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VIDIIAN WARSHIP

TYPE: WARSHIP
IN OPERATION: 2370s
LENGTH: 300 METERS
MAX SPEED: WARP 9.6
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VIDIIAN WARSHIP

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VIDIIAN WARSHIP

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The Vidiian warship was one of several similar types of vessels used by this race in the latter half of the 24th century. Its appearance resembled that of a manta ray, with two horns, similar to cephalic fins, jutting out the “head” of the ship on either side of a u-shaped indentation at the front. The bridge of the ship was situated on top of a flattened main body that spread out into broad wings. The entire ship appeared to measure at least as wide as it was long.

Heavily armed, the Vidiian warship was a powerful vessel used by this Delta Quadrant race in the 2370s. In terms of technology, the Vidiian warship was on a similar level to that of the U.S.S. Voyager NCC-74656. It was capable of high warp speeds, and Commander Chakotay commented that it was “loaded with weaponry,” which included particle beam weapons and torpedoes.

A smaller Vidiian starship was equipped with a type of dampening field that could drain energy from Voyager’s warp nacelles at a rate of seven per cent per minute, and it was likely that the warship also possessed this ability. Similarly, a much larger Vidiian vessel, which had a crew numbering at least 350, was armed with hyper-thermic charges and grappling hooks, which were used to access captured ships. The charges were used to neutralize the weapons of a targeted ship, while the grappling hooks were used to bore a hole into the hull, so it could be boarded.

MEDICAL NECESSITY
Much of Vidiian technology, and particularly their ships, was shaped by their health needs. For more than 2,000 years, the species had been suffering from a disease known as the Phage. It literally devoured their bodies and destroyed them at a cellular level. Despite their extensive medical knowledge, they had been unable to develop a cure, and they survived by stealing healthy organs from compatible humanoids.

Vidiian warships were therefore outfitted with the means to neutralize other vessels, rendering them unable to fight back or flee, before boarding them and kidnapping the crew. Transporter technology was also available to move the organs to the Vidiian, who was afflicted by the Phage. Many Vidiians served as honattas. This term referred to an individual whose duty it was to obtain organs for another Vidiian, who was afflicted by the Phage.

\[\text{Vidiian who suffered from the Phage had alien skin grafted onto their own, giving them a hideous appearance. The disease also afflicted their organs, and in order to prolong their lives, they harvested body parts from other species. They preferred to use corpses, but they would take organs from living bodies if necessary.}\]
could then be used to remove healthy organs from the captured species, or these unfortunate souls would be used for medical experiments as the Vidiians continued to look for a cure.

In 2372, Voyager reluctantly sought the help of the Vidiians after Captain Janeway and Commander Chakotay were bitten by an insect and infected with a virus while exploring a planet. The virus would have proved fatal if they had been removed from the planet, but something about its environment kept it in check. With the Doctor unable to formulate a cure, the crew of Voyager were forced to leave Janeway and Chakotay behind as they continued on their journey.

Six weeks later, Voyager detected a convoy of Vidiian warships. Knowing that the Vidiians had extensive medical knowledge, the crew wanted to contact them to ask for help, even though they knew there was a strong chance that the Vidians would try to abduct them for their organs.

WORTH THE RISK

Tuvok, who had become the acting captain, was eventually persuaded to take the risk and contact the Vidians. At first, they seemed happy to help, and Denara Pel, a Vidiian who had previously become friends with the Doctor, told them she had an anti-viral agent that would provide a cure.

As Voyager closed in on the meeting coordinates, they were suddenly surrounded by three warships. The Vidians refused to answer hails and launched an attack. Overwhelmed by the particle beam weaponry of the Vidiian warships, Voyager’s shields were soon down to 47 percent, while the Starfleet ship’s weapons had little effect on stopping the assault.

A more inventive tactic to repel the warships had to be used, and they still had to acquire the anti-viral agent for Janeway and Chakotay. Voyager briefly dropped its shields, and in that second the Doctor beamed the medicine from a Vidiian ship to his medical lab. Voyager then ejected an antimatter container into space, which they detonated with a photon torpedo. Simultaneously, Voyager jumped to warp, escaping the resultant explosion, disabling the Vidiian warships.

The timing of this plan worked perfectly as the Vidiians were unable to pursue, leaving Voyager free to take the antidote for the virus to the planet where Janeway and Chakotay had been left.

DATA FEED

Danara Pel was a Vidian doctor who had been suffering from the Phage since the age of seven. In 2372, she was near death when Voyager answered her distress call. The Doctor put her body in stasis, while transferring her mind into a holographic body. The two fell in love while working together, and they successfully came up with a way to prolong her life. She returned to her own people to continue her efforts to cure the Phage.
After suffering a near-fatal crash landing, Captain Janeway experienced several delusions in which the shuttle she had been traveling on was attacked and shot down by a Vidiian warship. A few moments later, Vidiians arrived and one shot Chakotay, while another grabbed Janeway around the throat and strangled her.

The next moment, Janeway and Chakotay were back on the Sacajawea, reliving a conversation they had just been having. The next moment they were shot out of the sky by a Vidiian warship, but then the situation reset itself again. This time they were pursued by two Vidiian warships, but when they released a tachyon burst, the ships simply vanished. This made them believe they were caught in some kind of repeating time loop, being placed back at the point just prior to the arrival of the Vidiian warship. In fact, all the events since the first crash landing had been a hallucination experienced by Janeway. They were caused by a non-corporeal alien wanting to lure her spirit away, so it could feed on her body after she died.
The first Vidiian starship that appeared in STAR TREK: VOYAGER was in the episode Phage. This was a redress of a studio model that originally started out as the Merchantman, and was designed by Nilo Rodis for STAR TREK III: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK. The model was redressed several times for various appearances before it appeared as the Vidiian ship, by which time it had been modified quite extensively. This model set the general look for Vidiian ships.

The Vidiian warship that first appeared in Resolutions was designed by VOYAGER’s visual effects producer Dan Curry, and he gave it an ominous, powerful look that was also consistent with the cultural aesthetic that had already been established for the Vidiians. It was unusual for anyone outside the art department to design a starship, but as was sometimes the case when they were pressed for time, the VFX department came to the rescue.

The impressive studio model of the Vidiian warship was built for STAR TREK: VOYAGER’s second season episode Resolutions, and it also appeared in the season three episode Coda. The open-winged ship featured fully functioning lighting, and various camera mounting-points to make filming easier.

The studio model of the warship was built largely from fiberglass. The surface was covered in suitably futuristic components that helped give it a sense of depth by creating shadows and texture, while it was painted in various shades of burgundy and cream. The model was equipped with fully functioning electronics, including tiny lights for the windows and larger lights for the engines in the wings.

The model measured approximately 84cm x 91cm and was auctioned at the Christie’s ‘40 Years of Star Trek’ sale in 2006. The bidding for the model was expected to reach $2,000-$3,000, but it actually sold for an incredible $5,040.

Visual effects producer Dan Curry came to the rescue when he designed a new Vidiian starship that was needed in a hurry.

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Visual effects producer Dan Curry came to the rescue when he designed a new Vidiian starship that was needed in a hurry.
The Vidiians were one of the first adversaries that the crew of the U.S.S. Voyager NCC-74656 encountered after they were whisked off to the Delta Quadrant by the Caretaker. When devising the series, the producers came up with a number of ideas of what sort of aliens Captain Janeway and her crew would face.

According to co-creator and executive producer Jeri Taylor, the Vidiians emerged from an idea about “a culture that was dying of an incurable virus and would go to any lengths to make their species stay alive.” She imagined them as being similar to the Mayan civilization, especially in regards to their practices of human sacrifice. Fellow co-creator Brannon Braga, who was a big fan of the horror genre, stated that the Vidiians were also partly inspired by Mary Shelley’s novel Frankenstein, in that they would be monstrous to look at, but they would also be, at least partially, portrayed as sympathetic. He said that another part of the inspiration came from wondering what humans would be like now had the bubonic plague not been wiped out, and what we would have done to survive.

ENGINEERING A PESTILENCE

The producers turned to their science consultant André Bormanis to come up with a believable type of plague that could infect and threaten to wipe out an entire species.

“We wanted to suggest a really vicious kind of a virus, something that ravaged this whole population of people, the Vidiians, and had driven them to this desperate situation where they had to harvest organs from other compatible species in order to survive,” said Bormanis. “And a bacteria phage is a real thing. That was a good choice for describing the deadly pathogen, the virus that had come so close to doing in the Vidiians for good.”

In fact, the aliens were originally going to be called the ‘Phages,’ but this was later changed to the ‘Vaphorans.’ However, when they were filming the script, it became clear that the actors were all pronouncing the name in different ways. It was therefore decided in post-production to overdub ‘Vaphorans’ with ‘Vidiians.’

Once the concept behind the Vidiians had been established, it was up to makeup supervisor Michael Westmore to design the look of the Vidiians. The brief Westmore was given said that they were suffering from a dreadful disease called the Phage, and the only way they could survive was by harvesting body parts from different alien species and then grafting them onto themselves.

“We started off with this patchwork quilt type of makeup,” said Westmore. “The skin was just a variation of colors. As we kept doing more shows involving the Vidiians, we started doing kind of silly things like adding a chunk of flesh that had an ear

STAR TREK MAKEUP

In his long and illustrious STAR TREK career, Michael Westmore created some incredible-looking aliens, including the gruesome Vidiians.

The Vidiians were one of STAR TREK’s most hideous-looking aliens. Makeup supervisor Michael Westmore created their design by making it appear that their faces were rotting, and that they had tried to patch them up with skin grafted on from the body parts of other aliens.

Each Vidian had a unique face that was made up of skin taken from a variety of skin species, including various Starfleet officers or even an ear that had been attached in an unusual place.

Briggs remembered, “I thought it would be interesting to create a species that was really creepy-looking and Frankenstein-like, with cobbled together body parts. This was because they had to steal organs to survive, but they had a very sympathetic backstory.”
behind the scenes

in it! There was one that had a Vulcan ear stuck to the back of its head. There was another one with a very obvious chunk of Talaxian skin. We started doing things like that to make each one of them a little different.

MIXTURE OF SKINS

Ultimately, despite each Vidiian’s head resembling a patchwork quilt of alien skins, Westmore decided to use merely a single mask for each Vidiian, each mask covering their respective wearer’s entire head. The different skin textures were sculpted onto each mask, and then painted with a variety of colors. “It was all sculpted into one piece with different textures,” said Westmore, “so it looked like overlapping chunks of stuff.

“We would make a chunk of skin spotted and the next one striped, then we started punching different kinds of alien hair into it, to make it seem as if they had added some type of alien to themselves with various types of hair. Then we started flocking areas on it, so there would be a fuzzy chunk next to a smooth chunk. That led us into working with textures on the skin surface.

“I also made teeth for them,” continued Westmore. “I thought it would look strange for them to have nice human-looking teeth. So, I started making a series of teeth that had a fang in it or something unusual. The teeth tended to look like a variation of different alien species in the mouth.”

In Faces, one of Westmore’s favorite episodes, one of the Vidiians wanted to look attractive to B’Elanna. So, he killed a Voyager crewman and grafted his face onto his own. “The same actor played the Starfleet officer and the Vidiian,” said Westmore. “At one point, he had to peel his face off, so we made a rubber copy of the actor’s face. We also gave him contact lenses, a different color in each eye. Those were the shows that really got interesting for us.”

The producers were extremely happy with the ideas behind the Vidiians, believing that they were the first really successful aliens on VOYAGER and they were also delighted with the outstanding makeup job Westmore did on them. This really was not surprising at all, as Westmore had been doing incredible work on STAR TREK for some years by this point. During his STAR TREK career, which started in 1986 on THE NEXT GENERATION and went through all the way to the end of ENTERPRISE, Westmore garnered 31 award wins and nominations, including winning five Emmy Awards.

GALLERY OF ALIENS

Westmore came up with dozens of elaborate STAR TREK makeup creations over the years. The richness of the alien cultures we saw was a tribute to Westmore’s skill and creativity. Notable among them were the Borg, the reptilian Cardassians, the shapeshifting Odo and fearsome warriors such as the Jem’Hadar and the Hirogen.

Westmore cast his net wide for inspiration. “What I used for a lot of my research were things on Earth that people know, instead of trying to just create something silly,” said Westmore. “I would relate it to animals, amphibians, birds, dinosaurs, things that people know are good or bad, and I would put that into the character. I had books all around, and I also had a file of pages I’d torn out of magazines, all to do with humans – ears, noses, chins, throats, pieces of skin, eyes.”

Having created this wonderful cast of characters, which one was Westmore’s favorite? “The Borg were interesting, and the evolution of the Borg. But I think out of all the characters, the ones I enjoyed the most were the Cardassians. We could have made them even better for a feature.
BEHIND THE SCENES

film, but for a TV show the design was fine. We didn’t have the time or the need to redesign them to maybe make them better by adding little multi-layers of scales down the shoulders, and do some feature refining.

“On ENTERPRISE, I really enjoyed redeveloping the Orion characters from THE ORIGINAL SERIES,” continued Westmore. “But, the Xindi-Reptilians, with porcupine quills coming out of them, were gorgeous.”

UP AGAINST THE CLOCK

Westmore not only came up with all these incredible creations, but he did it while under enormous workloads and strict deadlines. The producers were always mindful of the pressures on Westmore and his team. “If it was something big, Brannon Bregas tried to give me maybe two or three weeks’ notice. With the Hirogen, he gave me an extra week’s notice. But we didn’t have time to wait for an actor. I had molds of heads – large, medium and small heads – so Brannon said, ‘We’re hiring great big guys to do this,’ and we’d core up our biggest head and pre-sculpt the thing, but left the face open, so when they finally cast the real actor we made a piece that fitted on. But the head was all pre-made.”

Westmore had no time to compile a personal archive of all the things he’d created. “I didn’t have time to pull my camera. Once I knew the camera was rolling and everybody was done, then I’d got miles of paperwork I had to go through, including the next day’s layout – we called it the battle plan. It was an assignment where everybody was told what they were going to do the next day, what time they were coming in. They were told where they were going and what they were going to be doing.”

The pace was absolutely relentless, and when Westmore first started working on STAR TREK, he was often at the studio from 5 o’clock in the morning until 10 o’clock at night – working 85 hours a week.

“Three times they literally took me home due to exhaustion,” said Westmore. “One time I was having to hold on to a rail – I couldn’t stand up. They threw me in a car, drove me to the doctor and he said, ‘You’re exhausted.’ So little by little things eased up, by getting more help and more help. At the end my week was more like 60 hours.

DEALING WITH THE PRESSURE

“If I was a highly emotional person I couldn’t have functioned, because you would go crazy with all of the last minute things that were thrown at you. You needed people who were willing to jump in at the last minute and do whatever they could do.”

After nearly 20 years as STAR TREK’s makeup designer, Westmore could not have been happier with his job satisfaction and what he achieved. “I can honestly say in all the years of working on STAR TREK, there was nothing that I have seen in any movie where I thought, ‘I wished I had the opportunity to do that.’ We’d already done it. We’d done so many old-age makeups, we’d done so many aliens, we’d done so many diseases, we’d done so many things that you could possibly think about in other movies, and we did it faster than a lot of films, just because of our timeframe.”

Westmore was an expert in creating convincing old-age makeups, such as the one he did for Captain Picard in THE NEXT GENERATION episode ‘The Inner Light.’ He said that this was one of the hardest makeup techniques to master, as the facial muscles fall when you get older, and it’s difficult to replicate this effect.

The Xindi-Reptilian species was one of Westmore’s favorite makeup designs on ENTERPRISE. He was particularly pleased with the black spikes coming out of their heads, which he likened to a porcupine’s quills.

TOP For the Jem’Hadar, Westmore wanted a look that would enhance their strength and aggressiveness. He started off basing the race on the rhinoceros by placing multiple versions of its horn around their heads. He said the top of their heads was more like a dinosaur.

BOTTOM In designing the Hirogen, Westmore built their look on the mottled skin of a Gila monster, the venomous lizard. Many of the face appliances for the Hirogen had to be made large to fit some of the huge actors that played the fearsome Hirogen.
ON SCREEN

TRIVIA

Alan Sims, who was property master on STAR TREK: VOYAGER, was responsible for finding an ‘alien primate’ for the episode ‘Resolutions’. This was easier said than done, but he found a spider monkey that could walk on its hind legs. At first, producer Rick Berman was not convinced that it would look ‘alien’ enough, until he saw photographs of what it could do. Berman was immediately satisfied and said, ‘That looks alien enough for me. Book him!’

Susan Diol reprised her role as the Vidiian Denara Pul in ‘Resolutions’ after earlier playing the character in the episode ‘Lifesigns’. The actress had previously played Carmen Davila [pictured below] in the STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION episode ‘Silicon Avatar’.

KEY APPEARANCES

STAR TREK: VOYAGER

Resolutions

Captain Janeway and Chakotay both contract a deadly virus from an insect bite, and they are forced to remain on the planet where they were infected, as the environment prevents the disease from killing them. Janeway orders Voyager to continue its journey, but forbids the crew from contacting the Vidiians, who with their medical expertise may have a cure for the virus.

Weeks later, Voyager encounters several Vidiian warships and the crew can’t resist asking them for help. They say they have a cure, but it turns out to be a trap and they launch an attack.

STAR TREK: VOYAGER

Coda

Captain Janeway and Chakotay mysteriously find themselves caught in a time loop, in which one or more Vidiian warships attack the shuttle that they are on, resulting in their deaths.

It appears that they cannot escape their fate, but during one of these ‘episodes’ Janeway’s father appears to her and tells her that she is dead. He also tells her that she must let go and join him in death, allowing her crew to go on without her. These mind-bending revelations do not sit well with Janeway, and she soon comes to suspect that her ‘father’ has ulterior motives.

First Appearance:

Resolutions (VOY)

TV Appearance:

STAR TREK: VOYAGER

Designed By:

Dan Curry

The STAR TREK: VOYAGER episode ‘Coda’ was written by Jeri Taylor. She included elements in the story that she had previously established in her novel Mosaic that dealt with events in Kathryn Janeway’s life before she became captain. For instance, it included how her father drowned under the polar ice cap on Tau Ceti Prime.

Inside your magazine

• In-depth profile of the U.S.S. Jenolan NCC-2010, a 23rd-century Sydney-class ship that crashed into a Dyson sphere with Montgomery Scott on board.

• How the Jenolan studio model was created by Greg Jein out of an earlier model built for STAR TREK VI.

• In an interview with James Doohan conducted in 2000, the actor reveals how he came up with the name and the accent for the much-loved Scotty.

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