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SULIBAN
CELL SHIP

CREW: 1-2

LAUNCHED: 22nd C

LENGTH: 3.25 METERS

WEAPON: PARTICLE CANNON

SULIBAN CELL SHIP

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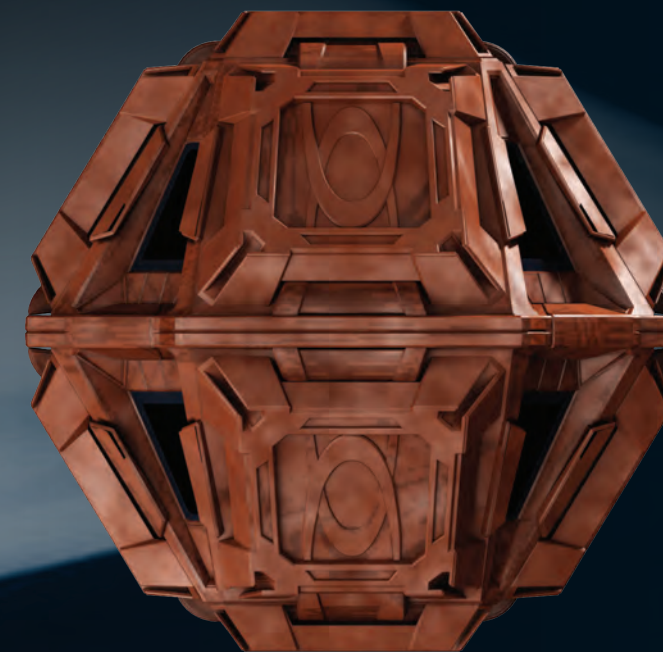
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SULIBAN CELL SHIP SPECIFICATION

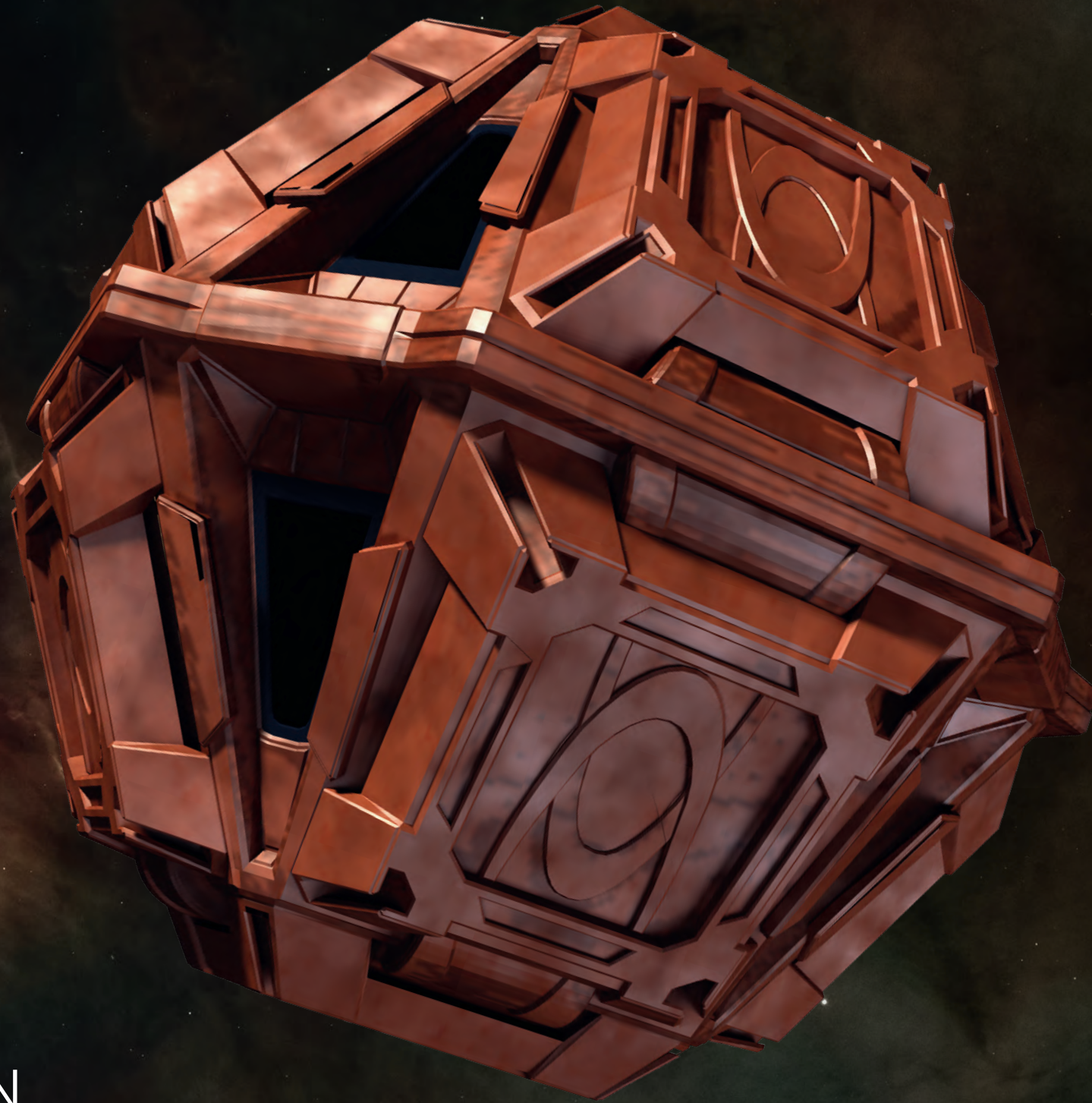


OPERATED BY:	SULIBAN CABAL
TYPE:	FIGHTER
IN OPERATION:	22nd CENTURY
LENGTH:	3.25 METERS (APPROX.)
CREW:	1-2 (STANDARD)
MAX SPEED:	AT LEAST WARP 5
WEAPONRY:	PARTICLE CANNON



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► In the mid 22nd century, the Suliban Cabal operated cell ships that were geometric in shape, and looked not unlike some form of escape pod. Most were just 3.25m long, but they had the tactical abilities of a much larger vessel.



SULIBAN CELL SHIP

Suliban cell ships were small, fast and agile, while they also incorporated cloaking technology from the future.

DATA FEED

The Suliban Cabal also operated a larger cylindrical cell ship that was approximately 12m in length. These vessels were equipped with a tractor beam as well as the other systems seen on the smaller cell ships.

Suliban cell ships were small, highly-advanced vessels used by the Suliban Cabal in the mid 22nd century. The size of them appeared to vary slightly, but most were about 3.25m in length, and all were shaped like a 3D hexagonal cube.

These red-rust colored craft were normally operated by just one person, but up to five average-sized humanoids could be squeezed into the interior at a pinch. Their flight was controlled by a steering yoke, which was very sensitive. Even

an experienced pilot of other craft had difficulty adjusting to its controls, but once mastered the small vessel was incredibly maneuverable.

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

Cell ships were capable of warp speeds at least as fast as warp 5, and potentially much faster. Their propulsion system used some form of tricyclic plasma drive. They were armed with particle cannons, which delivered a powerful blast considering the small size of the vessels. Unusually for this era, the cell ships were also equipped with cloaking devices that rendered them invisible to sensors. It used a type of particle radiation in the cloaking generator to conceal itself, and took power from the weapon nodes in order to generate enough energy for it to activate, meaning that it could not fire while cloaked.

Fitting all this technology into a vessel so tiny was an incredible feat of engineering, especially at this point in history. By the mid 22nd century, the Vulcans knew of the Suliban, but did not consider them to be a threat or a particularly advanced race. It appeared, however, that in just a few years the Suliban made huge technological advancements. Some of their species, who became known as the Cabal, somehow made contact with a mysterious figure from the future. This humanoid communicated with them from the 28th century, and supplied them with future technological know-how. It appeared, therefore, that the Suliban cell ships possessed systems that were derived from 28th century technology.

While the cell vessels were certainly advanced and incredibly impressive, a single cell ship posed only a small threat to other craft. In order to increase their effectiveness, cell ships were normally deployed in squadrons. Working together, multiple cell ships could strafe a targeted vessel and overwhelm it. Add to the fact that they could

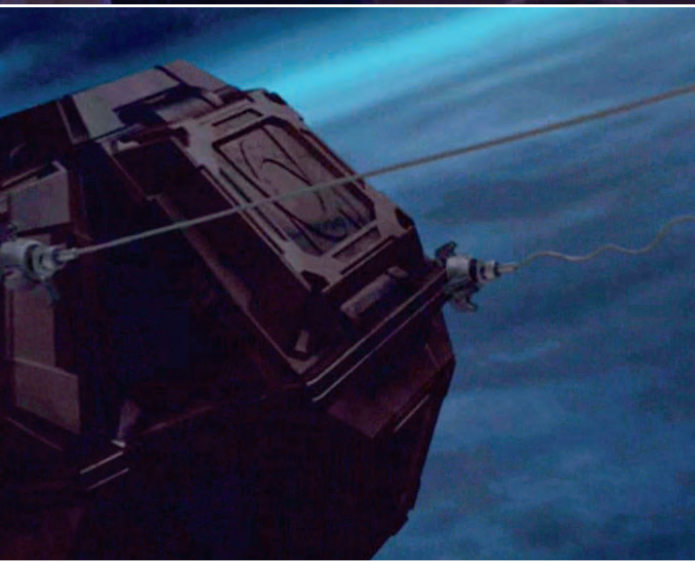


◀ Members of the Suliban Cabal had mottled greenish skin similar to a sandstone wall covered in moss. At some point, a mysterious benefactor from the 28th century offered them advanced technology, including genetic modification, in return for help with what became known as the Temporal Cold War.

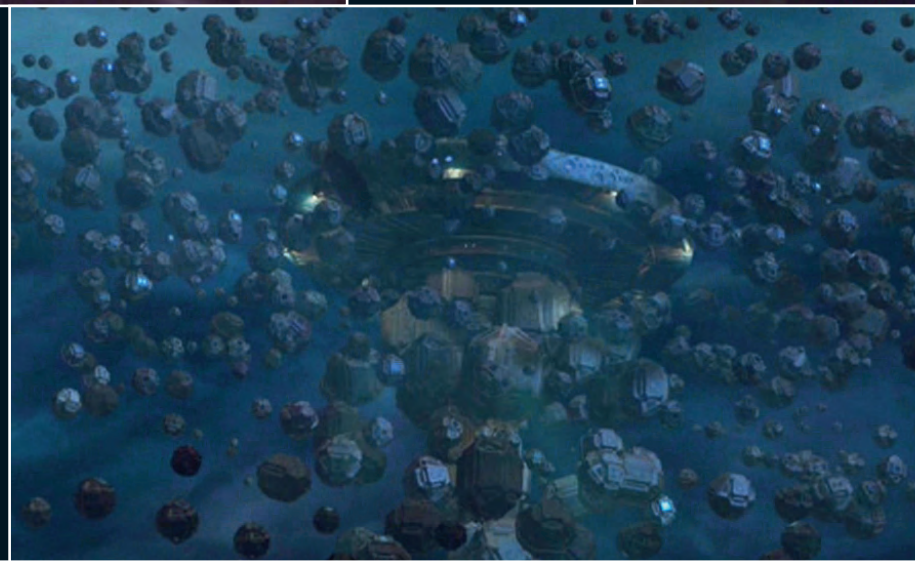


◀ *Enterprise* discovered thousands of cell ships hidden beneath the dense atmosphere of a gas giant. Many of the cell ships had docked together around a space station forming a helix.

▶ Tucker studied the cell ship in the cargo hold aboard *Enterprise*. He had trouble making the cloaking device work, but he eventually figured it out – unfortunately this was after he accidentally cloaked his own arm.



▶ After infiltrating the helix in the stolen cell ship, Archer set off a device that reversed the polarity of the maglocks that held the cell ships to the core structure of the facility. Thousands of cell ships broke away, and in the chaos *Enterprise* managed to escape with Klaang.



▶ Given its small size, a Suliban cell ship appeared to offer little threat to a vessel like *Enterprise*. Indeed, one cell ship posed only a small amount of danger, but half a dozen working together could easily have overwhelmed the Starfleet ship, much like a swarm of bees could besiege a larger animal.



▲ The cell ship was used to rescue Archer and Lt. Reed after they had been arrested on a pre-warp civilization planet. The stealth technology allowed them to sneak into the compound where they were being held. The cell ship proved just large enough to accommodate five members of the senior crew, but it was a tight squeeze.

▲ *Enterprise* used its grapppler to latch on to a cell ship before pulling it inside its cargo hold. After a quick study of its cloaking device, Captain Archer and Trip Tucker used it to sneak past the Suliban's defenses. They then docked with the helix where the Klingon Klaang was being held.

begin their coordinated attack while cloaked, the cell ships could quickly overpower and rout a vessel before they knew what hit them.

Cell ships could also combine together via magnetic docking locks to form a helix. Hundreds of these modular vessels could interlock around a central structure to form a massive spiral-shaped space station. This structure normally housed around 3,000 Suliban. As a species without a home planet, this helix served as a base for them, but it could be easily broken apart and moved to another area if necessary.

In 2151, *Enterprise* NX-01 found a helix located in the outer radiation belt of a class seven gas giant. It was well hidden beneath a dense layer of cyclohexane gas, which gave way to an even denser layer of liquid-blue phosphorous clouds.

The crew of *Enterprise* were looking for a Klingon named Klaang, who had been kidnapped by the Cabal and taken to this helix. When approaching the structure, *Enterprise* was attacked by several cell ships, forcing it to retreat.

INFILTRATING THE HELIX

In order to gain access to the helix, Captain Archer decided to try and steal a cell ship. Using *Enterprise's* grapppler, the crew latched on to one of the cell ships and hauled it into their cargo bay. Captain Archer and Commander 'Trip' Tucker were then able to fly the cell ship to the helix without being discovered. They managed to find Klaang, and subsequently made their escape.

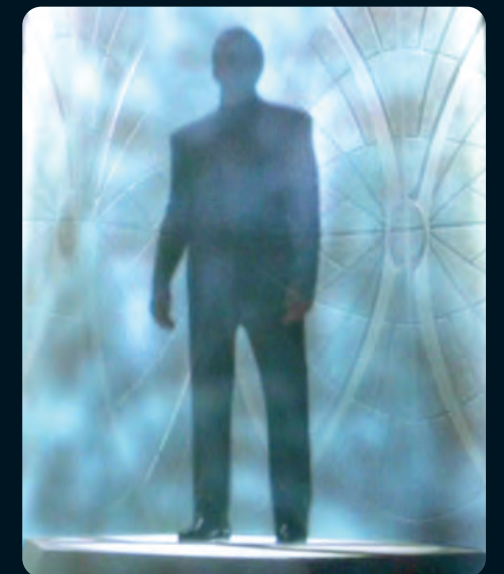
In 2152, the crew of *Enterprise* used the cell ship again to mount a rescue operation. Archer and

Lt. Malcolm Reed had been taken captive on a pre-warp planet, and in order to retrieve them the crew used the cloaked cell ship to reach the compound where they were being held.

Tucker had some trouble getting the cloaking device on the cell ship to work, and during preparations for the mission Tucker accidentally cloaked his own arm while figuring out how the system operated. He also belatedly discovered that the cell ship reset its systems after launch and took power from the cloaking device to arm its weapon nodes. The cell ship was therefore visible during its descent through the atmosphere of the planet and it came under attack from several aircraft. Fortunately, Tucker was able to switch power from the weapons to the cloak, and they were able to rescue their crewmates.

DATA FEED

The Suliban Cabal's advanced technology came from information given to them from a shadowy figure from the 28th century. He could communicate, but not travel, through time. He helped the Cabal develop their vessels, and gave them physical advancement through genetic engineering. In return, the Cabal became his foot soldiers in a bid to alter the Temporal Cold War in his favor.

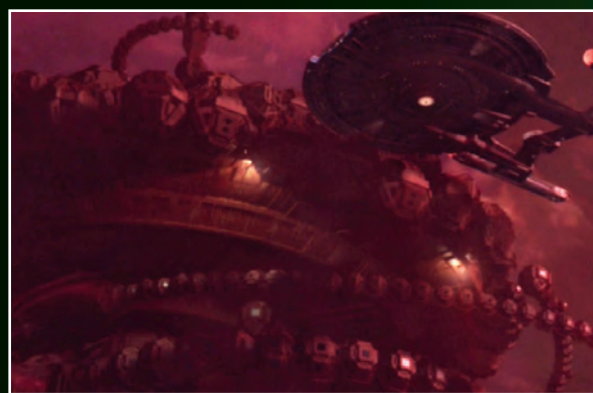


SECOND HELIX

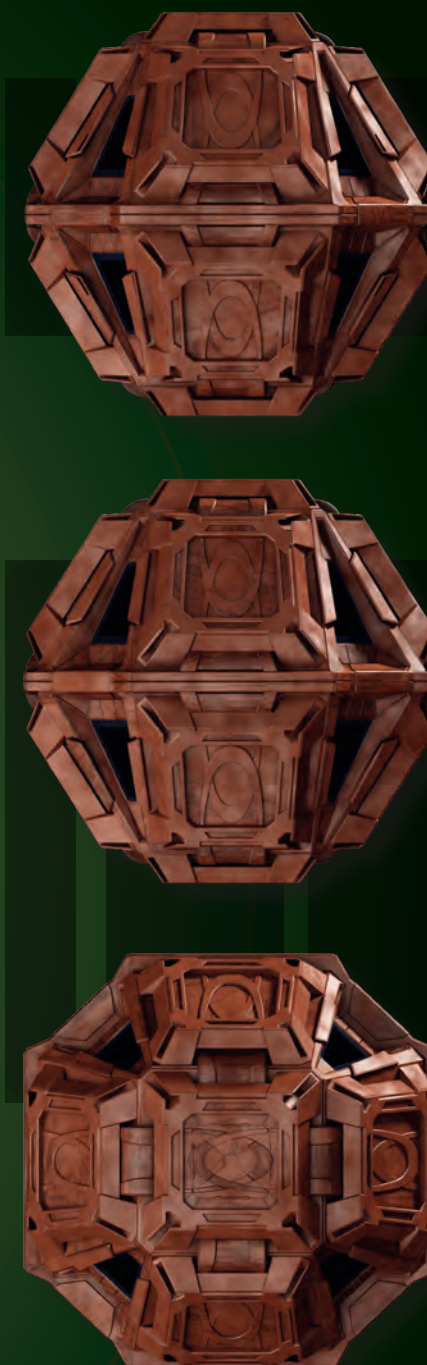
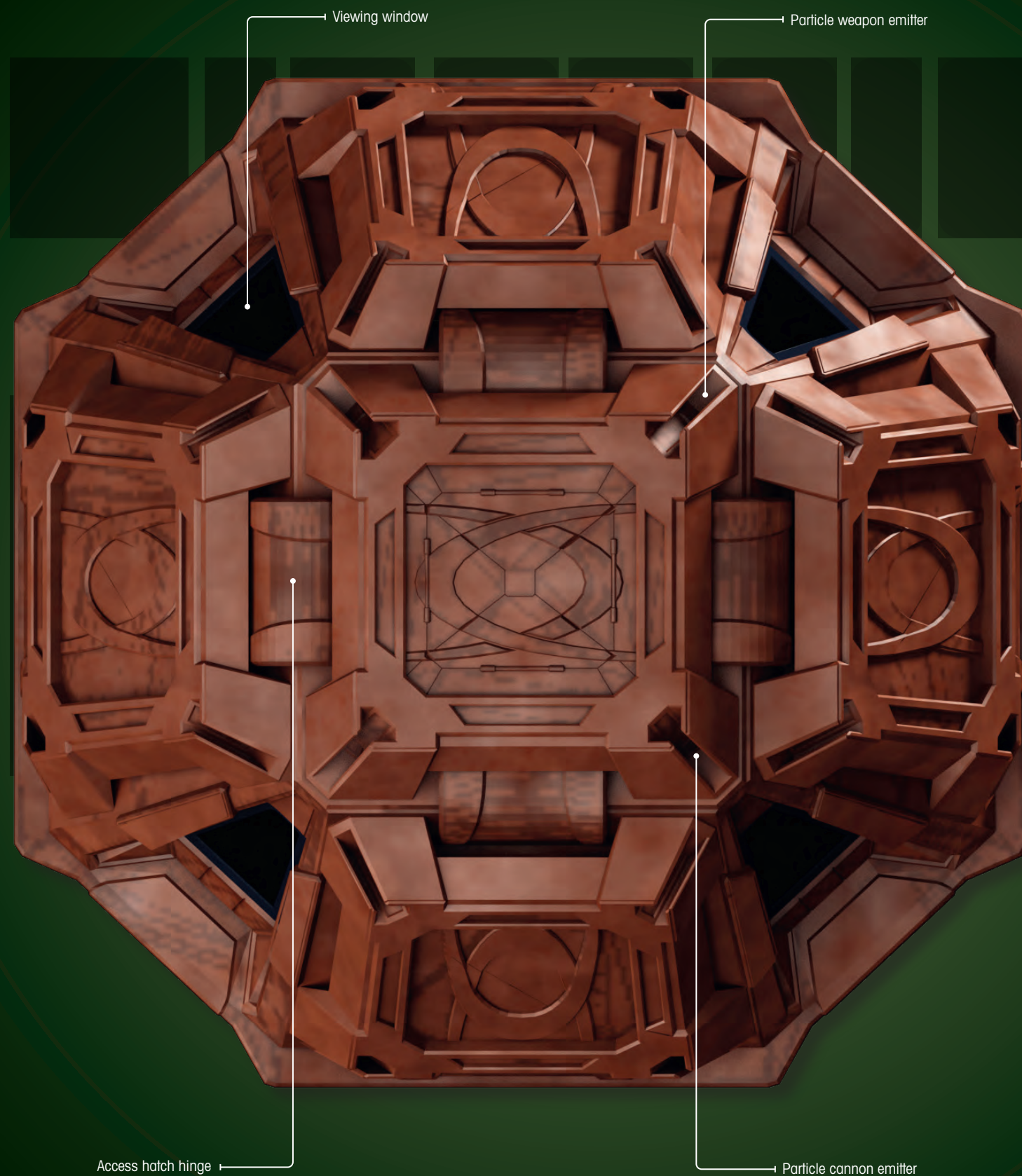
Another Suliban helix was found within a deep red nebula near Paraagan II in 2152. Like the other helix that *Enterprise* NX-01 had encountered the year before, it was a massive spiral-shaped space station that featured hundreds of cell ships docked around its central core.

It was from this base that the Suliban Cabal launched a plot that ended up destroying a Paraagan mining colony, taking 3,600 lives in the process. This scheme was carried out in such a way that the blame for their deaths fell on the crew of *Enterprise*. It was part of a wider conspiracy by agents of the Temporal Cold War to stop the mission of *Enterprise* by besmirching its name.

While investigating the real cause of the explosion on the mining colony, *Enterprise* was captured by the Cabal and taken to the helix located in the deep red nebula. The Starfleet crew faked a warp core breach aboard their ship, and fearing it would destroy the helix, the Suliban towed it out of the nebula whereupon it made its escape.



▲ *Enterprise* was boarded by members of the Suliban Cabal and taken to a helix that was hidden within a deep red nebula. The Starfleet crew had to fake a warp core breach in order to escape.

**DATA FEED**

As payment for their services in the Temporal Cold War, the mysterious figure from the 28th century gave the Suliban Cabal information on future technology. This allowed the Cabal to build their ships and equip them with cloaking technology. It also gave them the expertise to perform numerous genetic enhancements, such as the ability to shapeshift.

UNNATURAL ABILITIES

As part of their genetic enhancements, members of the Suliban Cabal had modified lungs. These allowed them to survive in different kinds of atmospheres and they could even tolerate the vacuum of space.

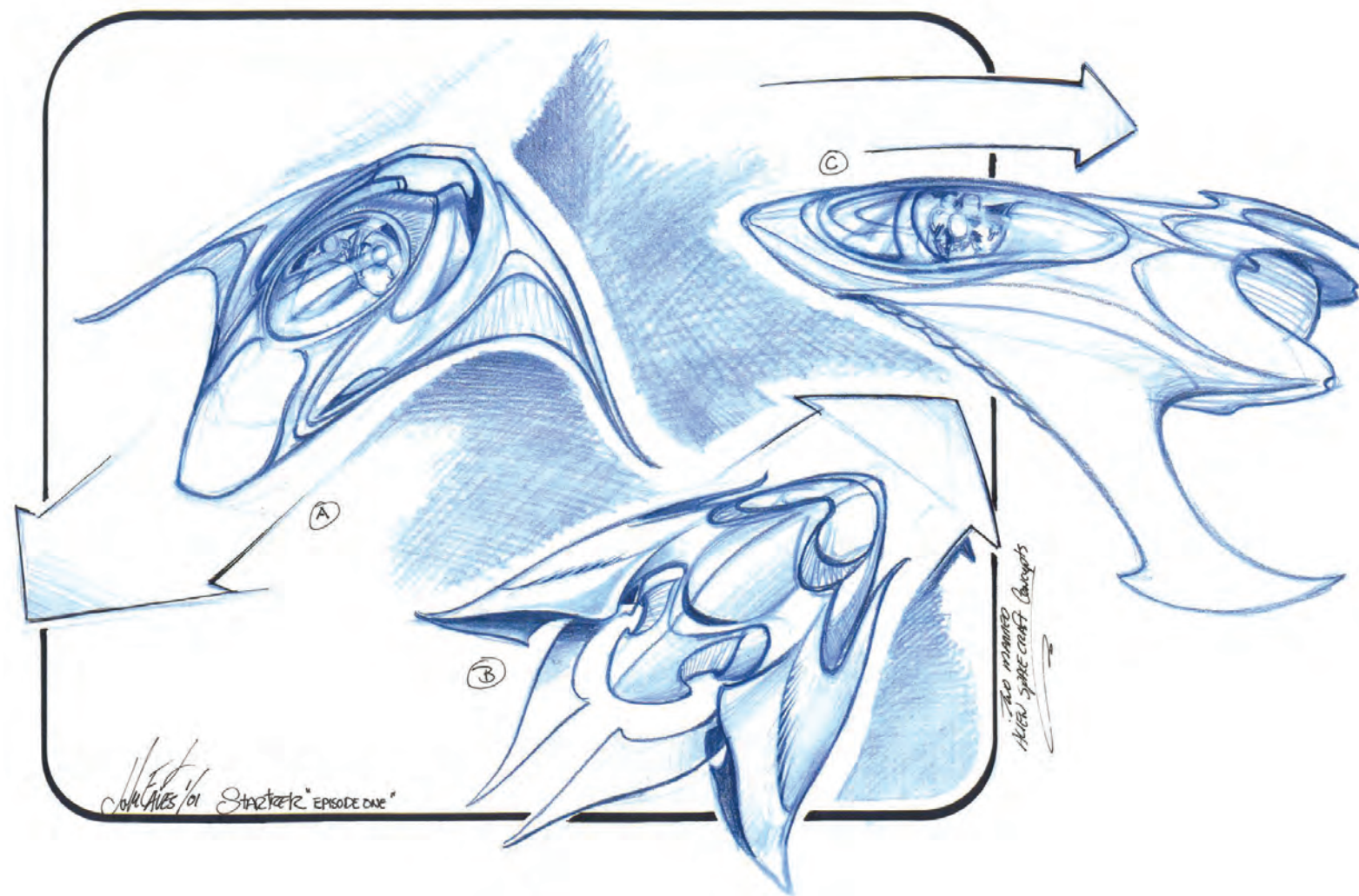
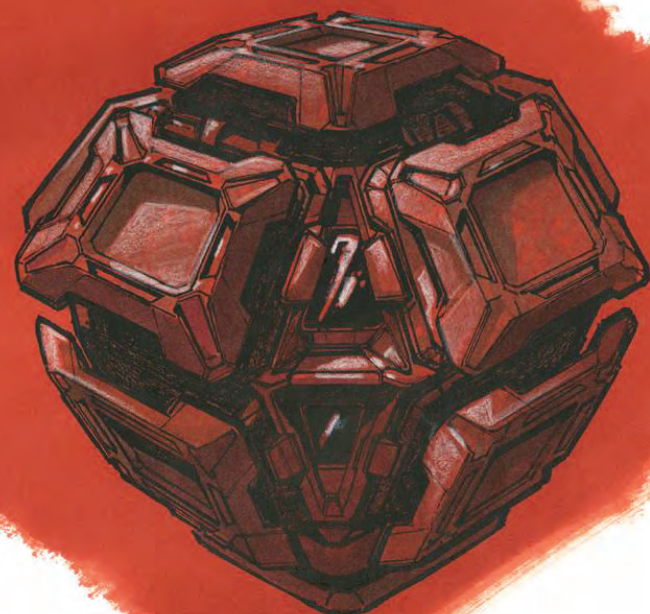
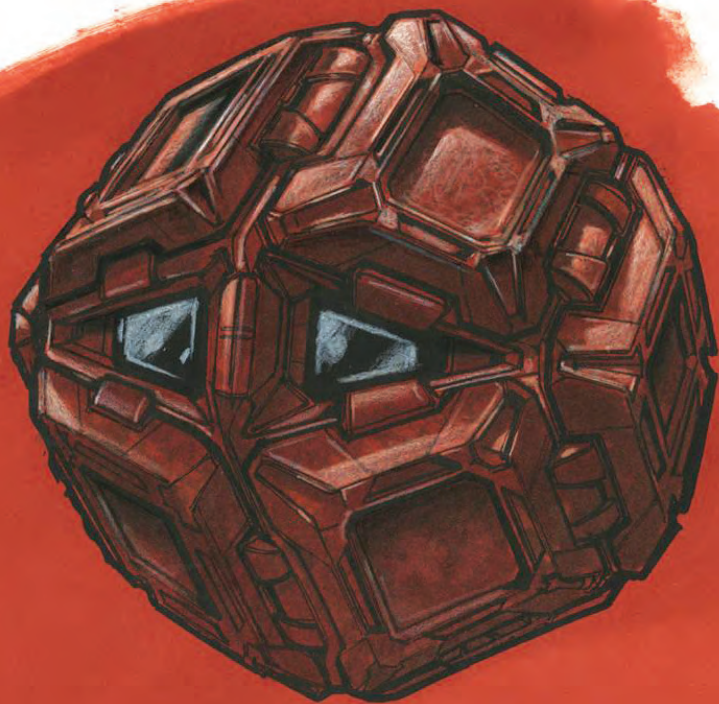
ADDITIONAL SHIPS

In addition to their cell ships, the Suliban Cabal also operated larger freighters and stealth cruisers. The latter ship had a crew of at least 20, and four particle beam weapon banks.

DISPLACED PEOPLE

After their homeworld became uninhabitable in the 1850s, thousands of Suliban settled in the Tandar sector. The Suliban Cabal began a war with the Tandarans in 2144, which resulted in all Suliban, whether they were part of the Cabal or not, being rounded up by the Tandarans and placed in detention camps.

▼ The Suliban ships were designed by John Eaves, who had returned to *STAR TREK* to work for production designer Herman Zimmerman.



DESIGNING THE

III

SULIBAN CELL SHIP

▲ John Eaves' first designs were produced before he even had a full brief. He knew that the Suliban ships were meant to be small, but had no idea that they were meant to connect to one another so he and his boss Herman Zimmerman came up with a curvy, organic design. A few hours later they got the full brief and this first design pass was consigned to the waste basket.

On *ENTERPRISE* the Suliban would use small, one-man ships that were designed to connect to one another to create larger vessels.

When *STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE* launched the producers wanted something new and different. Among other things the series had a major new race of villains, the Suliban, who used very different kinds of technology. Instead of having big, obviously aggressive ships, they

operated tiny vessels that were barely big enough for a single pilot but which would combine to make larger ships. As concept designer John Eaves remembers, the first time the art department heard about this, they didn't get the whole story.

"We got the beat sheet in the morning

and that said there was a new alien race with small ships, so straightaway (production designer) Herman Zimmerman and I came up with some fluid curvy designs. We took them to the meeting the same day where a broader beat sheet was provided. The description of the alien ships in that was

much more detailed and specific and that had the whole thing about docking together, so this whole rough idea was abandoned."

Eaves was working on the design for the *Enterprise* NX-01 at the time, but he was struggling to come up with a design that gave the producers what they wanted. The decision was made to take him off that and to put him on the design of the cell ships instead.

"The cell ship really wasn't a difficult

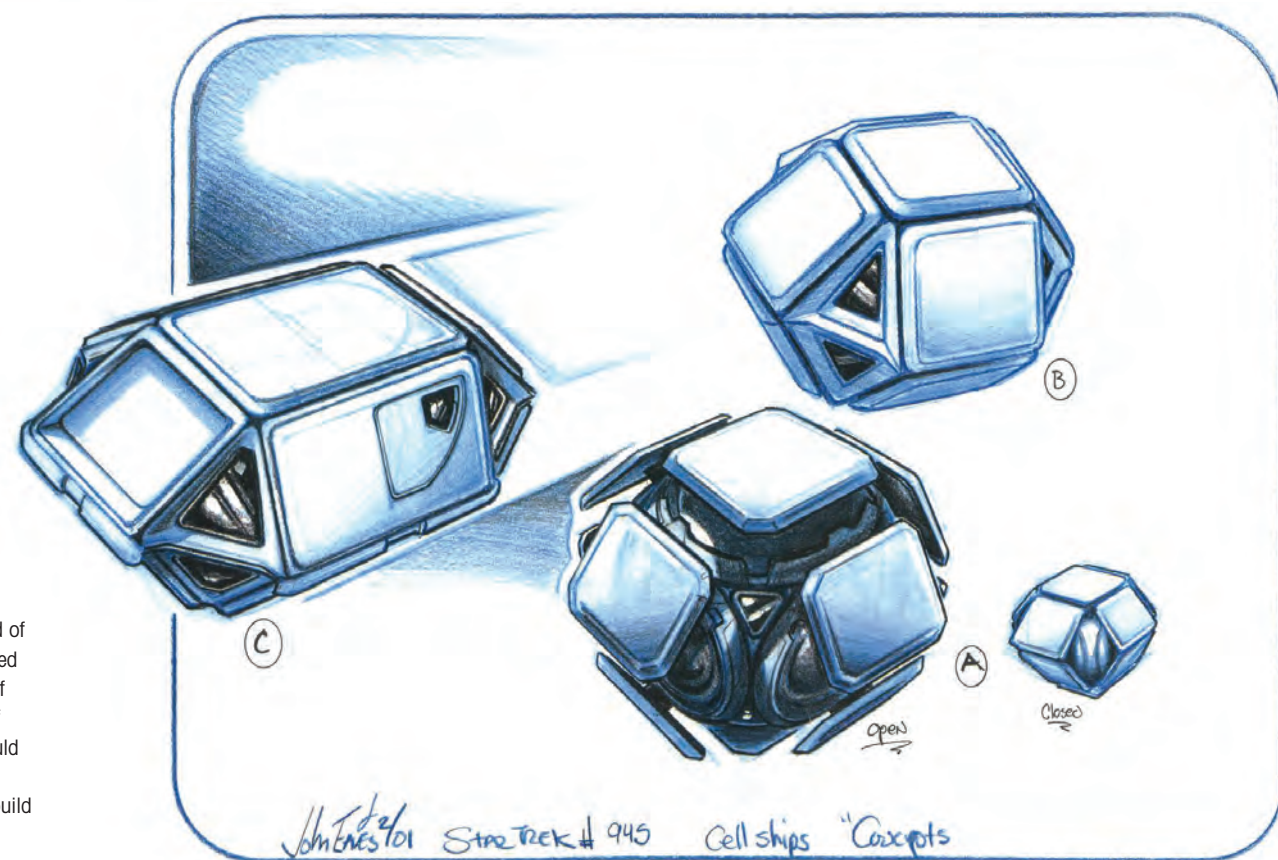
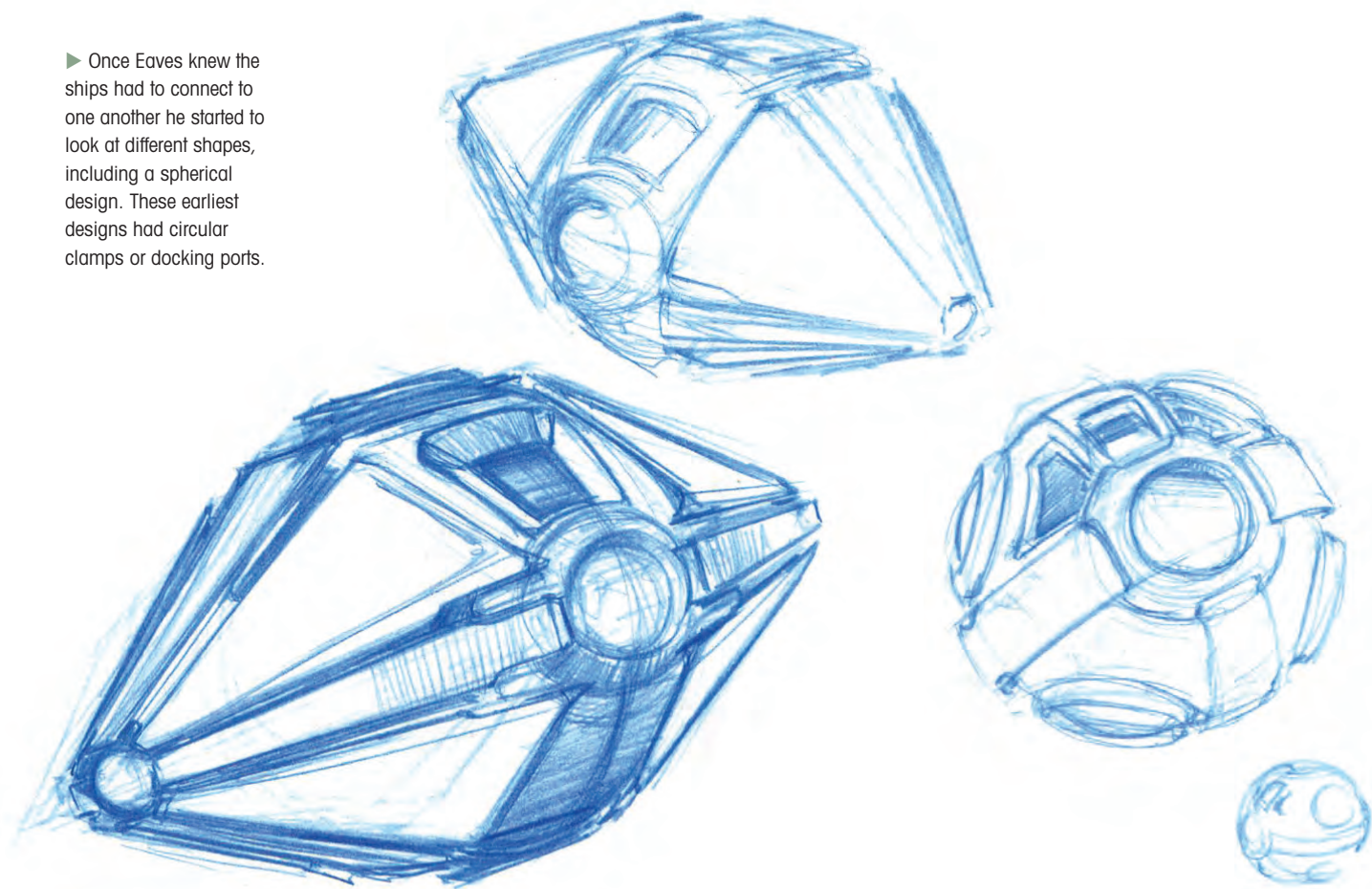
piece," he recalls. "We had all the don't dos right up front so it was pretty easy to follow the path and make this thing come out. They didn't want anything asymmetrical and after that meeting we knew that they had to connect together. I started to look at a circular design but you've seen that so many times. I thought if I did something with a bunch of facets and angles on it that would allow the ships lots of ways to connect to one another. Flat surfaces

can open up like a hatchway into the other ships so you're not limited to one hatch at the back and at the top. The design I came up with was kind of like a STOP sign – an octagon shape with ten flat sides that you could dock with."

This design proved to be enormously flexible: the cells could be used to make almost any shape and had, as Eaves says, a "mathematical feel" that pleased everyone.

"Herman thought this was really great

► Once Eaves knew the ships had to connect to one another he started to look at different shapes, including a spherical design. These earliest designs had circular clamps or docking ports.

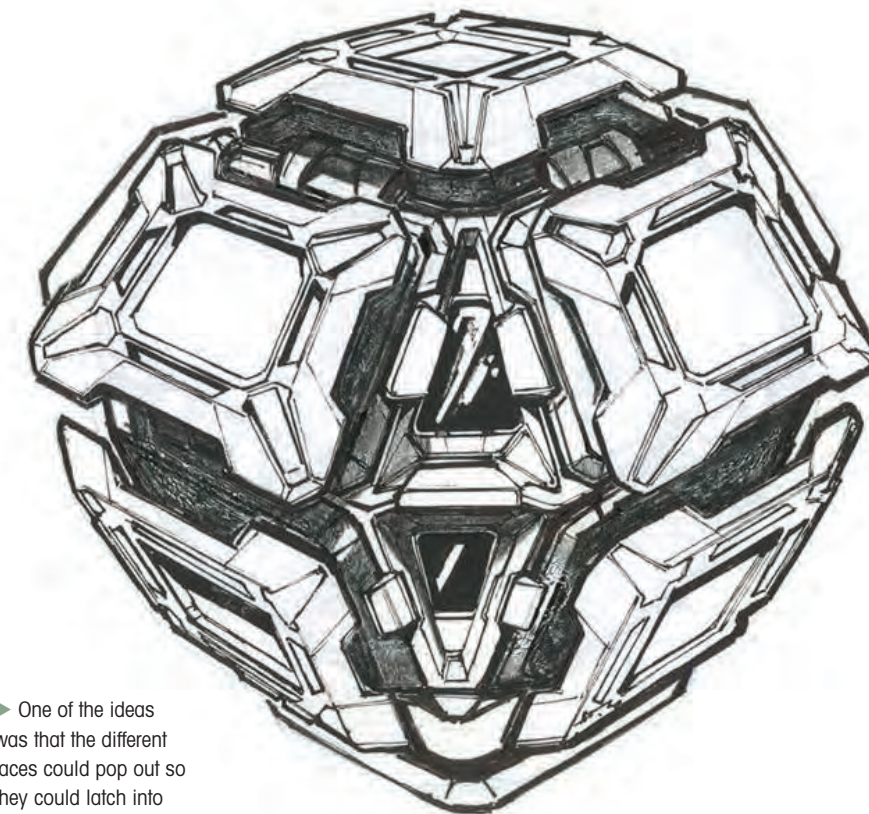


► On the next round of designs, Eaves started to explore the idea of giving the ship lot of flat surfaces that could connect to another, making it easier to build complex shapes.

and worked really well. Once we'd figured out that quick shape that one went through the approval process pretty fast."

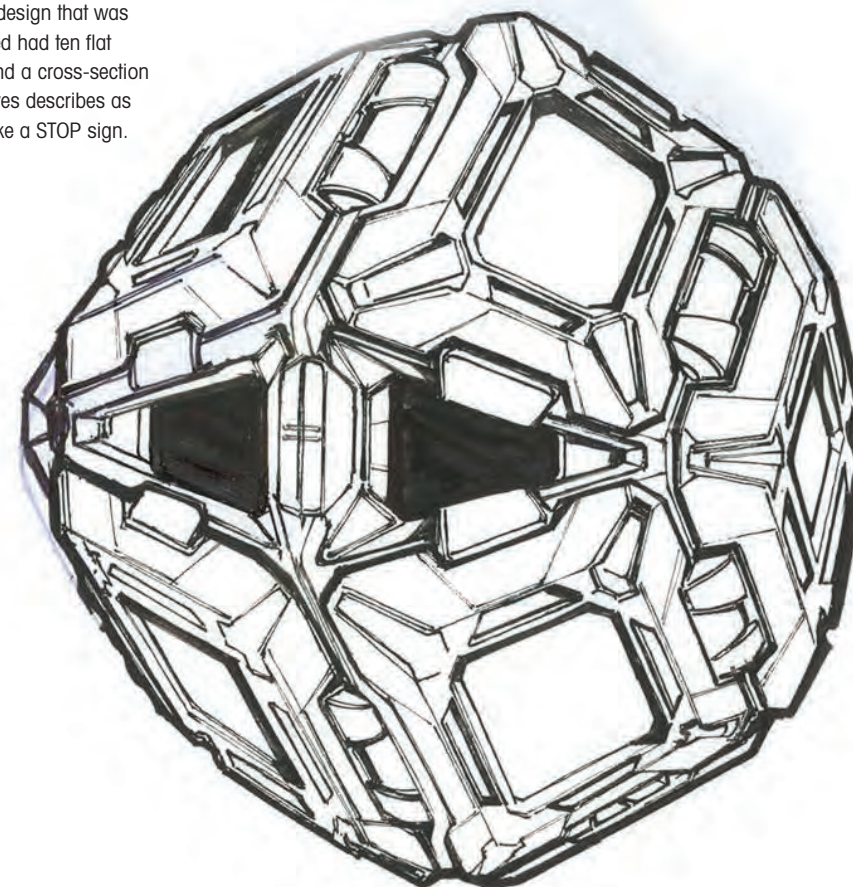
SURFACE DETAILS

However, although the basic shape was agreed rapidly, there was still a lot of work to be done working out exactly how the ships would dock with one another and refining the look. "It was mostly the surface detailing that changed and that took time to get approved," Eaves says. "It was all about that and how the facets were going to work - what would be a hatch and what would be a window. It's got kind of insets on the side. We knew we were going into the CG realm so we didn't have to do practical miniatures and practical sets and stuff. They built one for real but when it came to the visual effects, we had this brand new world



► One of the ideas was that the different faces could pop out so they could latch into one another.

▼ The design that was approved had ten flat faces and a cross-section that Eaves describes as being like a STOP sign.

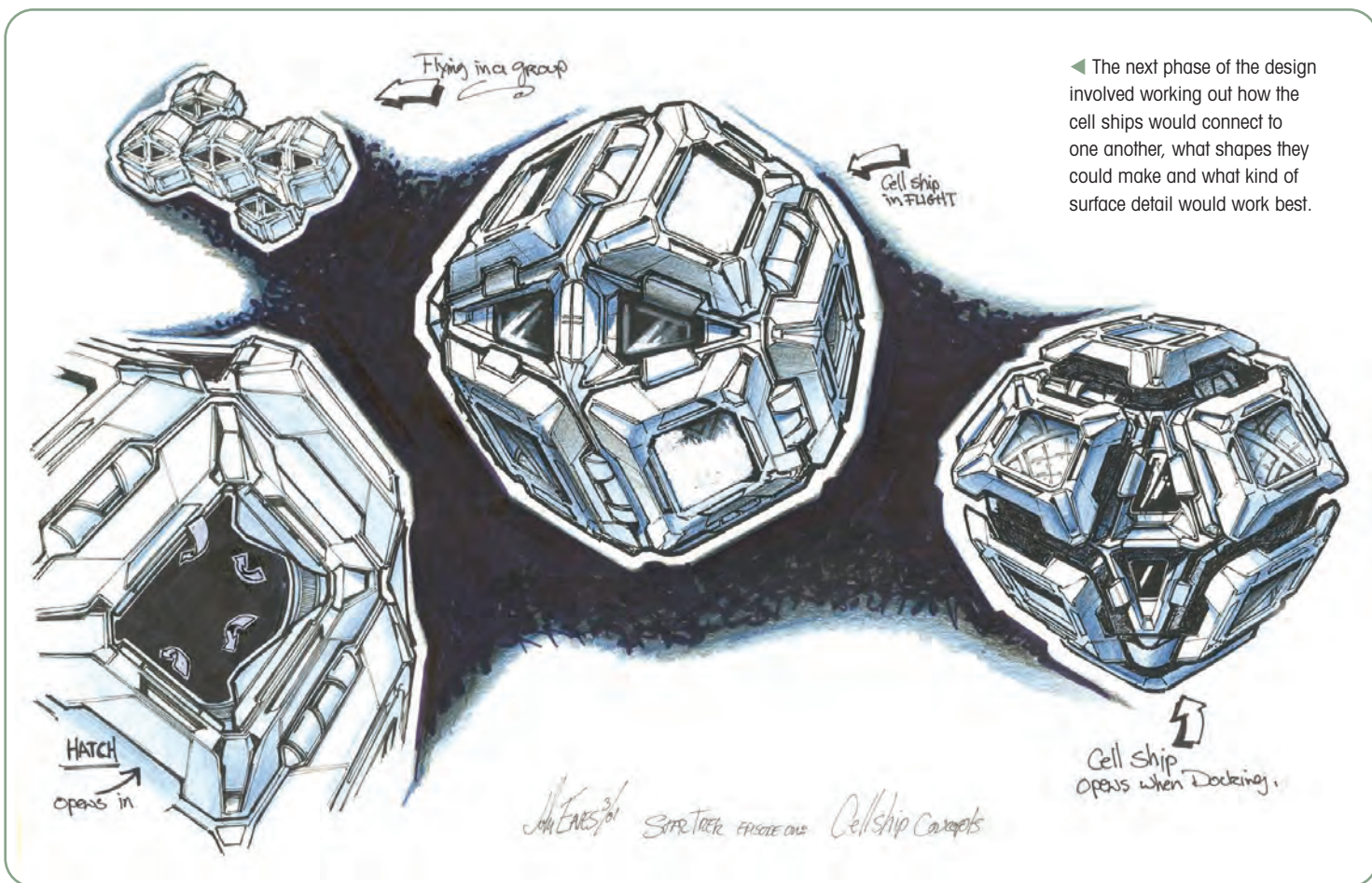


where we didn't have to worry about things being static. So we did all kinds of versions where the plates on the side would actually lift off and or pop up and expand. Nothing of that nature made it to the final version but we drew versions where all these things could extend out like bumpers."

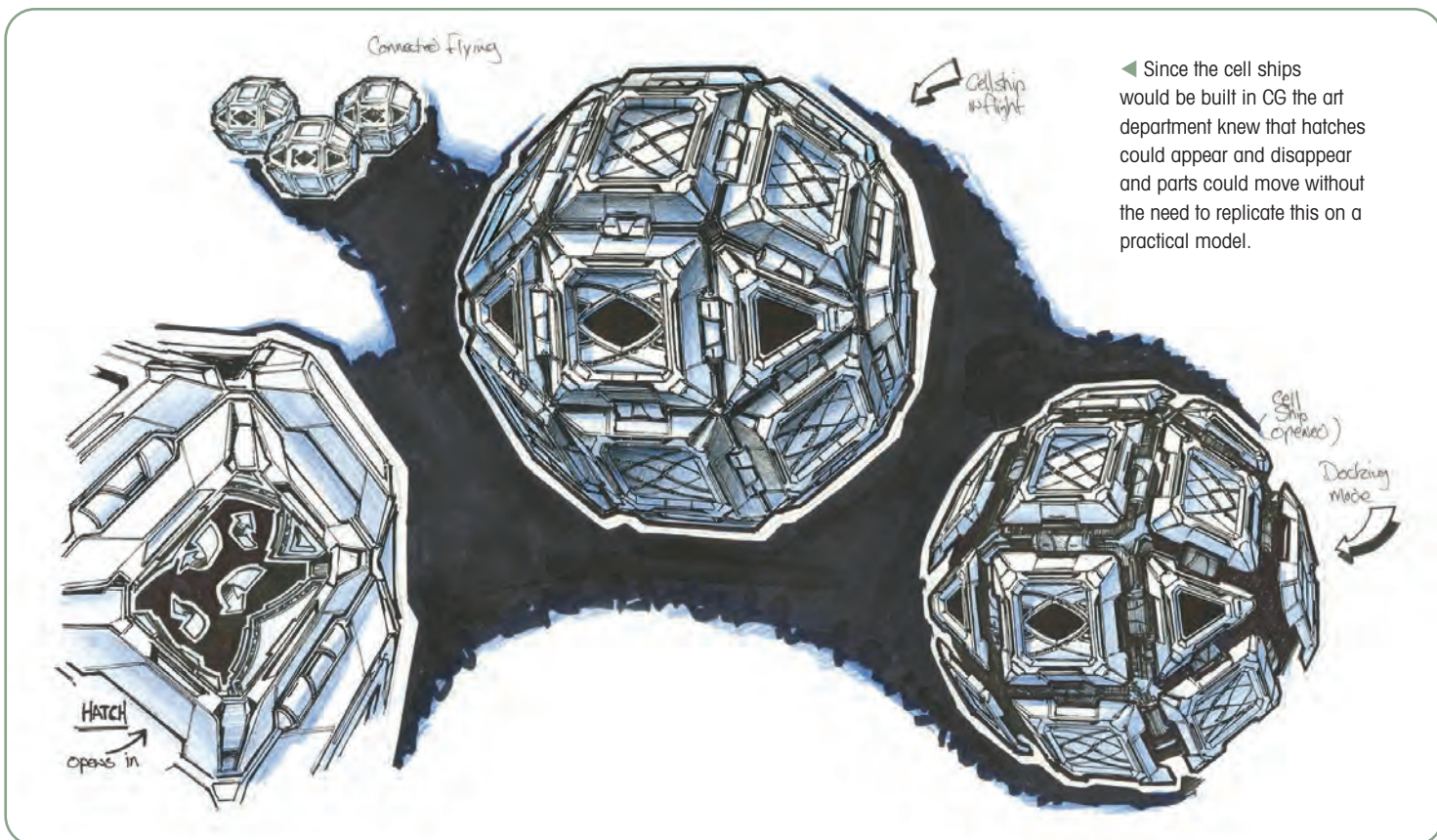
Spinning around

When it came to the interior of the cell ships the art department returned to the idea of a spherical design, with Eaves producing a design that could be built as a practical set.

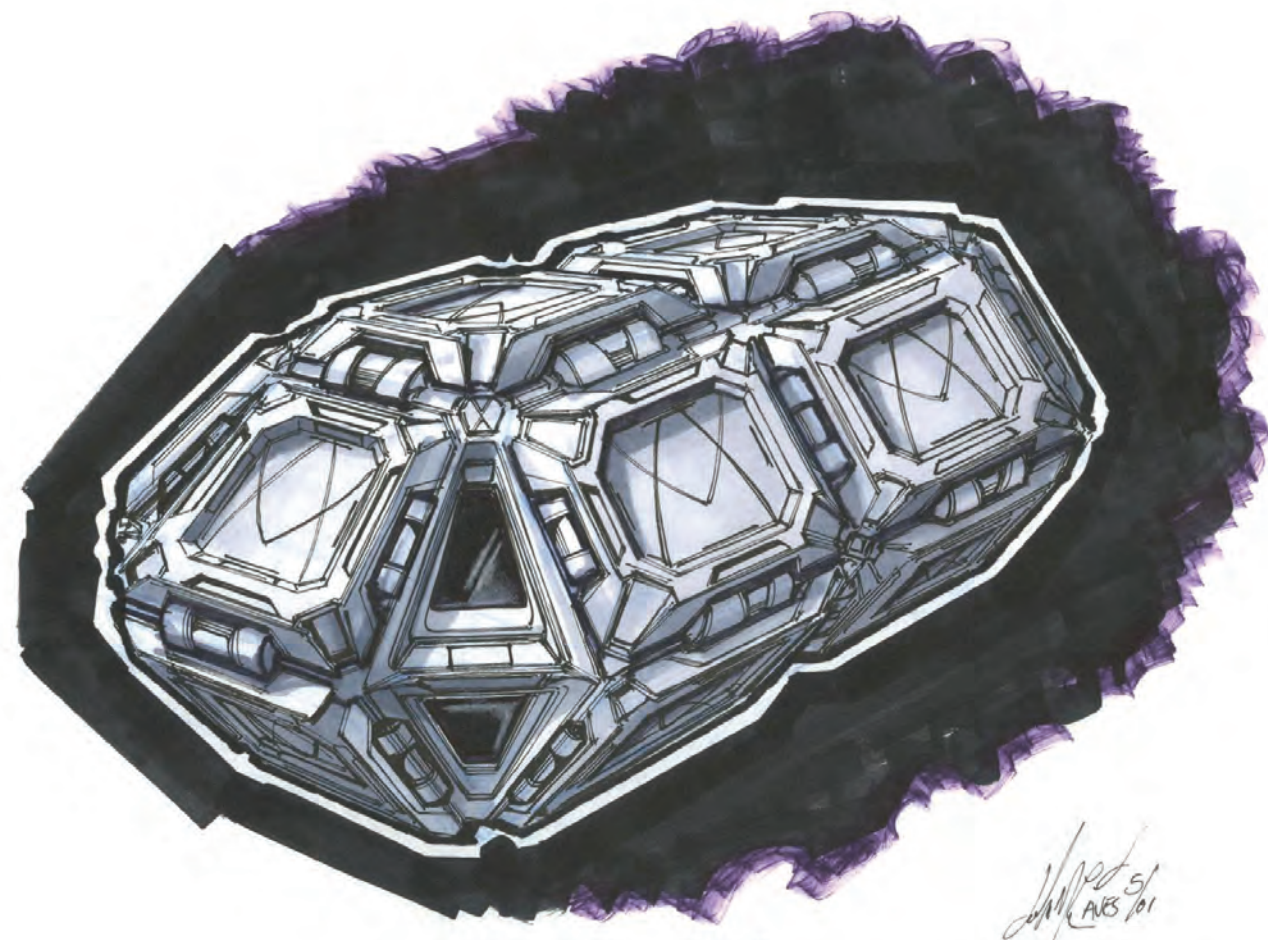
"You know those exercise wheels you can get into and those gyroscopes that roll inside themselves? This was how the cockpit is inside of it. It had this kind of rolling motion so no matter what the angle of the ship was, the pilot would always be upright. His seat would roll so he's not spinning. He's stationary while this ship kind of rolled around him."



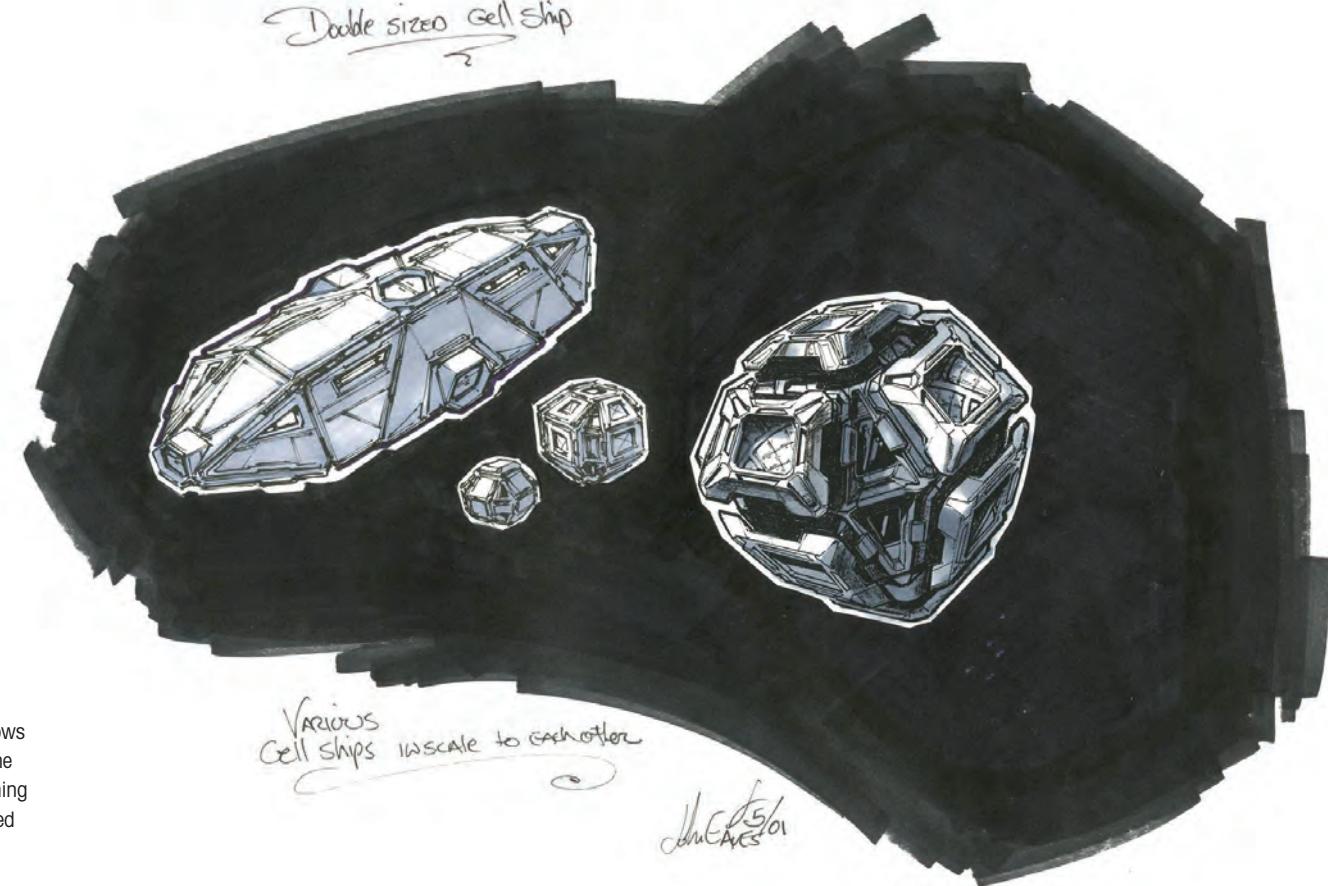
◀ The next phase of the design involved working out how the cell ships would connect to one another, what shapes they could make and what kind of surface detail would work best.



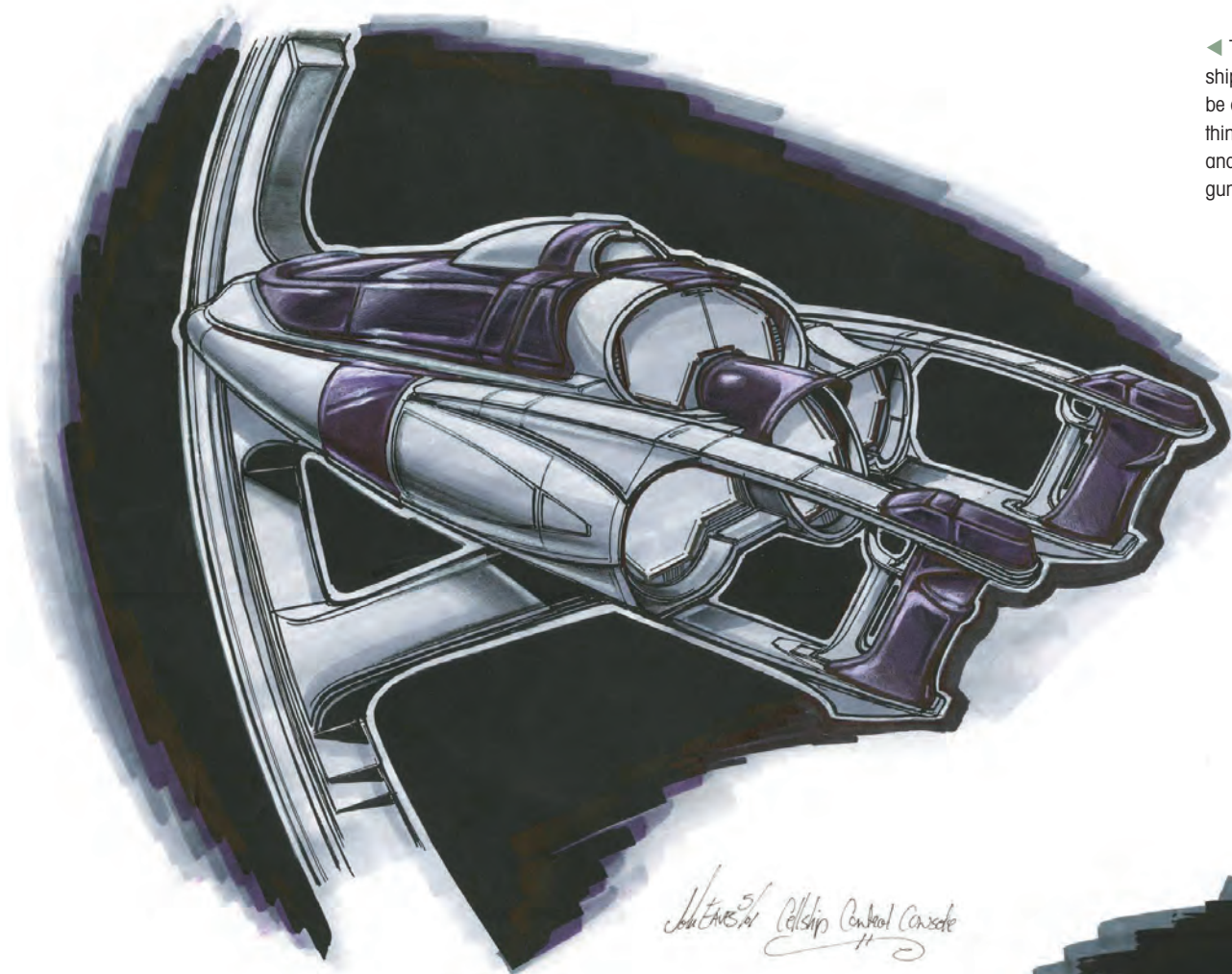
◀ Since the cell ships would be built in CG the art department knew that hatches could appear and disappear and parts could move without the need to replicate this on a practical model.



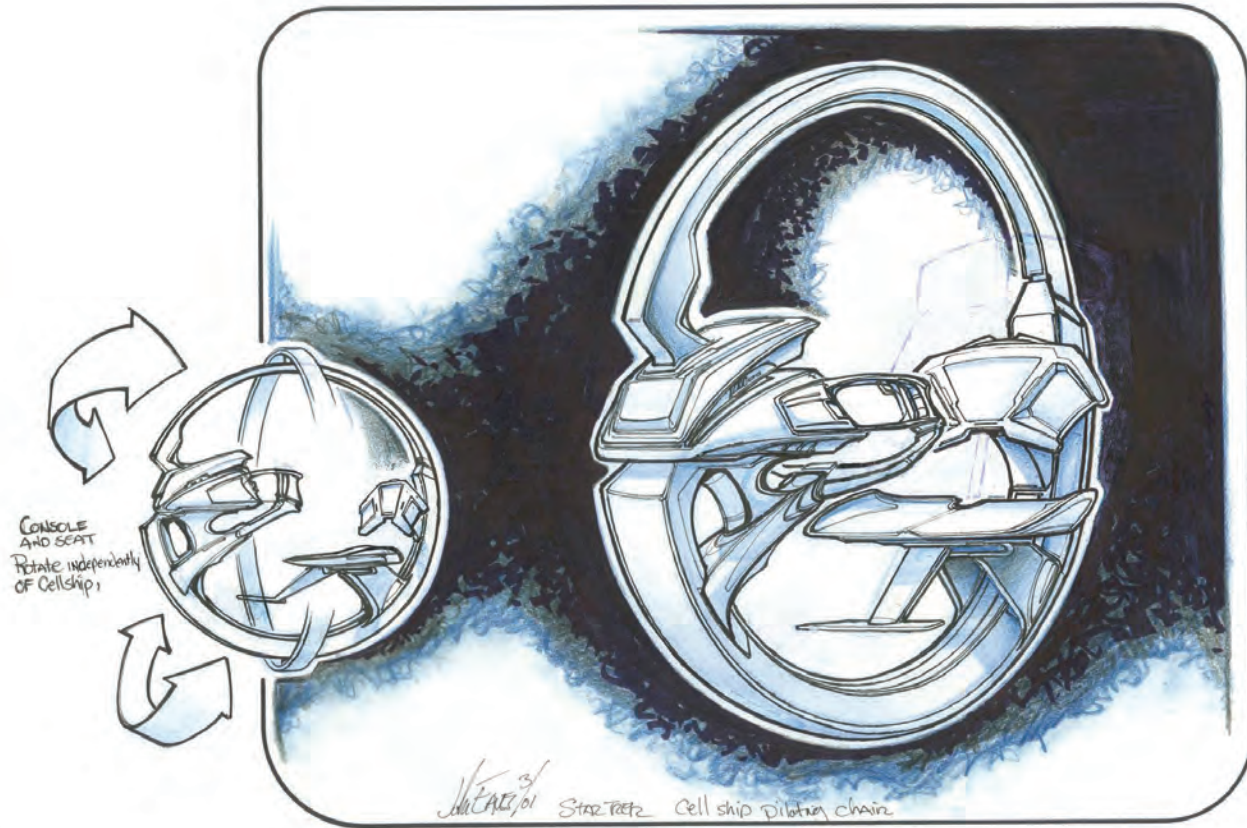
◀ Eaves produced drawings that showed what the cell ships would look like when they combined with one another, starting with a simple double unit.



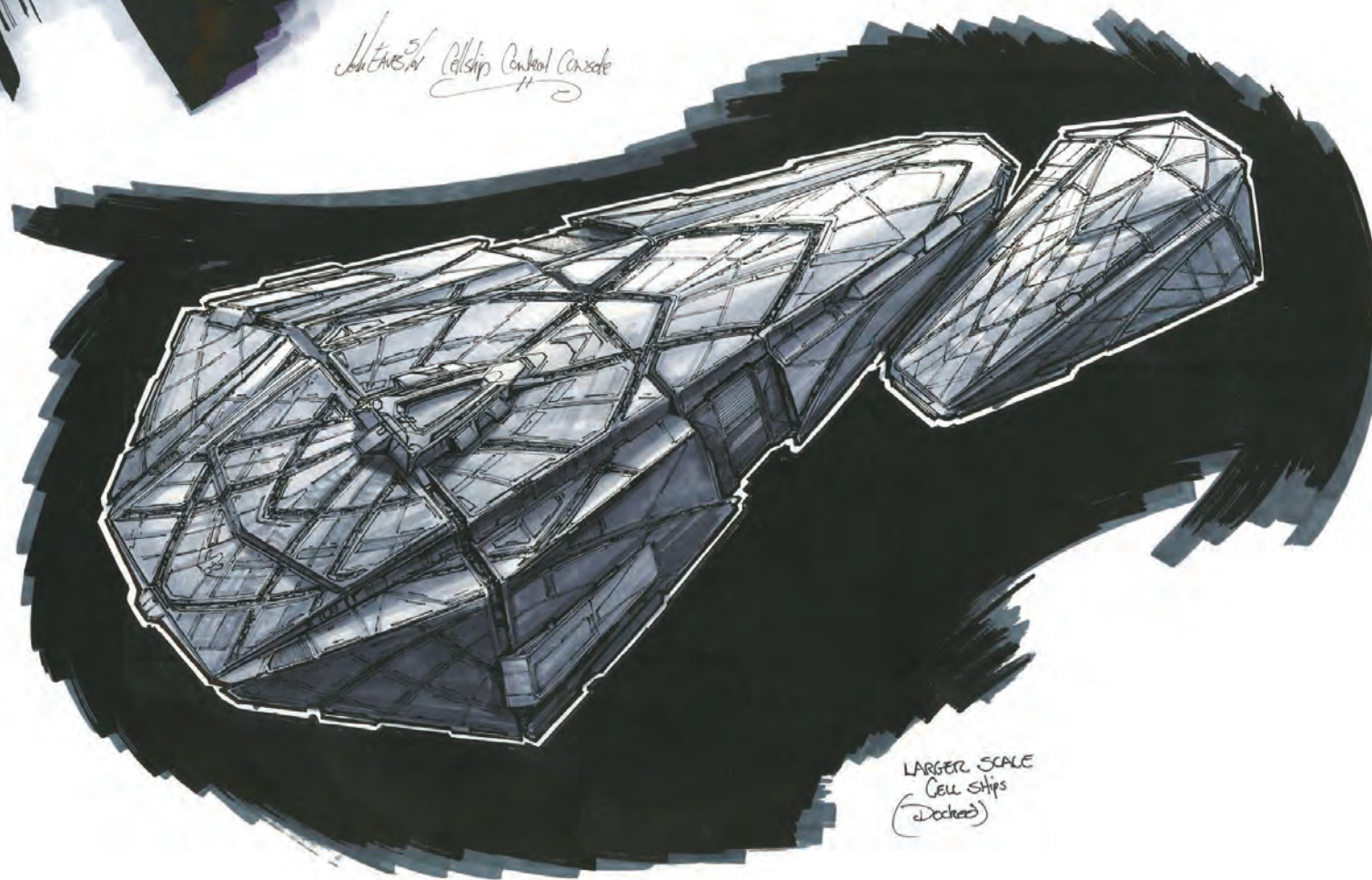
▶ This illustration shows that the cell ships came in different sizes meaning they could be combined to create even more complex shapes.



◀ The controls of the cell ship were designed to be different to the kind of thing we're used to and were reminiscent of a gunner's turret.



◀ The inside of the cell ship was spherical and was designed to stay upright while the rest of the ship rotated around it.



▶ This abandoned concept shows a design for two larger cell ships, and how they would dock with one another.

Laughing Eaves says that the color of the ships was the result of the last job he had before starting work on *ENTERPRISE*. "I had just come out of *Ghosts Of Mars*, so I had all these deep reds and browns in my marker box. I pasted that on top of it and they liked that color right away. It's not the Klingon color; it was more like a deep kind of moody red with deep warm browns in it. It was literally by accident that I had those colors in the marker box. I had gallons of that red ink and it was a case of just using it."

The cell ships were only part of the story though. "The cell ships were pretty easy," Eaves says, "but the big Suliban ship - the Helix ship - was just as hard as the NX-01. It was just a nightmare to do. I think me and Doug spent the same amount of time trying to iron this out."

As Eaves recalls the "Helix ship" started out as a conventional design, but as it evolved, it was decided it should be made up of hundreds of the smaller cell ships. What no-one knew for

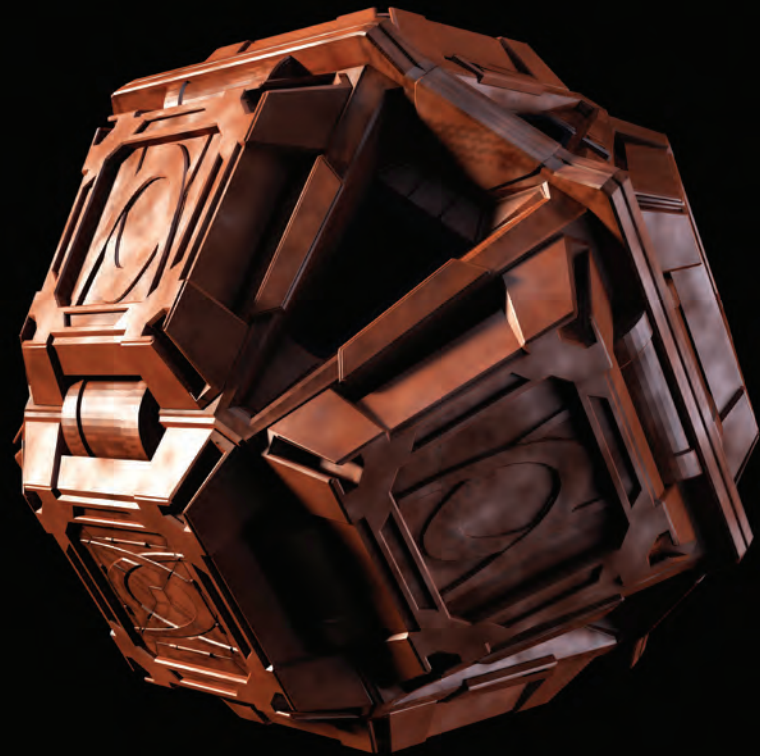
sure was what shape it should be.

"I think I drew about 40 or 50 different variations of it. It wasn't until the thirtieth one that they said 'Well when we say helix, we don't really mean *helix*.' I remember that conversation really well! I said, 'Well what do you mean when you say helix?' Then later on they went back so saying 'Actually, when we say helix we mean helix.'"

The final design had a long, thin central core that the cell ships connected to. "The full size ship was kind of cool to see. There's really not much of a ship underneath the Helix - it's just the cell ships; that's what makes the whole thing. Eden FX made a beautiful CG model on that."

Looking back, Eaves is amazed at the number of drawings that were produced, something he says would only happen on a pilot when the team had the time to refine the concepts so much. The result was an enormously flexible design that was *STAR TREK*'s own equivalent of a LEGO brick.

ON SCREEN



TRIVIA

John Fleck, seen below at a *STAR TREK* convention, played Silik, the most prominent Suliban to feature on *ENTERPRISE*. Fleck also portrayed numerous other characters in the *STAR TREK* franchise. His first appearance was as the Romulan Taibak in *THE NEXT GENERATION* episode *The Mind's Eye*. He played three separate characters on *DEEP SPACE NINE*: a Cardassian in 'The Homecoming, the Karemma trader Ornithar in *The Search, Part I* and Koval, a Romulan in *Inter Arma Enim Silent Leges*. He also played Abaddon, the owner of a junkyard, in the *VOYAGER* episode *Alice*.



The Suliban doctor who administered truth drugs to Klaang on the helix was played by Joseph Ruskin. The actor appeared in every *STAR TREK* TV series apart from *THE NEXT GENERATION*, although he did play a Son'a in the film *STAR TREK: INSURRECTION*.



ENTERPRISE creator and executive producer Rick Berman has said that the name Suliban was invented after he heard about the Taliban. He stated that years ago he visited Afghanistan to make a documentary at a time when the Taliban were first becoming infamous, and he remembered that he found the name "incredibly dramatic."

- FIRST APPEARANCE: BROKEN BOW (ENT)
- TV APPEARANCE: STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE
- DESIGNED BY: John Eaves

KEY APPEARANCES

STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE

Broken Bow
Enterprise NX-01's first mission is to deliver Klaang to the Klingon homeworld after he crashlands on Earth. During the journey, *Enterprise* is attacked by the Suliban and Klaang is kidnapped. Seeking to recover him, the crew eventually track him to a Suliban space station known as a helix. The structure is made up of thousands of Suliban cell ships joined together around a core. Heavily outnumbered, the *Enterprise* crew steal a cell ship and use it to infiltrate the helix. They find Klaang, but can they escape and find out why the Suliban wanted Klaang so badly?

STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE The Communicator

After returning from an exploratory mission to a pre-warp society on the brink of war, Lt. Reed realizes that he lost his communicator somewhere on the planet. Captain Archer and Reed return to the surface, but the natives have already found it. The crewmen are arrested and interrogated, as they are believed to be enemy spies with advanced technology. Meanwhile, Commander Tucker suggests using the Suliban cell ship that is stored in the cargo hold to rescue them. He just has find out how to operate the cell ship's cloak – a task easier said than done.

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