HIROGEN

WARSHIP

TYPE: WARSHIP
LAUNCH: 24th C
CREW: 2
LENGTH: 150 METERS

THE OFFICIAL STARSHIPS COLLECTION

FORTNIGHTLY
Tactically advanced and extremely robust, Hirogen warships were used to hunt prey over vast distances. Hirogen warships were distinguished by their dicyclic warp signatures and monotonium armor plating. This metallic armor covered the hull and was able to scatter the particle beam fire from other ships, rendering it largely ineffective.

The vessels operated by the Hirogen were very important to them, as they were intrinsic not only to their way of life but to their very survival. The Hirogen based their society on hunting other species to such an extent that they spent their lives aboard spaceships constantly roaming the Galaxy looking for new species to pursue. Their nomadic way of life had continued for so long that the Hirogen no longer had a home planet, and they lived aboard their ships. A large part of this devotion to the hunt could be attributed to the rewards it brought in Hirogen society. Individuals who captured unusual and resilient prey were envied by their peers and desired and sought after by females.

The most common type of vessel used by the Hirogen appeared to be the warship. It measured approximately 150 meters in length, but was normally operated by just two crew members. Despite plenty of interior space, no concessions were made to comfort. Instead they were designed solely from the standpoint of making them more efficient in chasing down prey.

The Hirogen warship featured numerous devices protruding from the exterior, including weapon turrets, torpedo launchers, defensive shield emitters and sensors. While all these devices were essential for stalking and capturing their prey, it gave the ship a cluttered look.

The Hirogen’s warships used sophisticated sensors and stealth technology to track their prey without being observed. If their prey did detect them and sought refuge on a planet, the Hirogen armed themselves with huge energy-directed rifles and beamed down to continue the hunt.

Each Hirogen vessel was led by an alpha male. Any other members of the crew were subordinate to the Alpha-Hirogen, although his position could be challenged if he showed any signs of weakness.
Hirogen warships were bristling with weaponry. These included torpedo launchers located near the front of the ship, and weapon turrets at various locations around the hull that fired directed-energy beams. In addition to these conventional weapons, Hirogen warships were equipped with a subnucleonic beam that could perform rapid scans of other vessels and severely disable them by disrupting their engines, weapons, sensors and communications.

As well as weapon turrets and torpedo launchers, the warships were equipped with subnucleonic weaponry. These devices emitted a beam that could perform rapid scans of other vessels and severely disable them by disrupting their engines, weapons, sensors and communications.

In addition to these conventional weapons, Hirogen warships were equipped with a subnucleonic beam that could perform rapid scans of other vessels. This beam also had a destructive effect, and could severely disable another ship, disrupting its navigational sensors, communications and propulsion. Once a target ship was disabled, the Hirogen could use their ship’s tractor beam technology to bring their unwilling victim closer.

TRAVELING THE GALAXY
Hirogen warships often covered huge areas of the Galaxy in the course of their hunts. One warship encountered by the crew of the U.S.S. Voyager NCC-74656 was found to have spanned a radius of 1,000 light years in just five years; it had also visited as many as 90 star systems in a single year. At top speed, Hirogen vessels were capable of traveling 4,000 ‘ketrics’ in about an hour (a speed of one light year every eight hours). To be able to cover these huge distances, Hirogen warships were equipped with impressive propulsion units. These engines emitted a distinctive acyclic warp signature, while the warp nacelles that were attached on either side of the main hull were covered with a protective carapace to shield them from enemy fire.

Hirogen warships were also able to mask their engine emissions by operating in stealth mode when they wished to track a vessel without alerting it to their presence. Occasionally Hirogen warships were encountered in packs. This appeared to happen only when they were hunting a particularly challenging and resilient prey. However, most warships traveled alone, as in their society there was more prestige and skill attached to hunting down prey without help from other ships.

Hirogen warships may not have been the most aesthetically pleasing, but they were heavily armed and extremely well protected. They were certainly more than a match for the U.S.S. Voyager when they were first encountered in 2374.

The Hirogen would mount the skeletal remains of prey they had killed on the walls of their warships, displaying them like trophies. The more unusual the prey, the more it was prized.

Onboard one ship, Chakotay and Tuvok found large cylindrical containers full of a liquid that was being used to break down the internal organs of prey, possibly for consumption.

The warp nozzles on warships emitted a red, yellow and orange glow. Carapaces encased the nozzles, helping to shield them from enemy fire and making it more difficult for ships to disable them.

DATA FEED
The Hirogen were a ruthless race of hunters whose intimidating appearance only added to their menace. They were much taller than most other humanoids and dressed from head to toe in body armor. Tracking prey had acquired an almost religious significance for them, and they followed certain customs before embarking on a hunt, such as marking their helmets with a colored pigmentation.
The high-ceilinged, open plan control room featured large spherical consoles with long rods set into them. These controlled all the ship's main functions, including flight control and weapons.

Hirogen warships were equipped with extremely sophisticated sensors that could detect both polarized EM signatures and residual ion emissions. This meant that they could even track vessels that tried to hide their location by using a scattering field to mask their engine signatures.

Hirogen warships were spread far and wide throughout the Galaxy. They remained in contact by using a network of relay stations that spanned the Delta Quadrant, and reached as far as the Alpha Quadrant. These stations were more than 100,000 years old and powered by tiny artificial black holes.

A Hirogen hunter learned from scanning Seven of Nine that she had a long coiled intestine, an organ he believed would make a prized trophy.

An entire wall in the control chamber was given over to the display of a variety of weapons. These included a bewildering array of cutting implements that possessed a surgical quality. They were used to slice up and butcher the Hirogen's unfortunate victims, including removing their skeletons, musculature and internal organs.
Plenty of STAR TREK aliens made only one appearance and were never seen again, so they only needed a single ‘ship of the week.’ However, there were other races that made repeated appearances and, by the time computer-generated models were reasonably affordable, they could end up with a whole fleet of ships. On STAR TREK: VOYAGER I found myself making several Hirogen ships, a space station, and a holographic decoy, but I began with the Hirogen ‘Hunter’ warship that was needed for the fourth season episode ‘Hunters.’

Designing ships for new alien races was always a challenge; the goal was to come up with shapes and colors that these aliens could use on several different ships and space stations. The scheme you came up with had to be distinct from any other alien culture we had seen in STAR TREK before, and the whole thing had to look cool.

I began work on the Hirogen warship, as I always did, by sketching a group of basic masses that would say something visual about the Hirogen themselves or that were somehow reminiscent of the sets that were being designed for the interior of their ships. For me, at this point, many different rules came into play simultaneously: I had to make it look like it worked; make it fit the style of the users; make it so the visual effects vendors could actually build it; make it according to what the script said; and make sure it looked interesting. Changes could – and did – come along the way, but this was a good start.

DESIGNING THE HIROGEN WARSHIP

Senior illustrator Rick Sternbach describes the creative process that went into designing the aggressively-styled Hirogen warship.

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COSTUME AND SET INSPIRATION

The first few pages of yellow-pad doodles set the tone for the final look. I remember that I was inspired by elements from the costume helmet worn by the Hirogen and parts of their control room set, particularly a row of large plastic tanks and tall triangular wall columns.

DESIGNING THE SHIP

The basic hull of the warship was defined by a mace-like spiked sphere, pointed nacelles and a pointed nose section, followed by a ribbed impulse engine module that capped off the tail. Interior and exterior shapes didn’t always need to reinforce each other, but I decided to make the connections here. Triceratops horns came to mind.

Sternbach always began by sketching out a few simple shapes on a legal pad in order to get a feel for an appropriate design. For the Hirogen warship, he tried to incorporate ideas and shapes that were reminiscent of the warship’s interior control room set that had already been built.
Sternbach originally sketched out an extremely aggressive forward module for the warship. The producers wanted a less ‘pointy’ front end, so it was replaced with shapes that echoed the engine casings, while an assortment of weapon barrels projected from the nose.

Some of the shapes and surface detail on the warship were evocative of the design of the helmet worn by the Hirogen, while the triangular wall columns and the globe-shaped console on the interior set also provided inspiration for the overall aesthetic of the design.

Playing with Shapes
The nice thing about building shapes with polygons was that you could interpenetrate different solid objects and let the computer handle shading the areas where they joined. The preliminary warship model was a set of some 12 objects that were pushed into each other, something you couldn’t easily do with foamcore or plastic. The impulse pods were scaled copies of the warp nacelles, attached to pylons and canted away from center.

On a clean 11”x17” sheet, I traced over the basic CG perspective sketch in light blue pencil and drew in the nearly-final details. To do this I studied photos of the Hirogen set, with its netting, columns, weapons collections and specimen tanks, for ideas. People often asked how I knew what shapes to draw and where, and I usually explained that it was a process involving memories of almost everything I’ve seen or experienced, with some very specific stored visuals in the areas of art history, industrial and space vehicle design, aeronautics, biology and physics.

Many details were an exercise in the aesthetic breakup of a larger blank space, with a pinch of engineering logic thrown in (the best science fiction hardware designers know do understand how the real stuff works). And the ‘Hunter’ warship surfaces followed that same process.

CG Model
Foundation Imaging was given the inked line art, along with orthographic views of the CG sketch model, and proceeded to build the model that would be used in the final show. A few elements changed in the process, such as the sphere flattening a bit and the addition of gun turrets, but the overall result fitted the bill. Foundation then gave it the finishing touch of dark, imposing metallic colors and textures.
The original Hirogen warship was used from 1997 to the fall of 2000, when the episode ‘Flesh and Blood’ called for the creation of a new, larger Hirogen vessel, a training base, a decoy probe and a renegade holoship, all of which had to use established stylistic elements. It was back to the doodle pad. The new Hirogen ship would become known as the Venatic class, and the producers decided that it should be much larger than the standard warship. As the script called for the U.S.S. Voyager NCC-74656 to shadow it by following close behind in a sensor ‘blind spot,’ specific design decisions had to be made. The earlier warship formed the basic look, but some parts were doubled in number as well as in size. Four of the now-signature nacelles were stretched and attached to a longer backbone. The central impulse engine also got more complicated with the addition of multiple sub-nozzles. Weapon platforms extended from top and bottom. A complex series of rings and tunnels set in the rear engines were modeled and animated by Foundation Imaging so that they became ponderous rotating wheels, no doubt parts of the Hirogen main propulsion system.

Other details were added in the CG sketch stage, including some very high-voltage plasma disruptors. This time around I did not produce a final ink sketch; instead various views of the Venatic-class CG sketch were emailed to Foundation, with the suggestion that they embellish the new ship the way they had done with the warship, and add Hirogen colors and textures.

Training facility
The Hirogen training base began like most ships, as a series of quick pen strokes to play with volumes and Hirogen-style parts. What immediately clicked for me was the concept of a cluster of holographic chambers that had a round floor plan, and all were tied together with structural beams and linked with ribbed transfer tunnels. The spire-like shape of the carapace covering the nacelles that had been designed for the Hirogen warship was adapted for a series of dorsal and...

TECHNOLOGY

Rick Sternbach explains how he designed more Hirogen ships, plus a space facility and a probe for STAR TREK: VOYAGER’s final season.
The design for the Hirogen holographic training facility was worked out as a CG sketch first before a fully detailed and colored version was created at Foundation Imaging.

ventral power generators, as well as providing propulsion to move the station around.

Communications antennae, antennas and sensor beams sprouted from the equator. Various combinations of chambers and connectors and antennae were whittled down to a single design with three holo-arenas, and transmitted to Foundation. Again, Hirogen colors and textures, along with any running lights and glowing energy sources, would be added to the final CG model.

Final Hirogen designs

The last two things that needed to be designed and built were the renegade holoship and the decoy probe. The holoship used the basic nacelle shape given to the other Hirogen vessels, but this time the bridge section was more rounded, to distinguish it from the others. A variation on the warship pylons became slight ‘wings’ with open cut-outs. Rounded structural beams tied the fore and aft sections together, and small vents and pressure spheres dotted the skin; these were all intended to cast interesting shadows and kick off highlights. That helped give a sense of scale.

Sensors, communications antennae, lifeboats and plasma disruptors went in all the right spots. As before, various views were rendered for the producer’s approval and for Foundation to build in the computer. The decoy probe was a simple, three-lobed object, small and to the point, with a few bits of raised detail like warp generators, nose fins, and impulse nozzles. Once again, CG sketching made the work go quickly, this time without the need for any pen drawings.

Future inspiration

That doesn’t always happen, of course, especially with larger, more important vessels. Some of those took weeks to develop. Freehand strokes often produced strange and fun results that could be refined into usable bits of hardware later. I tried to hang onto these little scraps, just in case. You never knew if those Hirogen doodles would be just the spark to set me off in a totally new direction of shipbuilding for another species.
ON SCREEN

TRIVIA
Actor Tony Todd guest starred as the Alpha Hirogen in the STAR TREK: VOYAGER episode ‘Prey.’ Todd is best known to STAR TREK audiences for playing Worf’s brother Kurn in both STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION and STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE. Todd said that playing the Hirogen was a “great experience,” but the costume and makeup made it a trial of endurance. Todd continued, “Of all the prosthetic work I’ve done, it was the most uncomfortable. Not only was it a four-hour makeup process for the face, it was an hour-and-a-half costume application as well.”

COMING IN ISSUE 52
U.S.S. CENTAUR
NCC-42043

Key appearances

STAR TREK: VOYAGER
‘Hunters’
After a message from Starfleet becomes lodged in a Hirogen relay station, the crew of the U.S.S. Voyager NCC-74656 head off to try to download it. Unfortunately, the ship is unable to get near the station because its quantum singularly power source is emitting powerful gravimetric forces. Instead, Seven of Nine and Tuvok are sent off in a shuttle, but on their way there, they are intercepted by a Hirogen warship and taken captive. Captain Janeway must find a way to free her crewmates and retrieve the message without them all falling victim to the Hirogen.

STAR TREK: VOYAGER
‘Prey’
When Voyager detects a Hirogen warship, Captain Janeway decides to make contact in the hope that they can settle their differences. When their hails go unanswered, an away team beams over to the warship, where they find one Hirogen decapitated and one severely injured. They take the wounded Hirogen back to Voyager to be treated, little realizing that they have also picked up a stowaway – a member of Species 8472. It too is wounded and just wants to return home, but when Janeway tries to help it, she comes into conflict with not only the Hirogen, but also Seven of Nine.

The Hirogen were originally inspired by American football players, hence their considerable size. Originally, only actors who were around 6ft 7in were cast, and then they were given platforms in their boots to give them even greater height.

STAR TREK costume designer Robert Blackman considered the Hirogen outfits the most complete head-to-toe look he created while working on the show. Initially, the costumes were made from silicone, but this made them extremely heavy. For later appearances foam was used, as this was much lighter and nearly as flexible.

First appearance:
‘Hunters’ (VOY)

TV appearance:
STAR TREK: VOYAGER

Designed by:
Rick Sternbach

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