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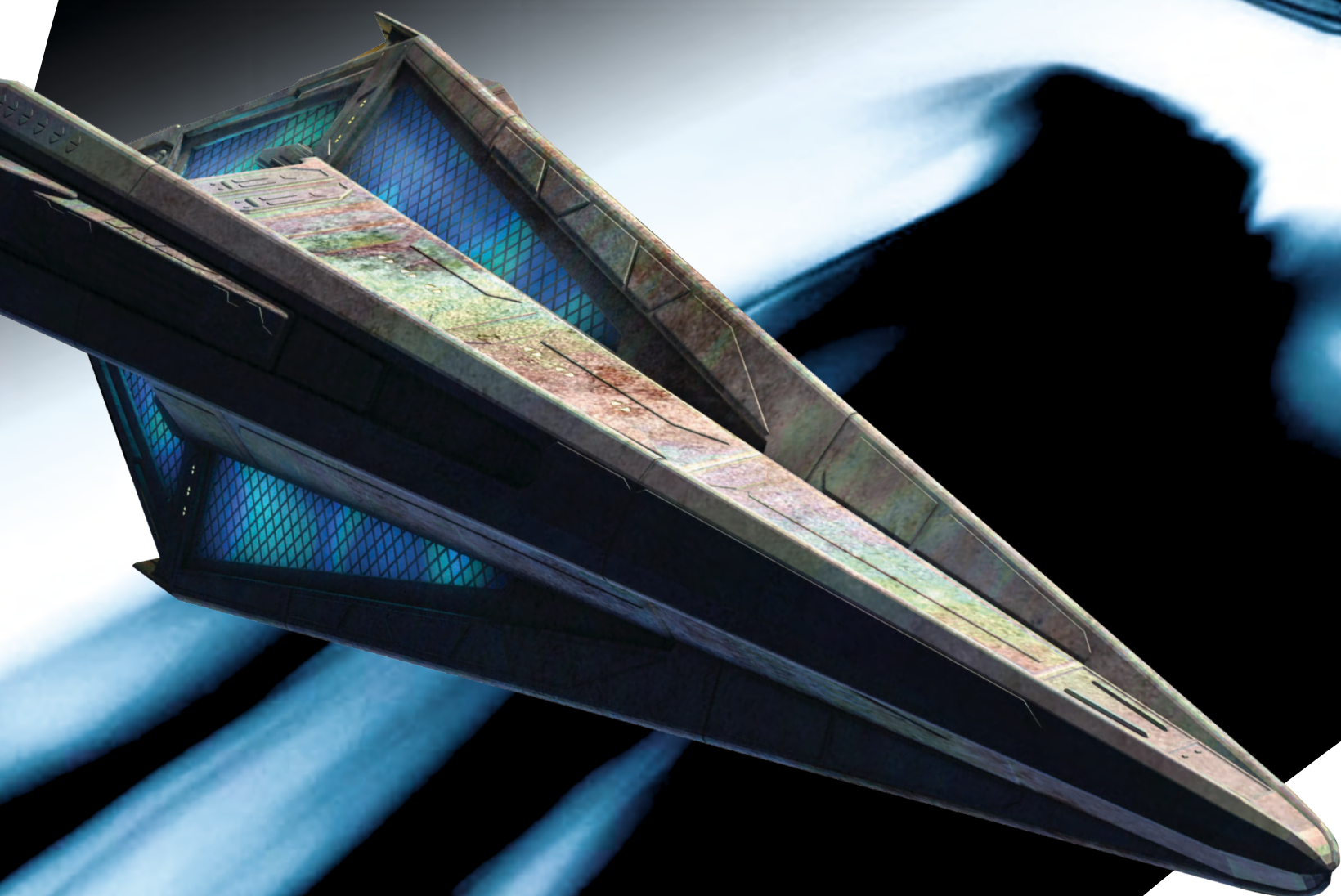
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STAR TREK™

THE OFFICIAL STARSHIPS COLLECTION



THOLIAN
STARSHIP (2152)

CREW: 1

LAUNCHED: 22nd C

LENGTH: 15 METERS

WEAPON: THOLIAN WEB

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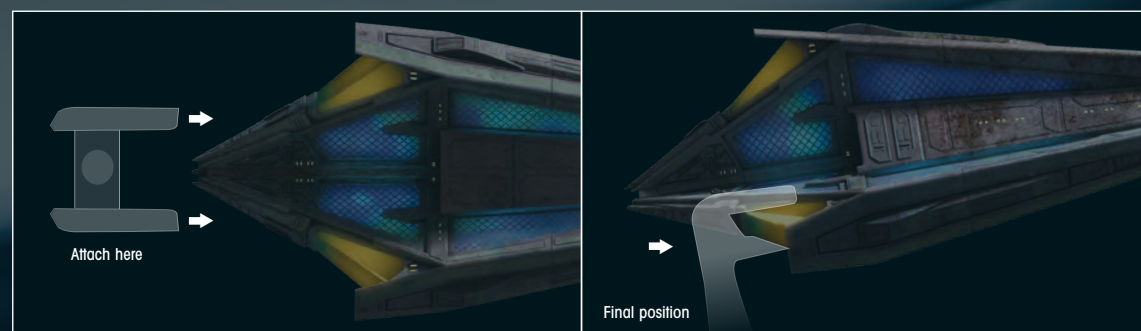
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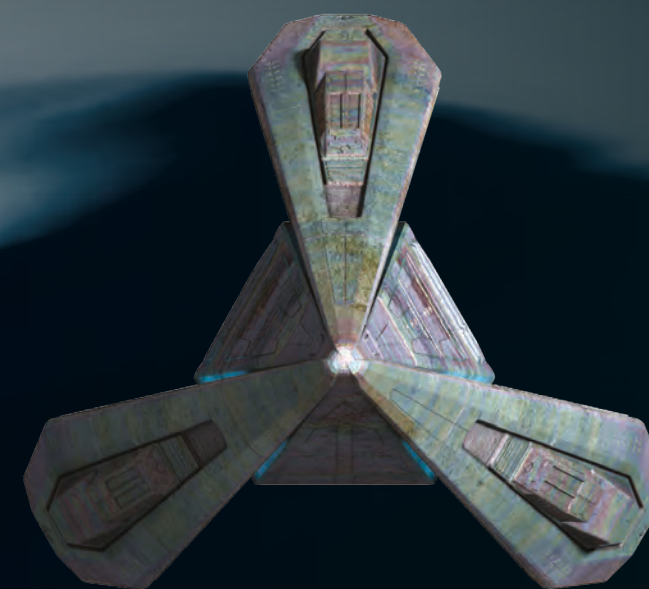
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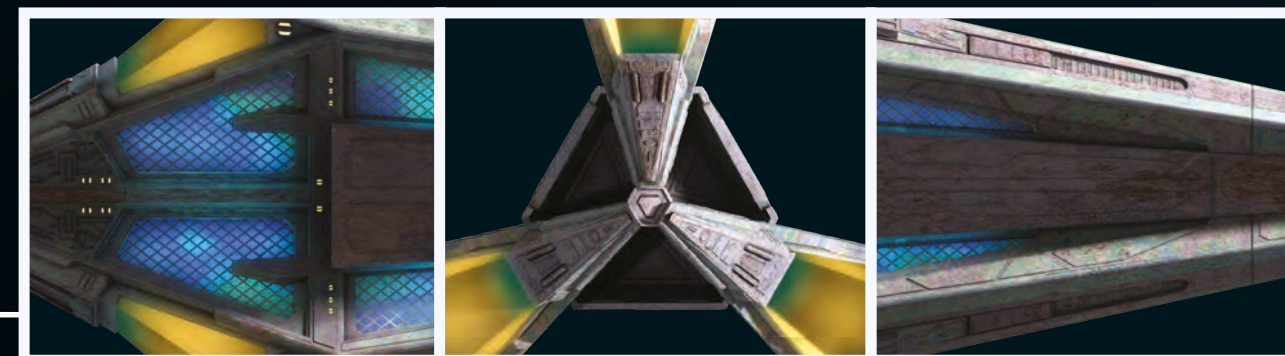
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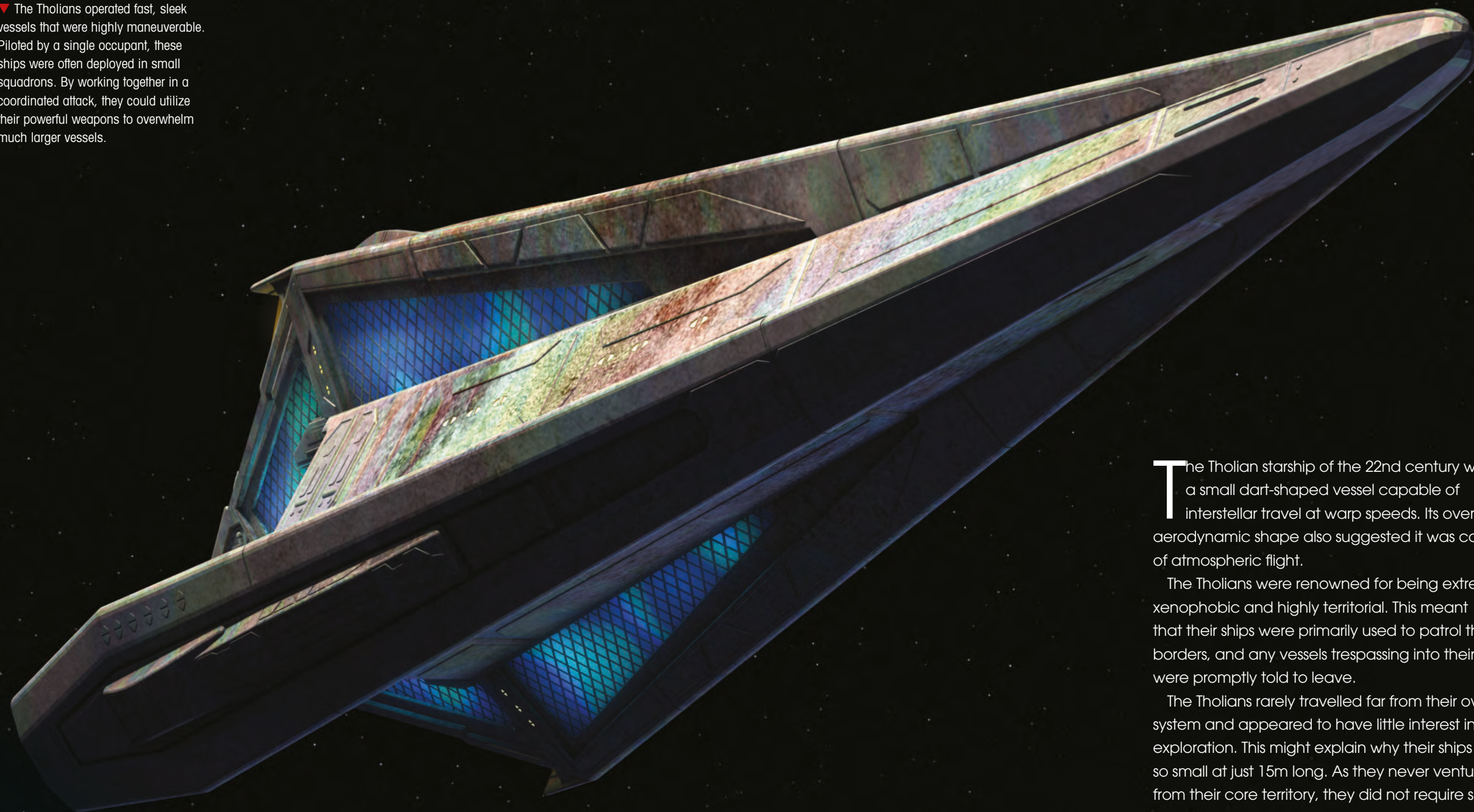
THOLIAN STARSHIP SPECIFICATION



OPERATED BY:	THOLIAN ASSEMBLY
ACTIVE:	22 ND CENTURY
LENGTH:	15 METERS
CREW:	1
WEAPONRY:	PARTICLE BEAM EMITTERS ENERGY-DAMPENING BOLTS
	THOLIAN WEB



▼ The Tholians operated fast, sleek vessels that were highly maneuverable. Piloted by a single occupant, these ships were often deployed in small squadrons. By working together in a coordinated attack, they could utilize their powerful weapons to overwhelm much larger vessels.



22ND CENTURY THOLIAN STARSHIP

Tholian vessels were extremely powerful for their size and tactically superior to many other ships of the era.

DATA FEED

The *Enterprise NX-01*'s encounter with a Tholian vessel in 2152 marked an Earth's ship first recorded contact with the species. The Tholians inhabited a region of space near the Klingon border, and they were extremely hostile to other races. Little more was known about them, except for the fact that they were very territorial and renowned for their punctuality.

The Tholian starship of the 22nd century was a small dart-shaped vessel capable of interstellar travel at warp speeds. Its overall aerodynamic shape also suggested it was capable of atmospheric flight.

The Tholians were renowned for being extremely xenophobic and highly territorial. This meant that their ships were primarily used to patrol their borders, and any vessels trespassing into their space were promptly told to leave.

The Tholians rarely travelled far from their own system and appeared to have little interest in exploration. This might explain why their ships were so small at just 15m long. As they never ventured far from their core territory, they did not require ships that could support a large crew on long missions. In fact, their starships appeared to be operated by just a single crew member and certainly could not accommodate more than two occupants.

The Tholians were so secretive that little was known about them in the 22nd century. Even the Vulcans, who had some previous contact with them, did not know what they looked like, but

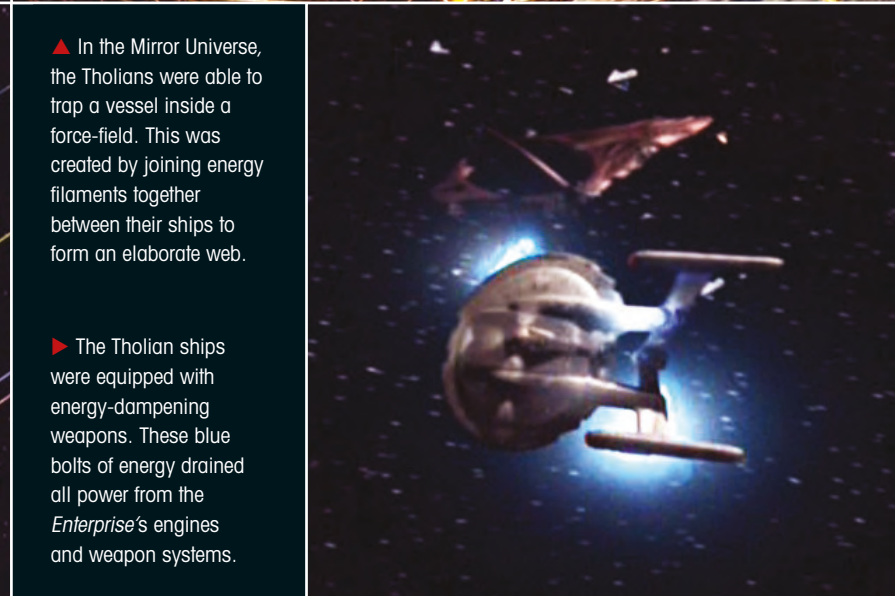
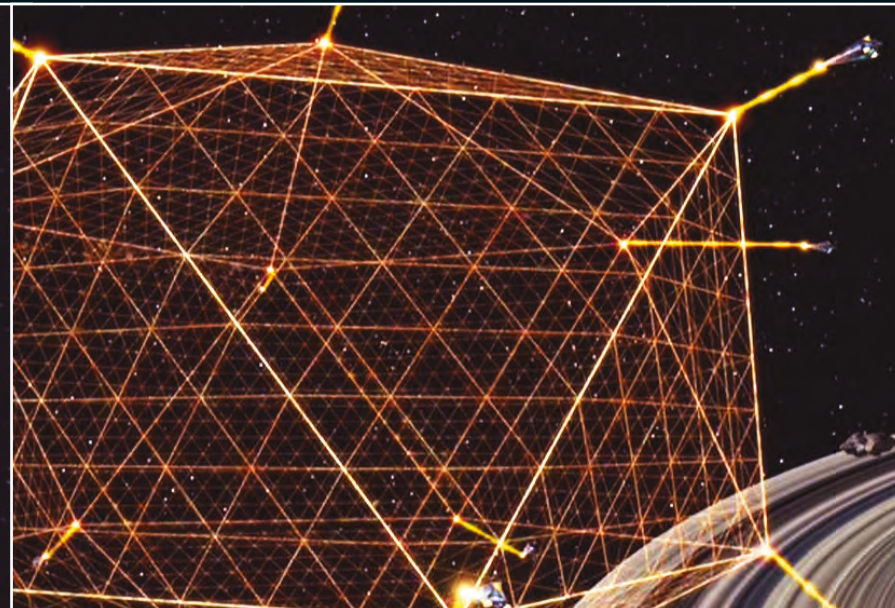
believed them to be a non-humanoid species. In fact, the Tholians were six-legged creatures with an upper body consisting of a hard crystalline carapace somewhat similar to a crustacean. Their unusual physiology meant they required extremely high temperatures to be comfortable and the interior of their ships was normally set at about 480 Kelvin (207°C).

SMALL BUT MIGHTY

Despite the diminutive size of Tholian ships, they possessed considerable firepower. Their arsenal included particle-beam weaponry and an energy-dampening weapon. Their offensive capabilities were certainly more than a match for many ships of the 22nd century. A few direct hits from these weapons would be enough to disable the engines and armaments of craft intruding into their space.

Tholian starships often operated in groups of two or more and could overwhelm much larger ships. In 2152, four Tholian starships working together were able to disable the *Tal'Kir*, a Vulcan combat cruiser, as well as destroy a small fleet of Sulliban ships.

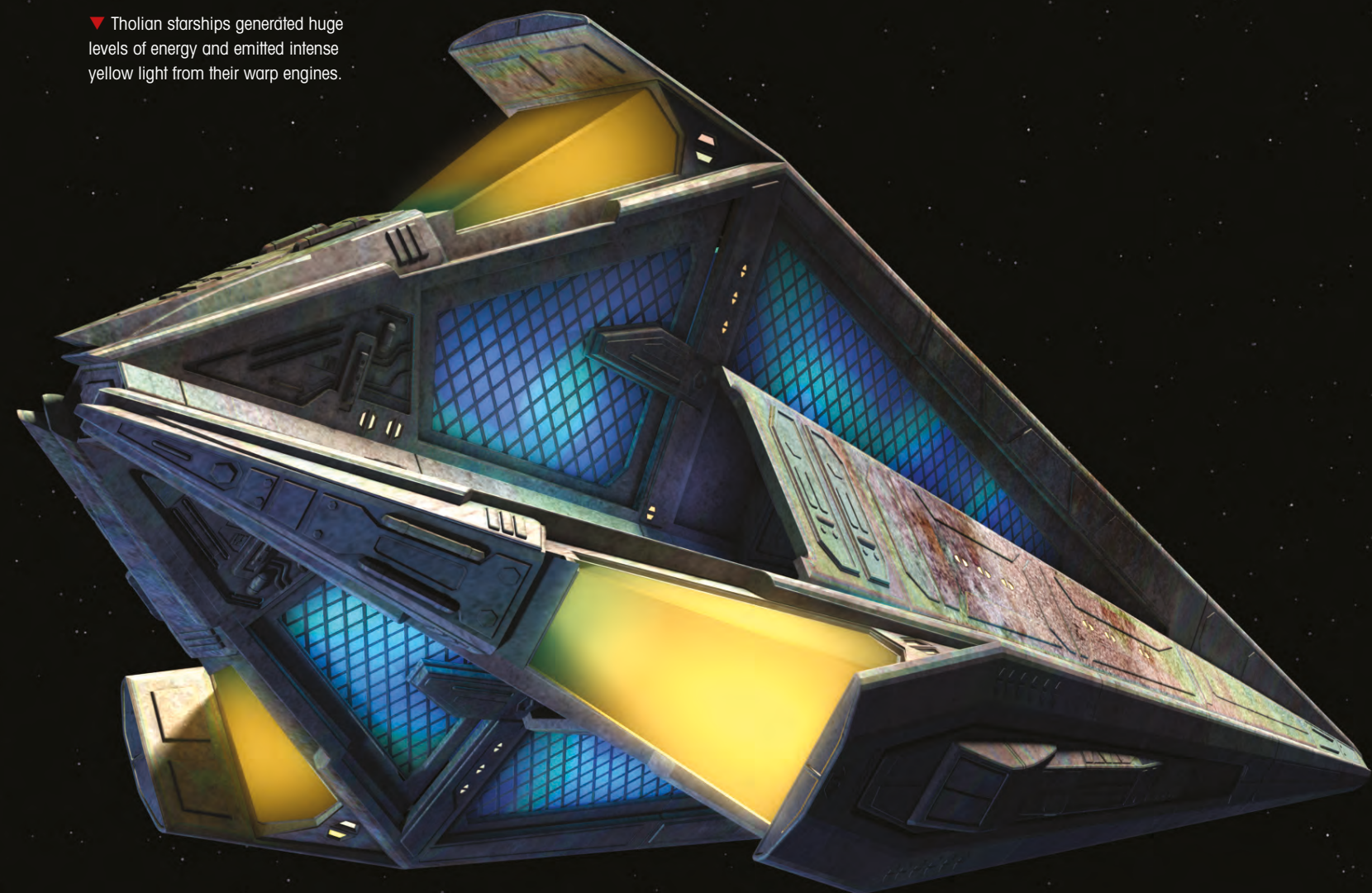
This incident occurred when the Tholians were attempting to retrieve a 31st-century Earth time-travel pod that had been salvaged by the *Enterprise NX-01*. The Tholian vessels scored several direct hits on the *Enterprise* with their energy-dampening weapons, causing it to lose all power



▲ In the Mirror Universe, the Tholians were able to trap a vessel inside a force-field. This was created by joining energy filaments together between their ships to form an elaborate web.

▶ The Tholian ships were equipped with energy-dampening weapons. These blue bolts of energy drained all power from the *Enterprise's* engines and weapon systems.

▼ Tholian starships generated huge levels of energy and emitted intense yellow light from their warp engines.



▲ **TOP** In 2152, the *Enterprise NX-01* became the first Earth ship to encounter the Tholians when it was surrounded by several of their ships.

by scrambling every power relay on board the ship. The Tholians were then able to steal the time-travel pod, only for it to return to its proper timeline moments later.

The fact that the Tholians knew about the pod, and made the unusual decision to travel far outside their borders to acquire it, appeared to indicate that they were involved in the Temporal Cold War.

WEB WEAPON

Tholian starships of the 22nd century may also have possessed an unusual and ingenious weapon known as a Tholian web. Certainly their Mirror Universe counterparts of this time utilized it. This involved first disabling a targeted ship with their energy-dampening weapon and then 'spinning

a web' of energy filaments in a geometric pattern around the ship until it was trapped inside.

At least two Tholian ships were needed to create this web of energy strands, although more could be used. The more ships involved, the quicker the web was completed. The web was made by launching energy filaments from one ship to another, and by weaving these lines of energy together, a trap would be formed, ensnaring the ship inside.

Once the web was complete, it became self-generating and the Tholian ships were no longer needed to power it. Weapons fire could enter the web but not leave, as the resulting detonation was absorbed by the filaments. If the trapped ship regained propulsion and tried to leave the web, it would be sliced apart by the energy filaments.

Once trapped inside the web, the ship could be destroyed, or dragged back to a Tholian port where its technology and parts would be harvested.

The Tholian starships of the 22nd century were tactically more than a match for many ships of the same era. Even one small Tholian ship had the power to tow the much larger *Enterprise* with a tractor beam. This beam also interfered with the *Enterprise's* targeting scanners, leaving it unable to fire on the Tholian ship.

A little more than a century later, however, perhaps because of their reluctance to interact with other species, Tholian starships had made little advancement. The appearance of their starships remained much the same, but their tactical abilities had fallen somewhat behind those of Starfleet ships.



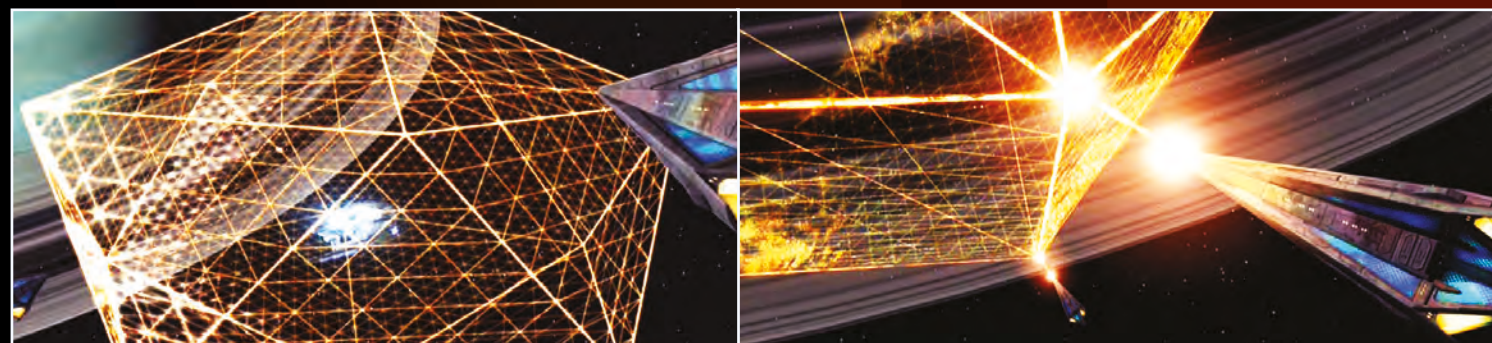
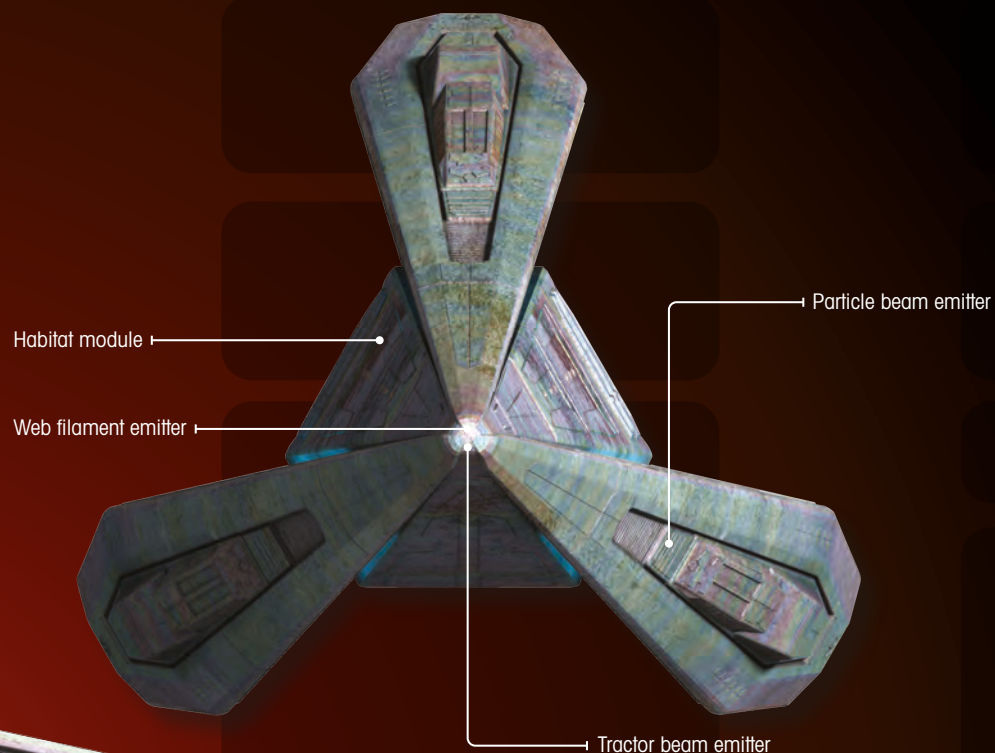
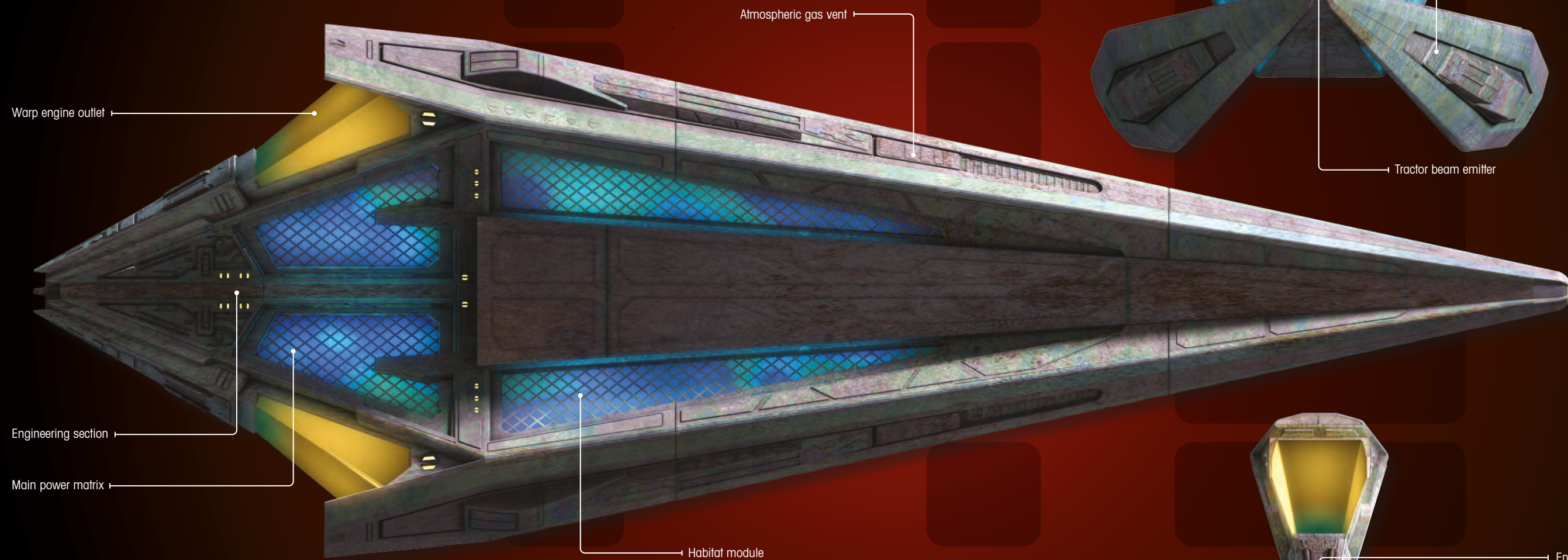
DATA FEED

Unlike most advanced species, the Tholians were not humanoids. They had six legs, two arms and their whole body appeared to shimmer with intense heat. They were hermaphroditic, and their speech was punctuated by a series of hisses and whistles. Their hard crystalline exoskeleton could act as a natural transmitter and send a distress signal. This exoskeleton would also begin to fracture if a Tholian was subjected to temperatures below 380 Kelvin (107°C).

THOLIAN TRAP

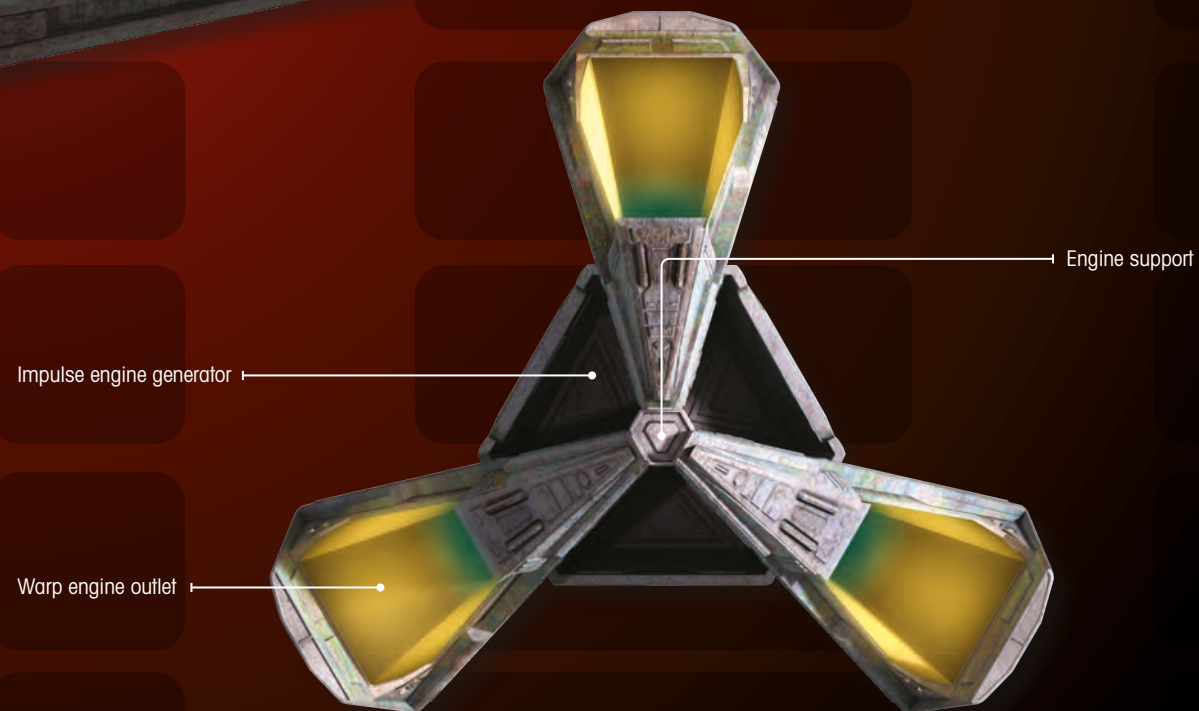
In 2155, the Mirror Universe Tholians opened a spatial interphase to another universe by detonating a tri-cobalt warhead inside the gravity well of a dead star. They knew it would be too dangerous to send a ship through this rift in the fabric of space, so they transmitted a distress call into the opening, hoping to lure a ship from the other side. The *U.S.S. Defiant* NCC-1764 from 2268 responded and became

trapped in the rift until it eventually phased into the Mirror Universe. The Tholians then towed the *Defiant* to one of their drydocks where they began harvesting its technology. The crew of the *I.S.S. Enterprise* learned of this advanced ship from the future and an away team managed to steal it, but not before the *Enterprise* was trapped inside a Tholian web and destroyed along with most of the crew.



▲ The *I.S.S. Enterprise* in the Mirror Universe became trapped after seven Tholian ships spun a powerful energy web around it in a matter of seconds.

▲ The intricately woven filaments that made up a Tholian web had a similar energy structure to that found in their tractor beams.



UNIQUE TECHNOLOGY

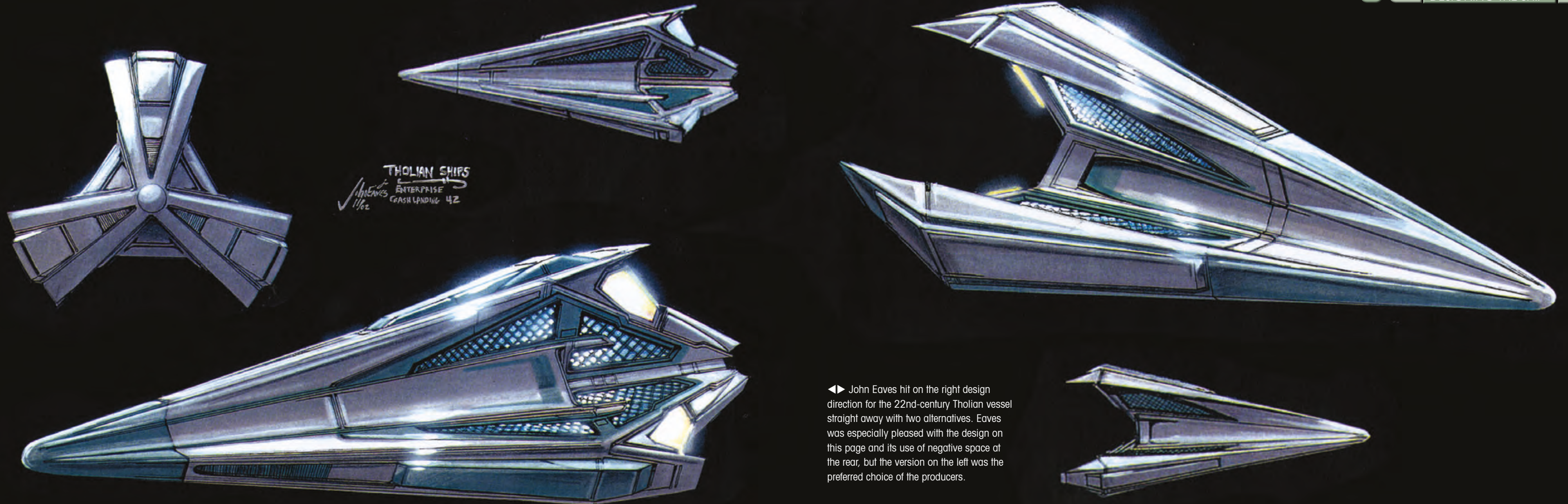
In 2268, Commander Spock ran an analysis of the filaments used to create the Tholian web and concluded that it was an energy field, but there was nothing similar to its structure in Federation technology.

SOLE SURVIVOR

Relations between the Tholians and the Federation would continue to be fraught well into the 24th century. In 2353, the Tholians destroyed a Federation starbase. The only survivor was Commander Riker's father, Kyle Riker.

WEB DIFFERENCES

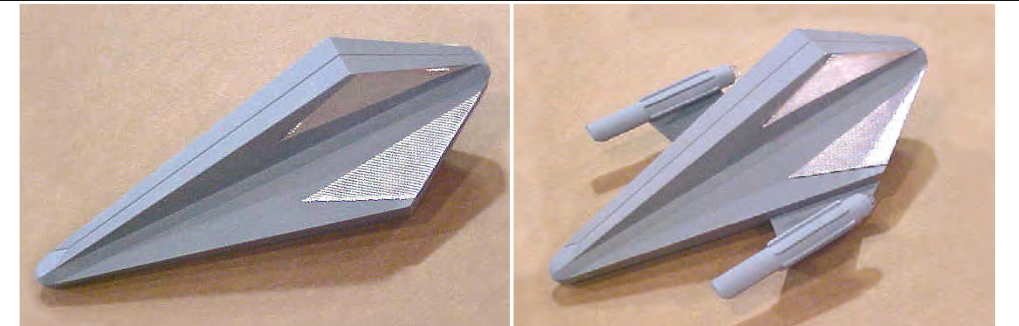
The web created by the Mirror Universe Tholians came from a beam emitted from the front of their vessels and was completed in a matter of seconds. The web in the regular universe took several hours to spin and came from the rear of the Tholian vessels.



◀ John Eaves hit on the right design direction for the 22nd-century Tholian vessel straight away with two alternatives. Eaves was especially pleased with the design on this page and its use of negative space at the rear, but the version on the left was the preferred choice of the producers.

DESIGNING THE THOLIAN STARSHIP

▶ The studio model of the Tholian starship that appeared in *THE ORIGINAL SERIES* had clean lines and was constructed almost entirely from wood. The model was later fitted with nacelles for its appearance as the *Aurora* in the episode 'The Way to Eden.'



The return of the Tholians gave concept artist John Eaves the perfect opportunity to retro-out one of Matt Jefferies' original classic starships.

One of the joys for fans of setting *STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE* in the 22nd century was that it offered up the prospect of revisiting some iconic aliens that had not been seen since *STAR TREK: THE ORIGINAL SERIES*, nearly 35 years earlier.

There was tremendous anticipation to see how *ORIGINAL SERIES* aliens and their ships would be reinterpreted with modern visual effects technology. Production illustrator John Eaves was certainly thrilled about the chance to reimagine designs that had inspired his

choice of profession. "One of the great things about *ENTERPRISE*," said Eaves, "was that every now and then we would get to work on a vessel that we loved from *THE ORIGINAL SERIES*. This was a great assignment to retro-out the Tholian ship."

Of course, it was the legendary art director Matt Jefferies who designed the Tholian ship that made a single, unforgettable appearance in *THE ORIGINAL SERIES* in 1968.

SIMPLE BUT EFFECTIVE

As ever costs had to be kept down, so Jefferies designed a vessel that would be simple and inexpensive to construct. Two studio models were built almost

entirely from wood with just the addition of reflective inserts embedded near the tails. With the use of some clever multi-colored lighting during filming, it gave the Tholian ships a mysterious, spooky alien glow that was in keeping with the creepy appearance of the non-humanoid race. The visual effect of these ships spinning their web of energy around the *U.S.S. Enterprise* NCC-1701 certainly made an impression on the TV

audiences of the 1960s, and the special effects for this episode were nominated for an Emmy Award.

As an aside, one of the Tholian studio models did make another screen appearance in *THE ORIGINAL SERIES*. It was modified with Constitution-class nacelles and Klingon *D7*-class battlecruiser pylons taken from their respective AMT model kits. With the addition of these parts the Tholian ship

became the *Aurora*, the ship stolen by Dr. Sevrin and his followers in the episode, 'The Way to Eden.'

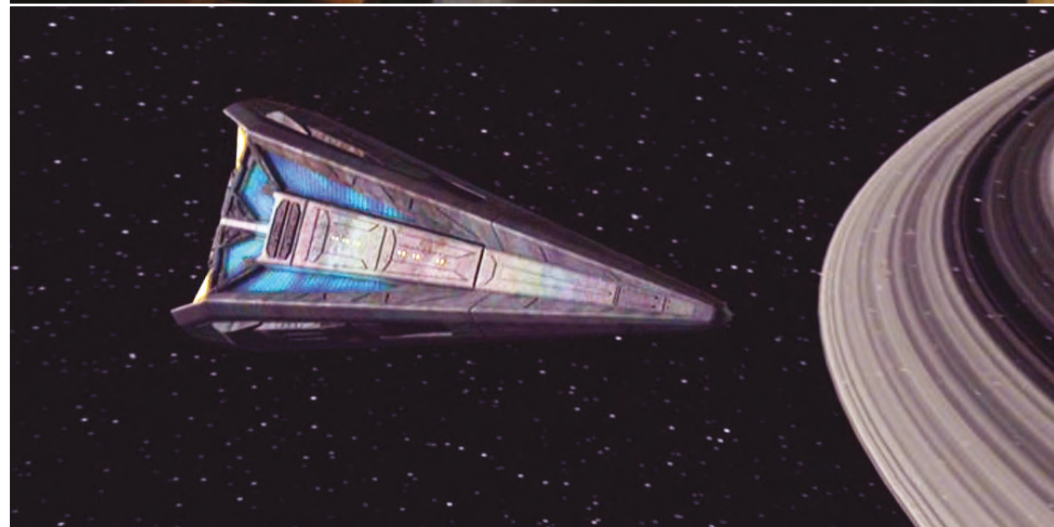
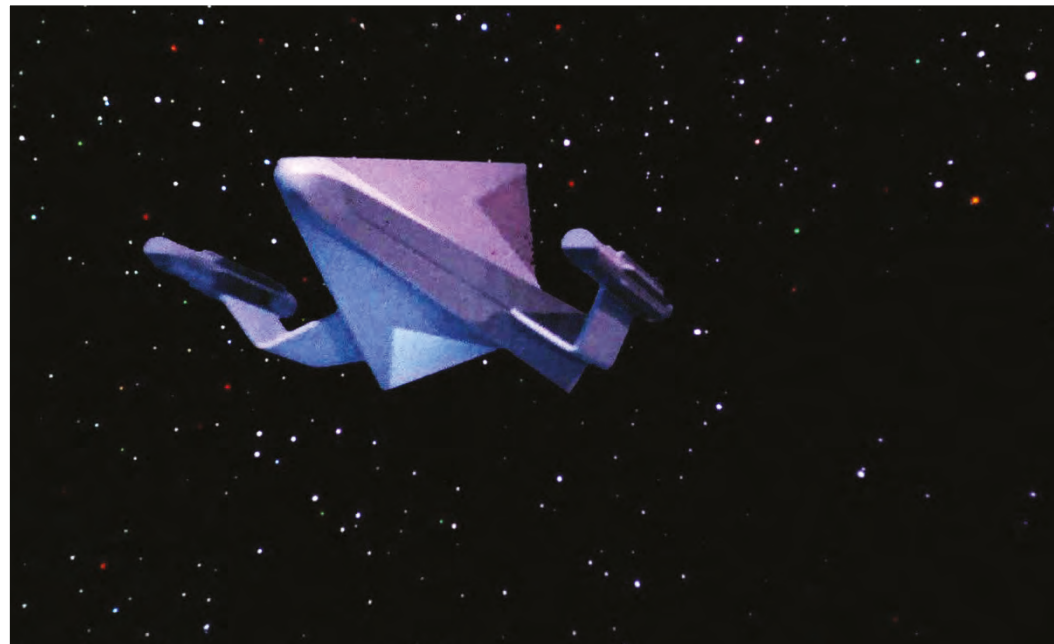
While the *Aurora* may have been quickly forgotten, the Tholian ship certainly was not – and it was always going to be a tricky task to design an earlier version of it for *ENTERPRISE*. There is a fine line between creating something new, but which also incorporated the design language that Matt Jefferies had established for the Tholian ship. For John Eaves, the solution was to keep aspects of Jefferies's original design, while making the styling look a little older. "I wanted to keep the front view of the Tholian ship the same," said Eaves, "but I felt the profile view was a little stark and harsh in *THE ORIGINAL SERIES*. I thought it would be good to elongate the ship so that it appeared sleeker, but also make it look like it could be a forebear of the original design."

One person that Eaves knew he could trust for good advice was *ENTERPRISE* scenic-art supervisor and technical consultant Mike Okuda. "I talked to Mike a lot about ship ideas," said Eaves. "He was the go-to guy if I had questions. He was always there to make sure I was keeping the design in the vein of the original. I liked to try and push it right to the edge until he'd say, 'OK, that's kind of borderline, but I think it will still be approved.'"

POWER SOURCE

One new element that Eaves incorporated into his design for the Tholian ship was the glowing, patterned screen panels that ran along the side of the ship. The idea behind this was to show where the energy and power originated from inside the ship.

Normally, Eaves liked to come up with at least four or five alternative designs before he submitted them to the producers for approval. In this case,



◀ The Tholian model appeared on screen again as the *Aurora* disguised with parts taken from commercially available model kits.

◀ The use of multi-colored lights during filming helped to give *THE ORIGINAL SERIES* Tholian ships a strange, iridescent glow.

◀ The 22nd-century Tholian starship benefitted from modern visual effects, but was obviously still related to the design of Matt Jefferies' original.



◀ The remastered version of 'The Tholian Web' that was first broadcast in 2007 featured an updated look for the Tholian starships. They retained the essential design elements of the original, but extra detail was added.

though, Eaves hit on a design direction that impressed straight away and he offered up just two designs, which can be seen in the main picture. "The version on the left was the one that got chosen," said Eaves, "even though I liked the one on the right a bit better. I liked that negative space on it. But it wasn't a hardship or a problem. I was happy with either one of these designs."

SHIP SCALE

Viewers have always been puzzled about the size of the Tholian vessels. It's obvious that they are small ships, but it was never clear just how small. The quandary is not surprising, given that Eaves himself is unsure. "I was basing my design on the size of the original," said Eaves, "but we didn't have a scale chart for many of the old ships. I didn't know if the Tholian ship was piloted by one guy, or two guys, or even a whole crew. The scale of a ship would often change depending on who was the effects supervisor. I wouldn't put a scale on it unless

I absolutely had to. I sometimes did a rough sketch showing the scale of a ship next to the *Enterprise*, but most of the time the decision about size would be made by whoever was doing the CG rendering of the ship or the visual-effects supervisor. Normally, I'd just give them the shape and they'd determine the size later."

Eaves knew he did not have to be too exact with the finer details, as he was confident that his designs were in safe hands with the animators working at special-effect house Eden FX. By this point, they had worked together for a number of years and developed a great working relationship.

In fact, Eaves was keen for the animators to add their own creativity to the process. This meant that Eaves often did not see the final version of the ship until it aired on TV. "It was always really fun to see what the final piece would be," said Eaves, "and usually I wouldn't see it until the show had come out. So I was like, 'Wow! I love all the stuff that these guys are doing!'"



REIMAGINING THE THOLIANS

▲ The producers were particularly keen that the Tholians would not be revealed as a humanoid species in masks, but something far more exotic.



There were no grand plans to feature the Tholians in *STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE*, despite their popularity with fans after their one and only appearance in *THE ORIGINAL SERIES* episode 'The Tholian Web.' Instead, their reintroduction came about because writer and producer Mike Sussman had always wondered what had happened to the *U.S.S. Defiant* NCC-1764, the ship that had disappeared into a 'spatial interphase' in 'The Tholian Web.'

This unsolved mystery led Sussman to pitch an idea for an episode that

revealed the *Defiant* had emerged from this spatial rift back in the 22nd century. Sussman's idea for the story was then that the crew of the *Enterprise* NX-01 would have to stop the *Defiant*, and its advanced technology, from falling into the hands of some alien races.

Sussman took this one step further and reasoned that one of these alien races would be the Tholians of the 22nd century. He concluded that they had somehow deliberately weakened the fabric of space, hoping to trap a ship from the future.

While this pitch had many intriguing ideas, it also had a few flaws, chief among which was the effect that Archer's discovery of the *Defiant* would have on the continuity of the show.

EXPENSIVE PROBLEM

The cost of recreating the *Defiant* for a single show was also prohibitive, as Mike Sussman explained. "As much as I would've loved to have seen Archer and the gang wandering the decks of a *Constitution*-class starship (and possibly running into a ghostly James Kirk



▲ Producer Mike Sussman was delighted with the Tholian ships and that they got to blow one up.



▲ Executive producer Manny Coto, pictured on set, was very keen to make a Mirror Universe episode.

in his silver bee-keeper suit), the story had some problems, not least of which would have been the expense of recreating the *Defiant*."

Sussman's original pitch was not completely thrown out, however, and the idea evolved, eventually becoming the second-season episode 'Future Tense'. Instead of featuring the *Defiant*, the story involved an even more futuristic vessel that was being pursued by both the Suliban and the Tholians. At



▲ The head of a Tholian was all that was seen of them in *THE ORIGINAL SERIES*. The way the viewscreen image appeared to shimmer with heat led to the revelation in *ENTERPRISE* that they lived in incredibly hot environments.

first, Sussman was worried that dropping the *Defiant* from the script would have also meant losing the Tholians, but he decided to stick with them.

KEEPING THE THOLIANS

"The Tholians came along as a logical part of the story involving the *Defiant*," said Sussman, "but when it no longer involved the *Defiant*, I thought I'd be losing the Tholians too. Then I realized I still needed an alien adversary who

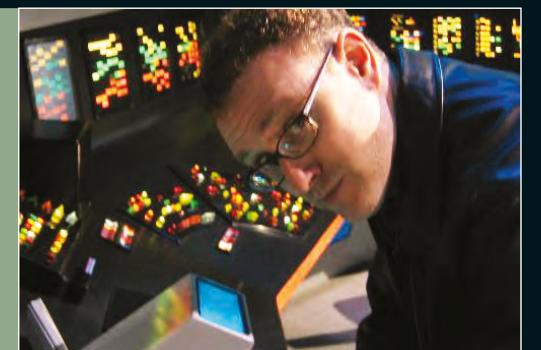
was going to fight Archer and the Suliban for the ship. I thought, 'Why not make it the Tholians?'"

As a huge fan of *THE ORIGINAL SERIES* himself, Sussman reveled in the chance to revisit a species that was a firm fan favorite. "What was so cool was that we knew so little about the Tholians," said Sussman. "To me they were like the Boba Fett of the *STAR TREK* universe. The Tholians were so mysterious. We did nail them down a bit and we did take away

MIKE SUSSMAN

STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE producer Mike Sussman (pictured right on the set of the *Defiant*) began work for the franchise in 1995. After several freelance script sales, he became part of the writing staff on *VOYAGER* and later moved on to *ENTERPRISE*. All told, he has writing credits on more than 30 *STAR TREK* episodes.

Sussman also revealed himself as being an aficionado of *THE ORIGINAL SERIES* saying, "I was a hardcore fan from the age of seven. I let my geek flag fly on *ENTERPRISE*. It ended up being very beneficial having that knowledge of the series and knowing what had been done and what hadn't been done."





▲ The producers were delighted that they were able to feature the Tholian energy web again in *ENTERPRISE*.

a little bit of the mystery in 'Future Tense' because we mentioned that their spaceships were really hot on the inside.

"I was diving into all sorts of semi-professional publications over the years that speculated what the Tholians were really like. One of the ideas was looking back on what little we saw of them in 'The Tholian Web' and how the viewscreen image seemed to ripple. People suggested that those were heat ripples, so we established in 'Future Tense' that it was incredibly hot inside their ships. In all the years of *STAR TREK* we had never really run into an alien



▲ The Tholian met a brutal end when the temperature inside its cell was lowered, causing it to shatter apart.

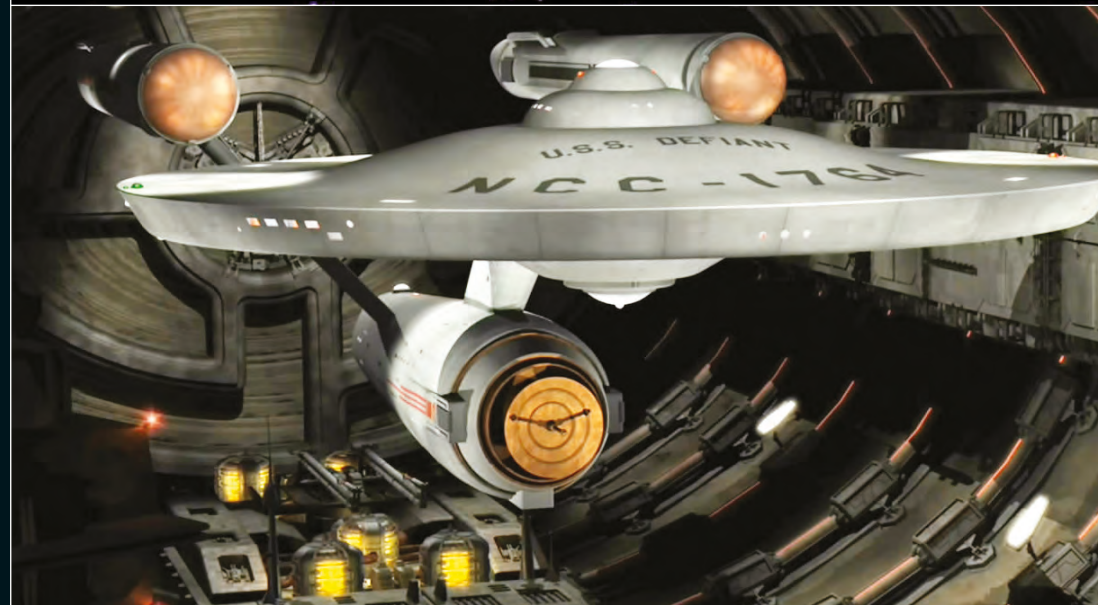
that lived in that kind of environment, so it was another way to keep them mysterious. It was just cool to feature them again, and I had no idea what the art department was going to come up with in terms of their ship. I was just super-thrilled to see what they had designed."

THOLIAN PROBLEM

After the Tholians appearance in 'Future Tense', Sussman had no immediate plans to feature them again on *ENTERPRISE*. "I would have been happy to use the Tholians again," said Sussman, "but they were difficult to do, particularly if you wanted to show them, as I'd set them up as something exotic. They could have been very boring-looking aliens that wore helmets, but I didn't want to do that. So I think in some ways I boxed myself into a corner. It wasn't until the fourth season rolled around and we were trying to find a Mirror Universe story that I realized that my original pitch for the *Defiant* story, which was very tightly woven with the Tholians, could be resurrected."

Originally it had been hoped that William Shatner could be brought in for a Mirror Universe episode on *ENTERPRISE*, but when that failed to pan out, executive producer Manny Coto was particularly keen to go with Sussman's idea involving the *Defiant*.

"The Tholians ended up playing a much bigger part in this story," said Sussman. "I needed a character that the crew of the *I.S.S. Enterprise* capture early on in the show who would lead us to the hiding place where we would find the *Defiant*. I thought, 'OK, we'll make it a Tholian.' It ended up becoming a little plot point that the Tholian sent out a distress call. I thought if I ended up going with an exotic alien physiology for the Tholian then it could have a crystalline structure that acted like a natural radio transmitter. It really



◀ Mike Sussman had always wondered about the fate of the *Defiant* after it was pulled into a spatial interphase. This question ultimately led to the reintroduction of the Tholians on *ENTERPRISE*.

◀ The *Defiant* was recreated as a CG model for its appearance on *ENTERPRISE*. The fact that it only featured in the Mirror Universe meant it freed the writers from continuity concerns.

◀ As 'In a Mirror, Darkly' was a two-part episode, it justified the cost of building the sets on board the *Defiant* that were needed for filming. The bridge was recreated in painstaking detail.

helped that this alien had bizarre physiology and justified that story point."

The appearance of the Tholian was something that Sussman was particularly keen to get right, but the script just referred to them as a crystalline, multi-legged species. "I felt if we were going to show them, we had to do them right," said Sussman. "There were a lot of different designs tossed around. They were all crystalline, but some of them didn't quite stand upright. They were cool designs, but I was looking at them with Manny (Coto) and our concern was that many of them didn't have the head that we saw in *THE ORIGINAL SERIES* episode. We wanted a creature where everything above the neck would be recognizable from before, but everything below the neck could be new."

WEB RETURN

The expense of creating a fully CG Tholian meant that it could not be featured too heavily, but Sussman was particularly happy that they also managed to feature the infamous Tholian web. "We saw a lot of their ships, and we blew one of them up," said Sussman. "I think they created another 12 Tholian ships that surrounded the *Enterprise* and we saw the web. What I threw in – which was kind of cool – was that you can fire in through the web at the ship, but it couldn't fire out and that way you could destroy your enemy."

Sussman was delighted that he had the chance to feature the Tholians and reveal a little more about them. "I hope we get to see the Tholians again in a future *STAR TREK* production," said Sussman, "but it was great to finally revisit them. What was cool was that we kept them pretty mysterious. There's still a lot we don't know and I don't think we revealed too much, so I think there's still plenty of areas to explore in future series or movies."

ON SCREEN



TRIVIA

In the 'Future Tense' episode, Captain Archer initially wondered if the dead pilot that they found aboard the derelict craft was Zefram Cochrane. He was rumored to have been testing an experimental warp ship when he disappeared. Cochrane's true fate was not discovered until 2267 when Captain Kirk, Commander Spock and Dr. McCoy found him living on an asteroid in the Gamma Canaris region. Cochrane had been brought there by a cloud-like entity he called the Companion, who kept him young and alive for the next 150 years.



The episode 'Future Tense' marked the first appearance of a Tholian ship since their debut in *THE ORIGINAL SERIES* episode 'The Tholian Web,' aired nearly 35 years earlier.



Mike Sussman, writer and producer of many *STAR TREK: VOYAGER* and *STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE* episodes, wrote 'In a Mirror, Darkly, Parts I & II.' He said he intended these episodes to be a prequel to 'Mirror, Mirror' and a sequel to 'The Tholian Web.' *The Defiant* ended up in the story as Sussman had spent years wondering what had happened to the ship after it disappeared in 'The Tholian Web.'

FIRST APPEARANCE:	'FUTURE TENSE' (ENT)
TV APPEARANCES:	STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE
LAST APPEARANCE:	'IN A MIRROR, DARKLY, PART II' (ENT)
DESIGNED BY:	John Eaves

KEY APPEARANCES

STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE
'FUTURE TENSE'

Far beyond where any Earth vessel has ventured before, the crew of the *Enterprise* NX-01 are shocked to find a badly damaged craft adrift in space with what appears to be a human body aboard. As they investigate the mystery, the *Enterprise* is attacked first by the Suliban and then by the Tholians, with both races laying claim to the salvaged craft. Ultimately, Archer and his crew learn that the mysterious ship is from the distant future and that the Suliban and the Tholians are prepared to go to any lengths to procure it.

STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE

'IN A MIRROR, DARKLY, PART I'

In the Mirror Universe, first contact with the Vulcans ends with Zefram Cochrane shooting one of the Vulcans and taking control of their ship. Using its technology, the Terrans venture out into space and create a brutal empire by conquering many races. Nearly 100 years later, Commander Archer stages a mutiny aboard the *I.S.S. Enterprise* and takes the ship into Tholian space. He has learned that the Tholians have captured a powerful Earth ship from the future, and he is determined to get his hands on it so he can rule the Terran Empire.

COMING NEXT

22ND CENTURY ROMULAN BIRD-OF-PREY

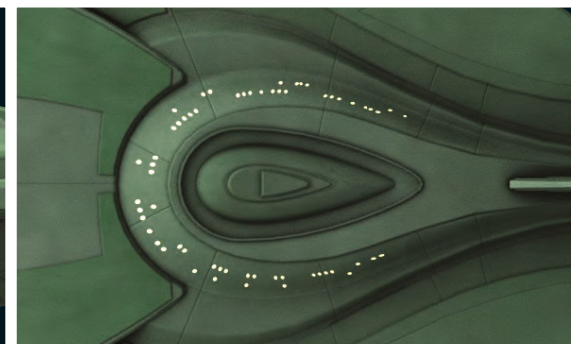
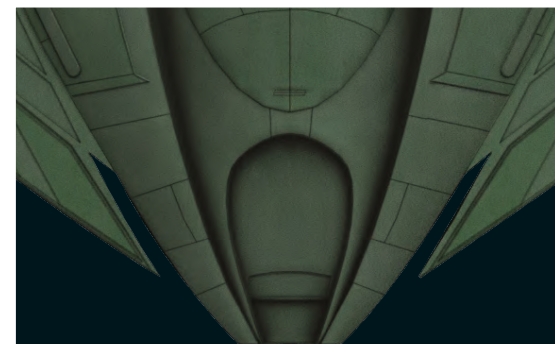


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- In-depth profile of the *Romulan Bird-of-Prey*, the deadly Romulan patrol ship of the 22nd century
- A look at John Eaves' designs for the *Romulan Bird-of-Prey*
- How the Romulans were portrayed in *THE ORIGINAL SERIES*



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