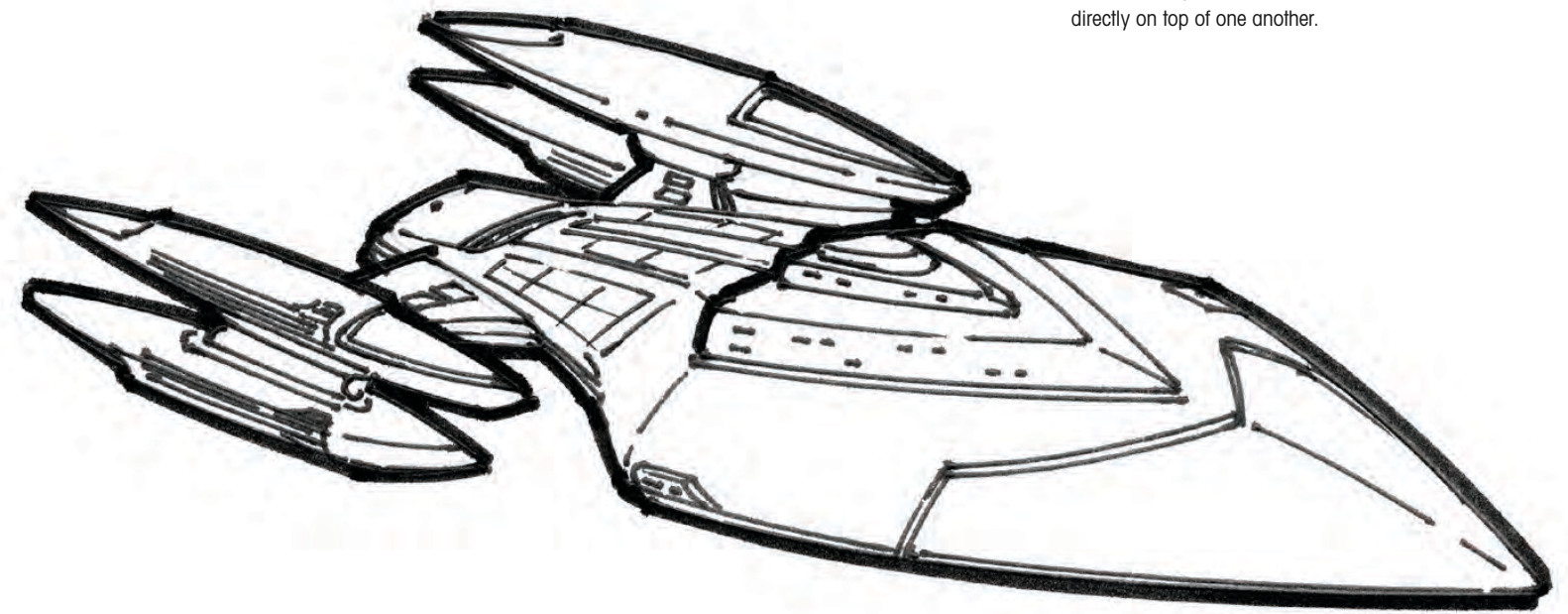
However, unlike the *Enterprise-E*, the final pylons were swept forward, similar to a sleek X-29 jet aircraft. On the earlier versions of the design, the pylons had been flat and fitted together in a stacked configuration, but Sternbach made the decision to angle them, feeling that separating the nacelles gave the ship a bit more 'air' and the impulse exhaust a clear pull backward.

After getting the go-ahead from the

visual-effects department, Sternbach made a series of perspective drawings that pointed out all of the surface details of the combined ships. However, since the ships were completely symmetrical, he only needed to fill in the details on one side.

Many of these elements were given a subtle redesign, since the *Prometheus* used the most advanced technology available to Starfleet. "The phaser strips were given an updated look with tapered ends," explains Sternbach. "The lifeboat hatches became elongated hexagons and the bridge dome got an armored top. Thinner sensor strips and new pop-up photon torpedo launchers were also added.

"Eventually," says Sternbach, "all the exposed surfaces of the separated ships were drawn up for the CG modelers who took into account shield grids, passageways with sealable connectors, bridge modules and docking clamps. In the split engineering hull, a unique shared warp core could be divided and sealed off for the multi-vector mode,



▼ Sternbach refined this version of the design, which at this point still had the nacelles stacked directly on top of one another.

giving each half its own half-sized warp core – only the upper half had the shuttlebay, however. The main hull was equipped with an enlarged deck containing the bridge, two lifeboats and a housing for one or two mini-warp nacelles."

The VFX department asked for the ship to have some kind of articulation so, after some thought, Sternbach decided to have the mini warp nacelles on the 'saucer' section extend on swing arms. The arms also contained the plasma conduits from a warp core located deep in the hull. While the dorsal nacelle extended up from its housing, the ventral one dropped down into the space previously occupied by the engineering hull.

Now it was the turn of Foundation regulars, Adam 'Mojo' Lebowitz and MacDougall to take the sketches and orthographic views and build a CG version of the ship. As the *Prometheus* was an experimental vessel, the NX-59650 registration number was added. That number is considerably

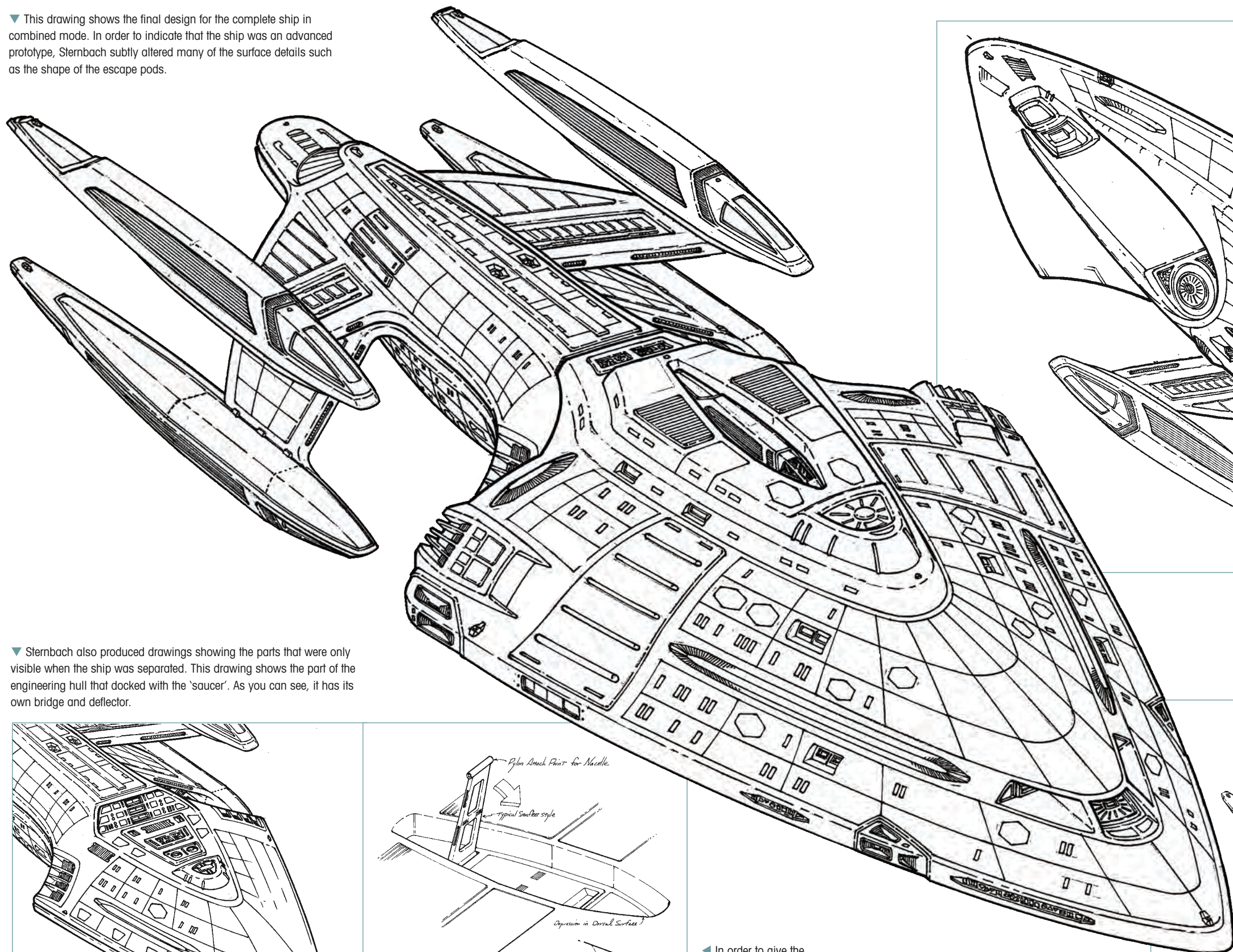
lower the original suggestion of 74913, suggesting that the *Prometheus*

development project had been in place quite some time before *Voyager*.

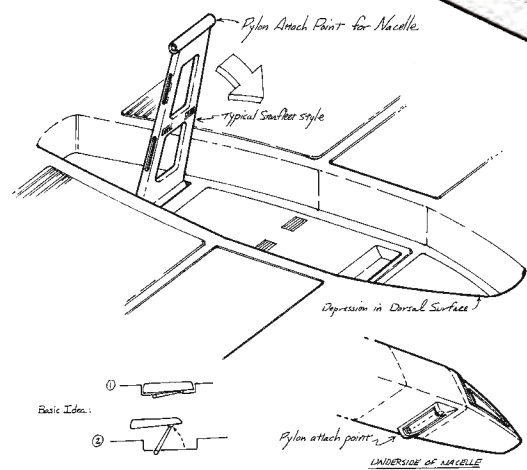
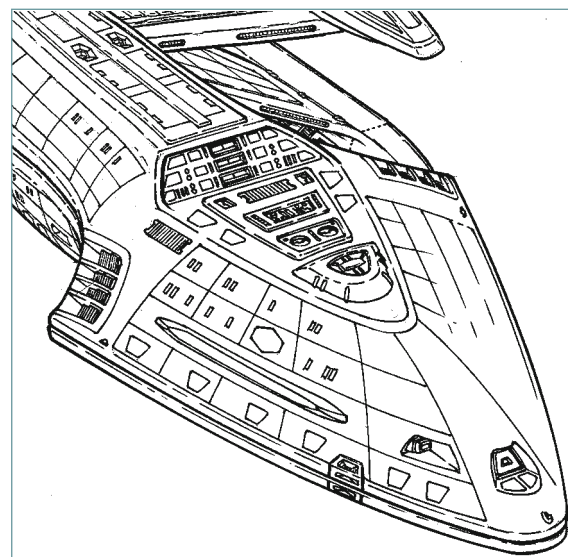


▲ This computer sketch shows how this version of the ship would have split into five (rather than three) separate vessels. The additional sections were a 'captain's yacht' and a built-up 'bridge' module.

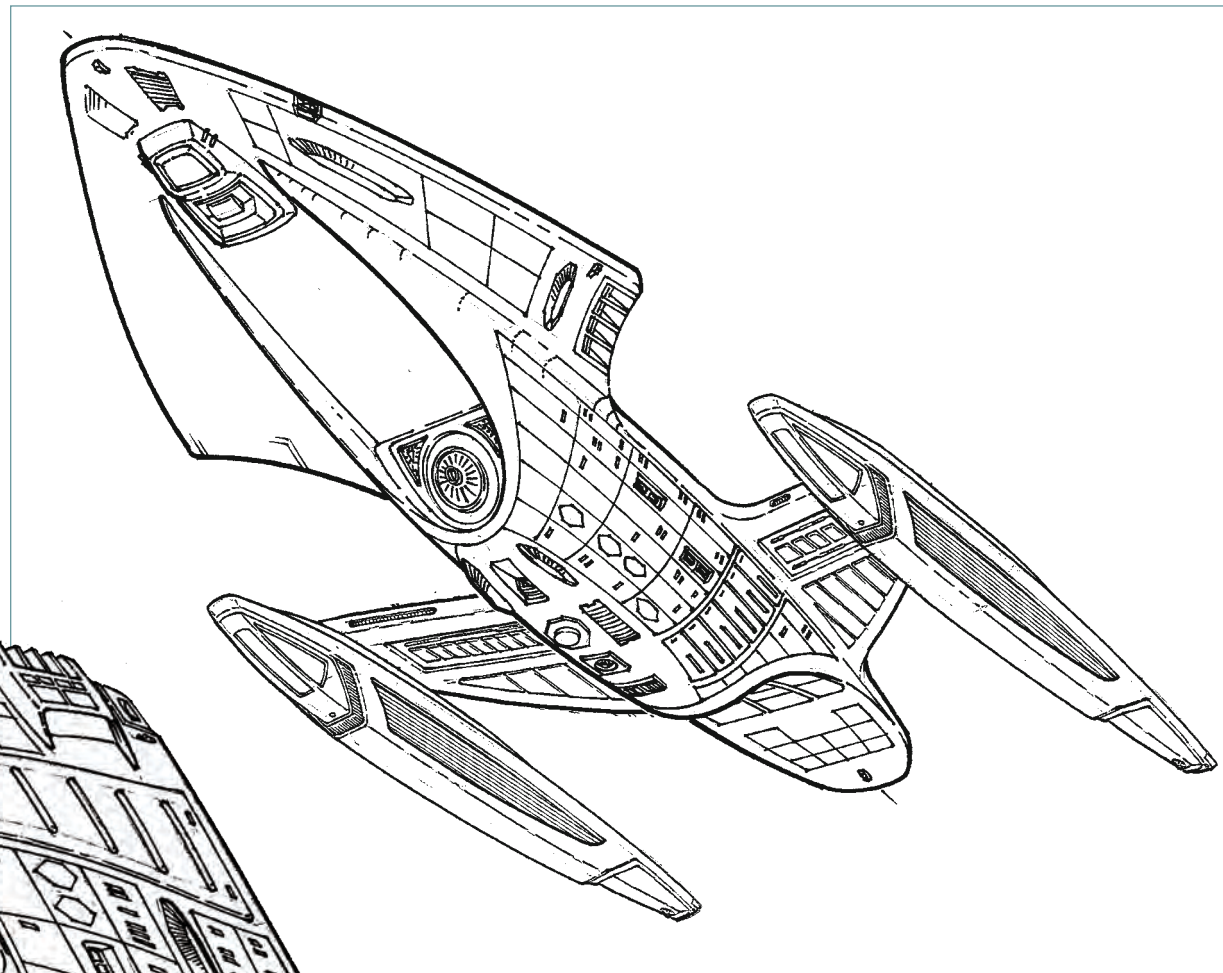
▼ This drawing shows the final design for the complete ship in combined mode. In order to indicate that the ship was an advanced prototype, Sternbach subtly altered many of the surface details such as the shape of the escape pods.



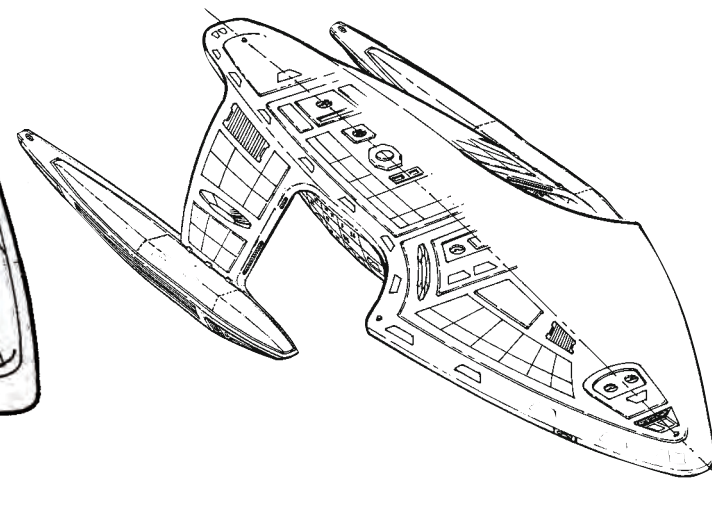
▼ Sternbach also produced drawings showing the parts that were only visible when the ship was separated. This drawing shows the part of the engineering hull that docked with the 'saucer'. As you can see, it has its own bridge and deflector.



◀ In order to give the Prometheus some moving parts, the nacelles in the main hull were designed to swing up into position when the ship separated.



◀ This drawing shows the lower part of the Prometheus from the underside. This became one of the independent vessels, but the drawing also provided enough information to complete the model of the ship when it was in its combined form.



◀ This view shows the top of the lower portion of the separated engineering hull, including the concealed phaser arrays and a warp-core hatch. The same details were mirrored on the underside of the upper part of the engineering hull.

ON SCREEN



TRIVIA

Confusingly, Starfleet seems to have more than one starship called the *U.S.S. Prometheus*. As well the experimental ship that we saw on *STAR TREK: VOYAGER*, there was a *Nebula*-class ship that appeared in the *STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE* episode 'Second Sight'. We can only assume that the earlier vessel was destroyed (probably during the Dominion War) leaving the name free to be used for the new prototype.



The *Prometheus* has two different registries - the hull clearly says NX-59650 but, inside the ship, the displays say NX-74913. This was a result of some confusion between the VFX and scenic-art departments. Registries are normally sequential so the higher they are, the later the ship was commissioned. The scenic-art department figured that that meant the *Prometheus* should have a very high registry number, whereas the VFX team used a lower registry to imply that the ship had been in development for a long time.



The *Prometheus*'s EMH is intrigued to learn that his counterpart on *Voyager* made additions to his program that allowed him to have sexual relations.

FEATURED TV SERIES:	STAR TREK: VOYAGER
FIRST APPEARANCE:	'Message in a Bottle'
MOVIE APPEARANCES:	None
FINAL APPEARANCE:	'Endgame'
DESIGNED BY:	Rick Sternbach

KEY APPEARANCES

'Message in a Bottle'

The crew of the *U.S.S. Voyager* are amazed when Seven of Nine tells them that she has found an abandoned network of subspace communications relays that lead all the way to the edge of Federation space. They can even detect a Federation vessel on the other side, but *Voyager*'s attempts to communicate with it fail. In desperation they decide to send the Doctor's program through the relays. He arrives in the sickbay of an unusual Starfleet

vessel. There is no sign of the crew and to his frustration he doesn't have security clearance to access any useful systems.

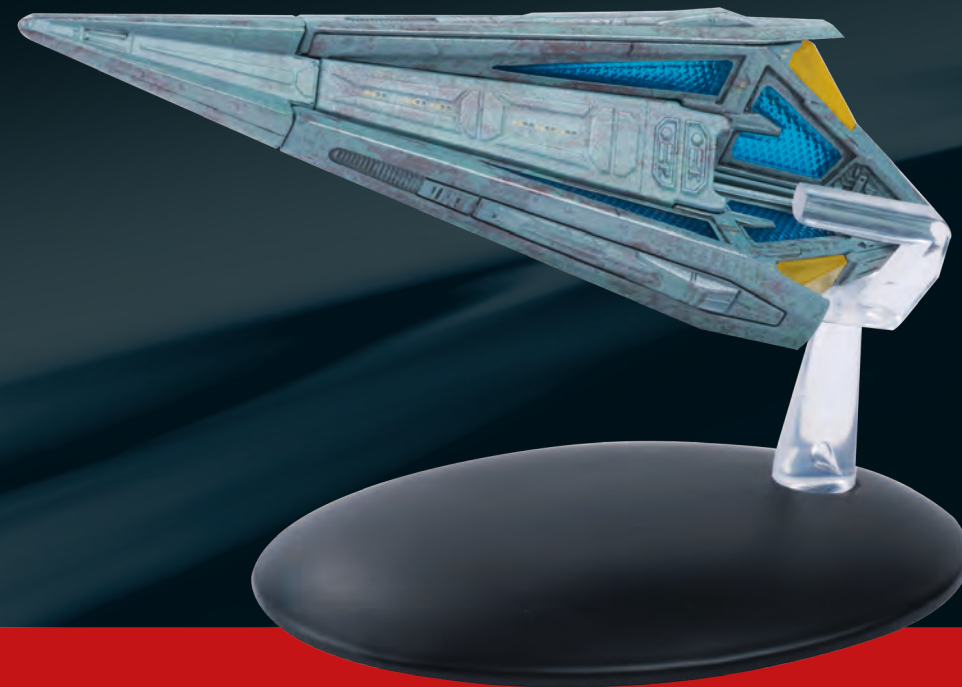
The Doctor soon discovers that he is on the *U.S.S. Prometheus*, an experimental vessel that has been commandeered by Romulans. Somehow he must retake the ship before it reaches Romulan space, but the only help he has is the *Prometheus*'s own EMH, who would much rather deactivate himself than fight the Romulan invaders...

COMING IN ISSUE 26

THOLIAN WEBSPINNER (2152)

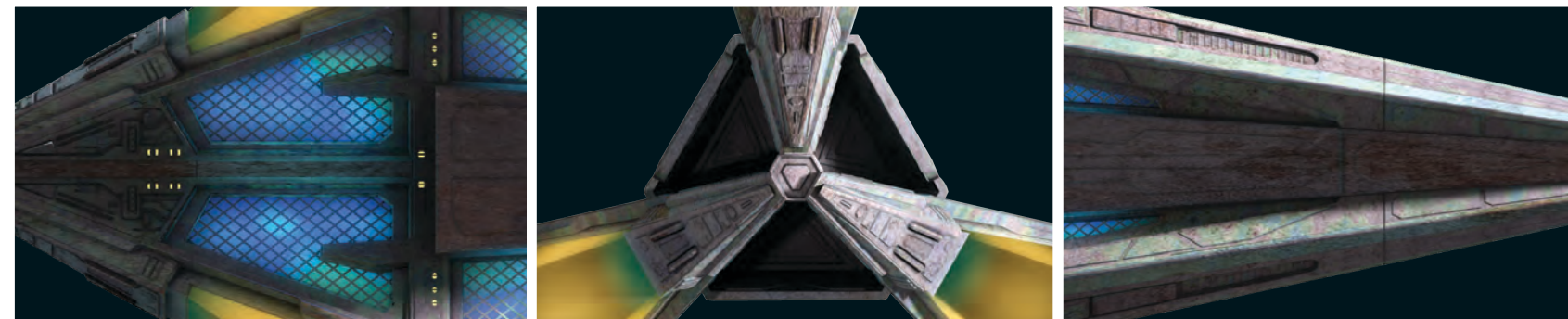


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- How the art department updated Matt Jefferies' original ship design



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