

95

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NEW ORLEANS CLASS

TYPE: FRIGATE

LAUNCHED: 24th C

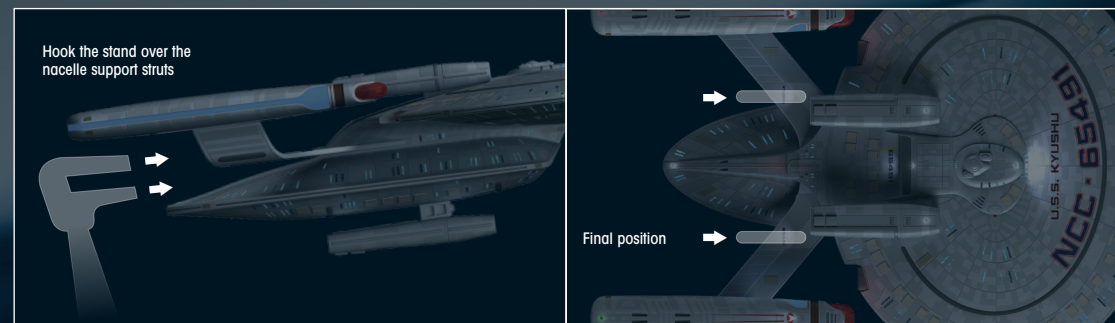
LENGTH: 340 METERS

MAX SPEED: WARP 9.3

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Development Director:
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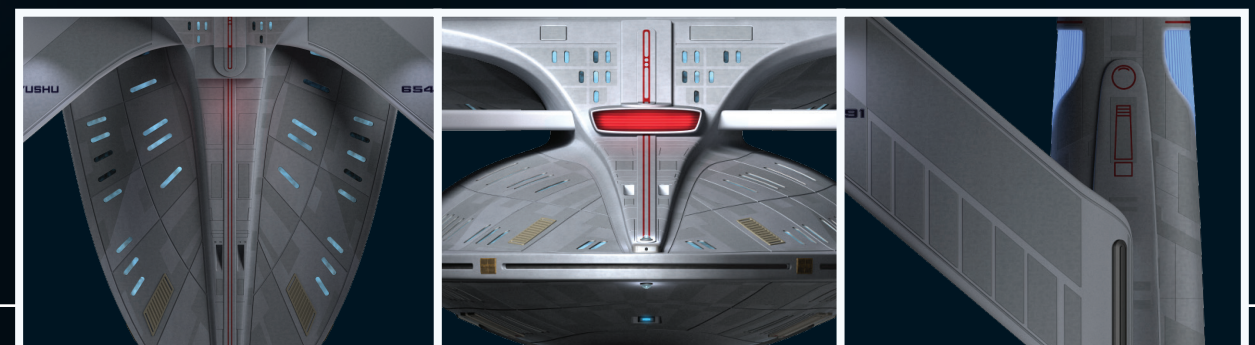
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NEW ORLEANS CLASS SPECIFICATION



TYPE:	FRIGATE
AFFILIATION:	STARFLEET
LAUNCHED:	24th CENTURY
LENGTH:	340 METERS (APPROX.)
CREW:	500
TOP SPEED:	WARP 9.3
WEAPONRY:	PHASER EMITTERS, PHOTON TORPEDOES
CAPTAIN:	RIXX





► The *New Orleans* class was a frigate, and similar in design to the contemporary *Galaxy* class. The most obvious difference between the ships was that the *New Orleans* class featured an additional pod on the underside of the secondary hull.

NEW ORLEANS CLASS

New Orleans-class vessels were like *Galaxy*-class ships in both appearance and ability, but about half the size.

The *New Orleans* class was a type of Starfleet vessel that was in use in the 24th century. Its appearance was similar to a *Galaxy*-class ship, but at approximately 340 meters in length, it was significantly smaller.

The saucer section of the *New Orleans* class was elliptical in shape and featured the same style of windows and escape pods as the *Galaxy* class. It was smaller, however, and two oblong structures were attached on top at the rear of the saucer. The main bridge was situated on deck 1 in the center of the saucer, but it was slightly larger in relation to the saucer section as a whole than it was on the *Galaxy* class.

FAMILIAR DESIGN

The engineering hull and warp nacelles on the *New Orleans* class were also almost identical in shape to those on the *Galaxy* class, but were larger in proportion to the rest of the ship.

The most obvious outward difference between the two classes of ship, apart from the size, was that the *New Orleans* class featured a tubular structure on the underside of the engineering hull.

Less obvious differences could also be found in the neck of the ship between the saucer and engineering sections, and the shape and positioning of the warp pylons. The neck structure was much shorter on the *New Orleans* class, meaning that the saucer and the engineering hulls were much closer together. Meanwhile, the nacelle pylons were attached just over halfway along the engineering section and swept back,



◀ Captain Rixx was in command of the *New Orleans*-class U.S.S. *Thomas Paine* NCC-65530 in 2364. Rixx was a Bolian and considered to be one of Starfleet's most accomplished captains at the time. According to records, the *Thomas Paine* was on a diplomatic mission to Epsilon Ashanti III in 2367, and to Alderaan in 2368.



▲ The surface detail on the *New Orleans* class was almost identical to that found on the *Galaxy* class, in particular the windows, escape pods and phaser strips. Seen from above, however, there were a couple of distinctions as the *New Orleans* class featured two additional structures attached to the rear of the saucer section, and the positioning and design of the warp pylons was different.

whereas the pylons on the *Galaxy* class were positioned at the very rear of the engineering hull and swept straight out horizontally.

As the *New Orleans* class was about half the length of the *Galaxy* class, it followed that its crew complement was significantly less. Whereas the *Galaxy* class normally carried just over 1,000 people, the *New Orleans* usually operated with a crew of around 500.

The *New Orleans* class had slightly less powerful engines and armaments compared to the *Galaxy* class too. The warp engines on the *New Orleans* class gave it a top speed of warp 9.3 sustainable for 12 hours, and a cruising speed of warp 6. It was equipped with a high-capacity shield grid, 10 Type-X phaser arrays, plus three photon torpedo launchers.

Other facilities on board the *New Orleans* class included sickbays, transporter rooms, holodecks

and several specialized research labs. In many ways, it was very similar to the *Galaxy* class, but just on half the scale.

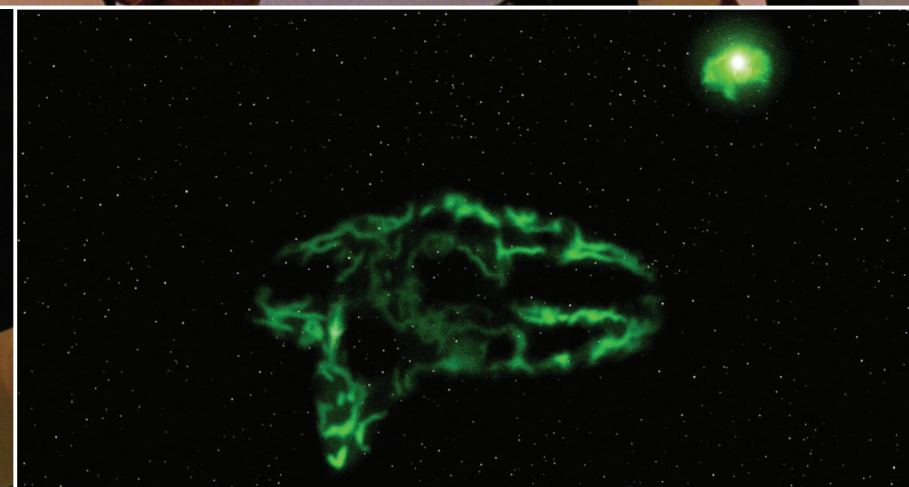
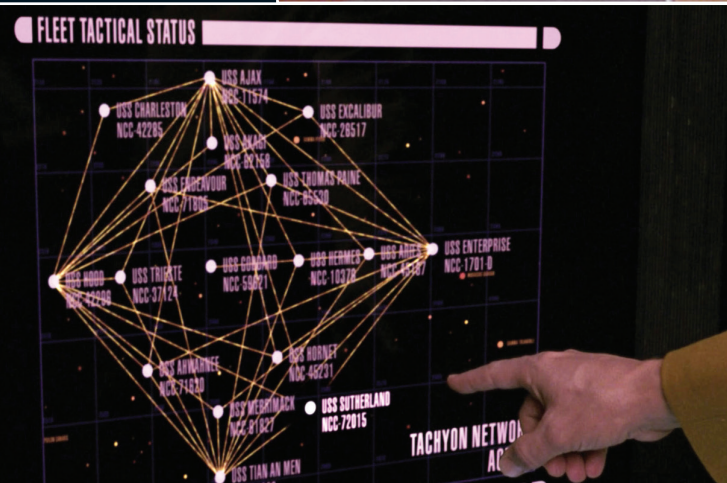
ALIEN CONSPIRACY

In 2364, two *New Orleans*-class vessels were called to a secret rendezvous at an abandoned mining colony on Dytallix B along with the *U.S.S. Enterprise* NCC-1701-D. Captain Walker Keel of the *U.S.S. Horatio* NCC-10532 called the meeting after he suspected that a neural parasitic alien intelligence was trying to take over Starfleet Command.

The meeting was attended by Captain Picard, Captain Rixx and Captain Tryla Scott. Rixx was in command of the *New Orleans*-class *U.S.S. Thomas Paine* NCC-65530, and was considered one of Starfleet's best captains, while Scott was captain of the *New Orleans*-class *U.S.S. Renegade* NCC-63102. She attained the rank of captain faster than

▶ The drifting wreckage of the *New Orleans*-class *U.S.S. Kyushu* was evidence of the carnage at the Battle of Wolf 359 when a single Borg Cube destroyed 39 Starfleet ships on its seemingly inexorable way to Earth.

▼ In 2368, the *New Orleans*-class *U.S.S. Thomas Paine* was one of 17 Starfleet ships that formed a tachyon detection grid in the hope of exposing Romulan supply ships entering Klingon space.



anybody in the history of Starfleet, which made her something of a legend.

In 2367, the *New Orleans*-class *U.S.S. Kyushu* NCC-65491 was part of a fleet hastily assembled by Admiral Hanson to intercept a Borg Cube that had invaded the Alpha Quadrant. The armada tried to stop the Borg at what became known as the Battle of Wolf 359. Unfortunately, it was more like a massacre as the Cube, armed with the tactical knowledge of the assimilated Captain Picard, ripped through their defenses. The battle resulted in absolute carnage as 39 ships and nearly 11,000 lives were lost, including the destruction of the *Kyushu*.

In 2368, the previously mentioned *New Orleans*-class *Thomas Paine* was part of a more successful fleet that prevented Romulan Warbirds from transporting supplies to the House of Duras during the Klingon Civil War. The *Thomas Paine* was

one of 17 ships that formed a tachyon detection grid that was set up to detect cloaked Romulan warships entering Klingon space. Once they had been exposed, the convoy of Romulan ships was prevented from sending further supplies to the House of Duras, and Gowron was able to hang on to power as the legally appointed leader of the Klingon Empire.

▲ The Romulans tried to supply the House of Duras with weapons in its attempt to take control of the Klingon Empire during their civil war. They were defeated after the convoy of Romulan ships was detected.

DATA FEED

Captain Tryla Scott was in command of the *New Orleans*-class *U.S.S. Renegade* in 2364. She was an outstanding officer and became widely celebrated after she had become captain faster than any other person in Starfleet history. Along with Captain Picard and Captain Rixx, she was called in to investigate the infiltration of Starfleet Command by parasitic life forms. Unfortunately, she was infested by one of these parasites and Commander Riker was forced to fire at her with a phaser set to kill in order to stop her.



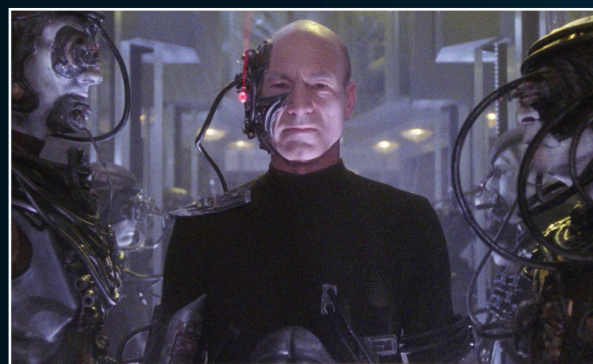
BATTLE OF WOLF 359

The *New Orleans*-class *U.S.S. Kyushu* NCC-65491 was just one of 39 Starfleet vessels that tried to repel an invading Borg Cube at the Battle of Wolf 359 in 2367. Not all the names of the Starfleet ships that made up this armada were known, so it was possible that more *New Orleans*-class vessels were part of this tactical force, but they were not seen and no reference was made to them.

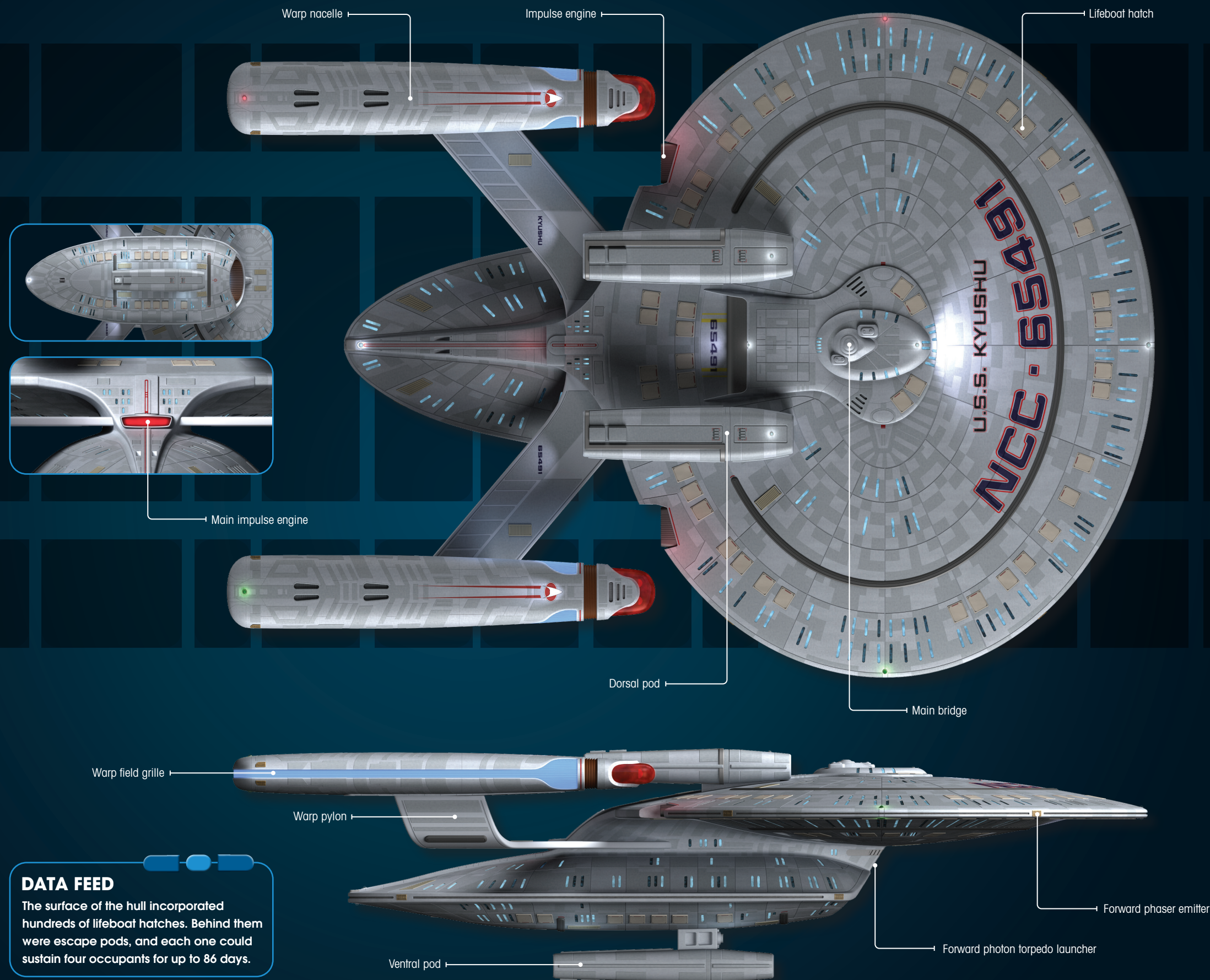
The *New Orleans* class was primarily built for exploration rather than combat, but its offensive and defensive capabilities were considerable if not quite up to the standards of larger *Galaxy*-class ships. Nevertheless, the *Kyushu*, along with the other ships in the armada, was easily defeated by the Borg Cube. Part of this was down to the fact that Captain Picard had been partially assimilated and his knowledge of Starfleet ships and tactics was therefore known by the Borg.

Another part was down to the fact that the Starfleet armada used the wrong strategy. The ships attacked one at a time because they did not want to risk hitting their own vessels in the crossfire. Unfortunately, this meant the Borg Cube could easily pick them off one by one, with no danger of it being overwhelmed.

As it happened, it would not have made much difference what tactics were used, or even if Captain Picard had not been turned into Locutus. The simple fact was that the Starfleet armada was no match for the Borg.



▲ Captain Picard was captured by the Borg and transformed into Locutus. All Picard's knowledge of Starfleet's defenses was assimilated by the Borg, making it even easier for them to destroy Starfleet's ships.

**DATA FEED**

The surface of the hull incorporated hundreds of lifeboat hatches. Behind them were escape pods, and each one could sustain four occupants for up to 86 days.

ISLAND NAME

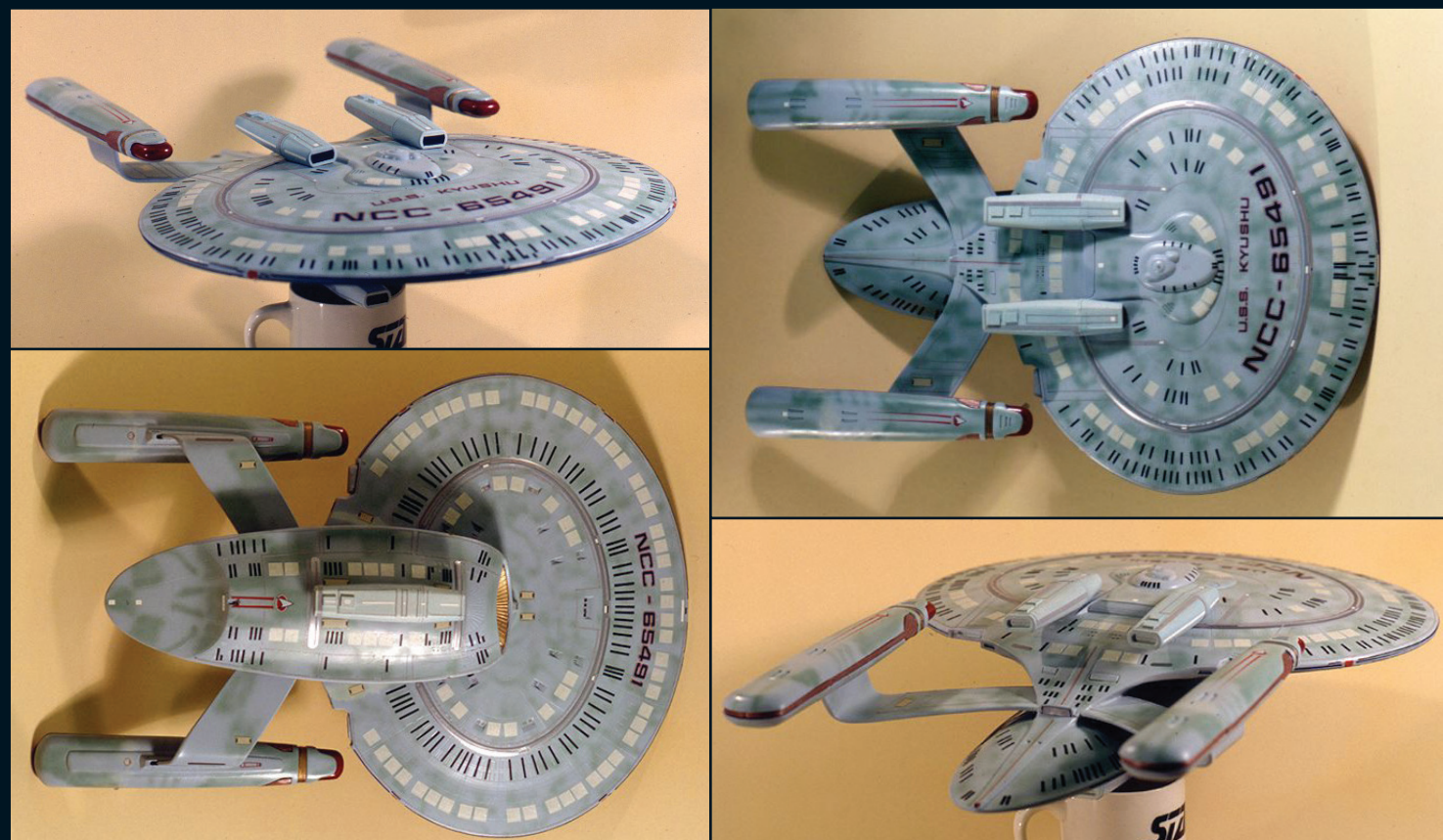
The *New Orleans*-class *U.S.S. Kyushu* was named for one of the four main islands of Japan. It was also referenced in the *DEEP SPACE NINE* opening episode *Emissary*, but the line was later cut.

FIRST MENTION

The first on-screen reference to the *New Orleans* class came from a display graphic on the bridge of the *U.S.S. Enterprise-D*. This was in the fourth season episode *Brothers*, in which the *U.S.S. Thomas Paine* was labeled as a *New Orleans*-class vessel.

INSIDE HUMOR

In 2369, the *New Orleans*-class *U.S.S. Thomas Paine* was on a diplomatic mission to Alderaan. This was an in-joke by the production staff as *Star Wars*' Princess Leia claimed to be on a mission to Alderaan when she was captured by Darth Vader.

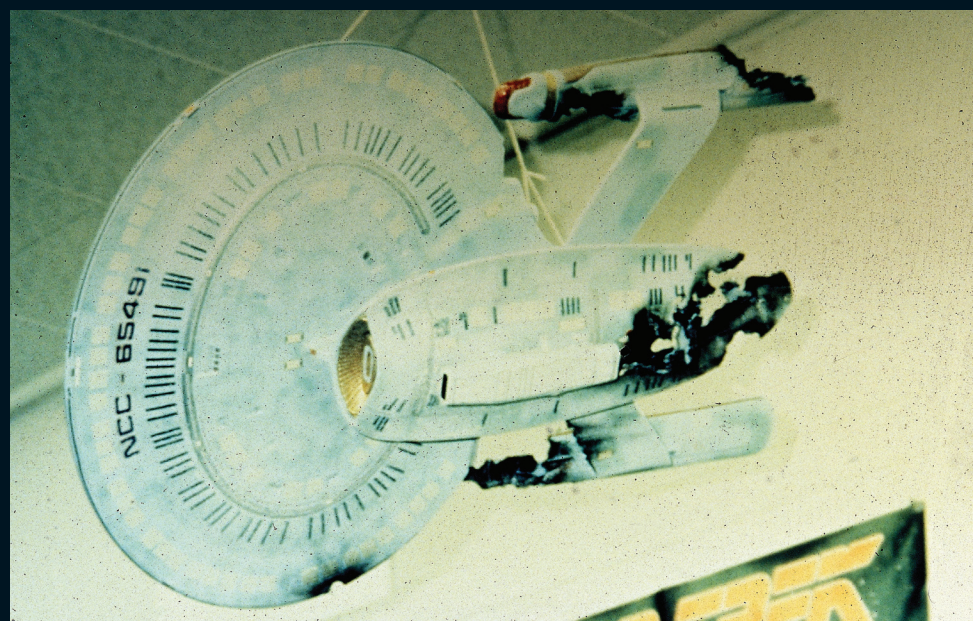


NEW ORLEANS CLASS

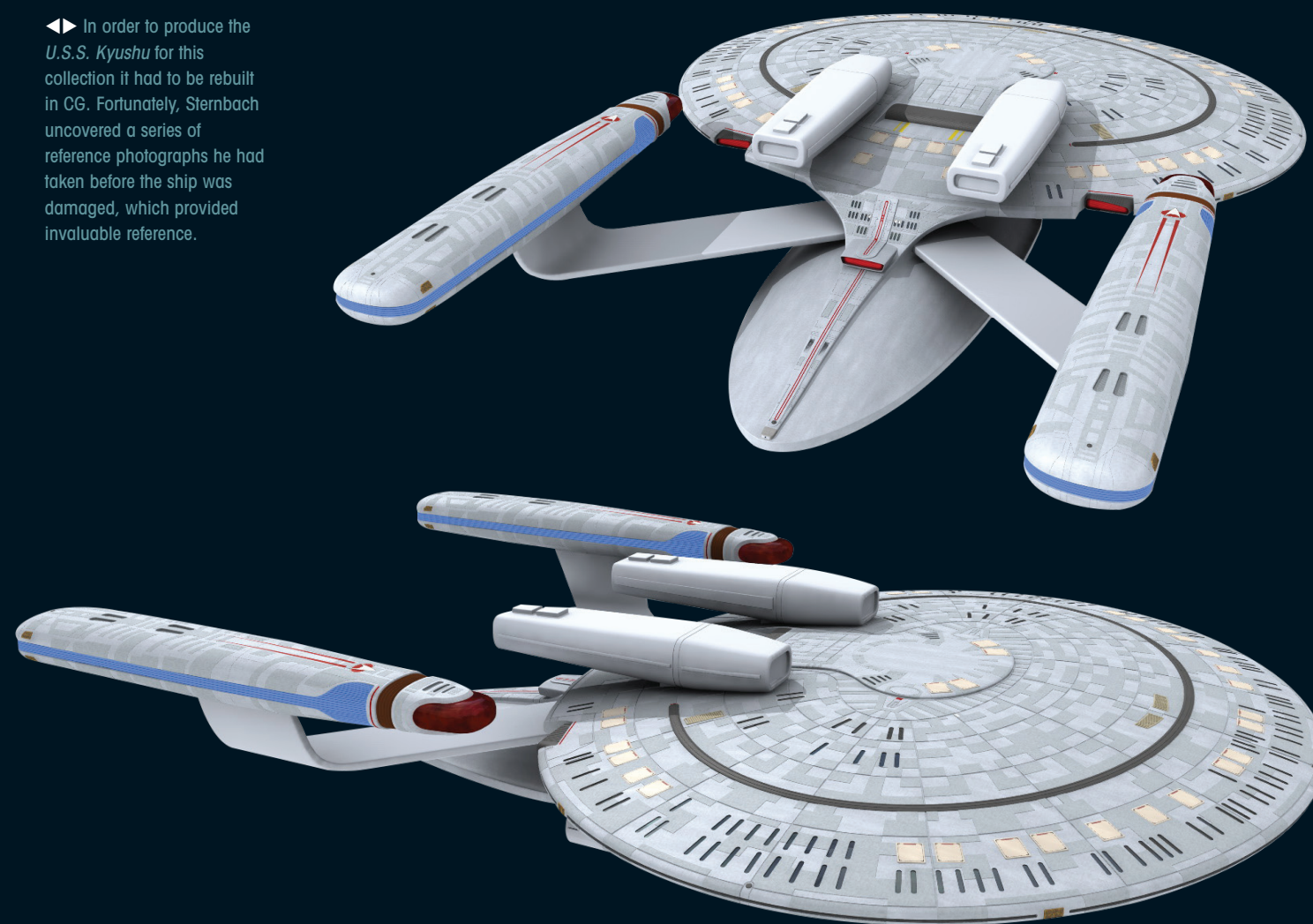
One of the rarest Starfleet ships was built as part of an attempt to create a budget starship and the prototype only just made it to the screen.

In the early days of *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION* different designs of Starfleet ships were in short supply. The production team had to rely on the handful of models that had been built for the features so when a Starfleet ship appeared it was almost invariably an *Excelsior*-class, *Miranda*-class or *Oberth*-class ship. Everyone figured that there must be other kinds of ship in the fleet but there was no budget to make them.

► The study model of the *New Orleans*-class *U.S.S. Kyushu* made a single appearance in debris field that *Enterprise-D* encounters in the aftermath of the Battle of Wolf 359. The model was permanently damaged by Okuda and Sternbach, who used a dremel to remove parts of it before applying painted damage.



◀ In order to produce the *U.S.S. Kyushu* for this collection it had to be rebuilt in CG. Fortunately, Sternbach uncovered a series of reference photographs he had taken before the ship was damaged, which provided invaluable reference.



"After a while," Mike Okuda remembers, "the net effect of seeing those ships repeatedly was to suggest that Starfleet was mostly composed of old ships. As a result, Rick Sternbach and I put a lot of thought into how the show could get a ship that looked like a contemporary of Probert's beautiful *Enterprise-D*.

"Our thought was that a design based on castings from the *Enterprise-D* molds could help hold down costs a lot. We discussed what such a ship would look like, but of course, the final decision would be up to our producers. I asked Ed Miarecki to come up with some study models to make it easier to see what such a ship might look like. I specifically asked him to do 24th century versions of the *Reliant* and

the *Excelsior*. Ed also came up with a number of other variations, just for fun."

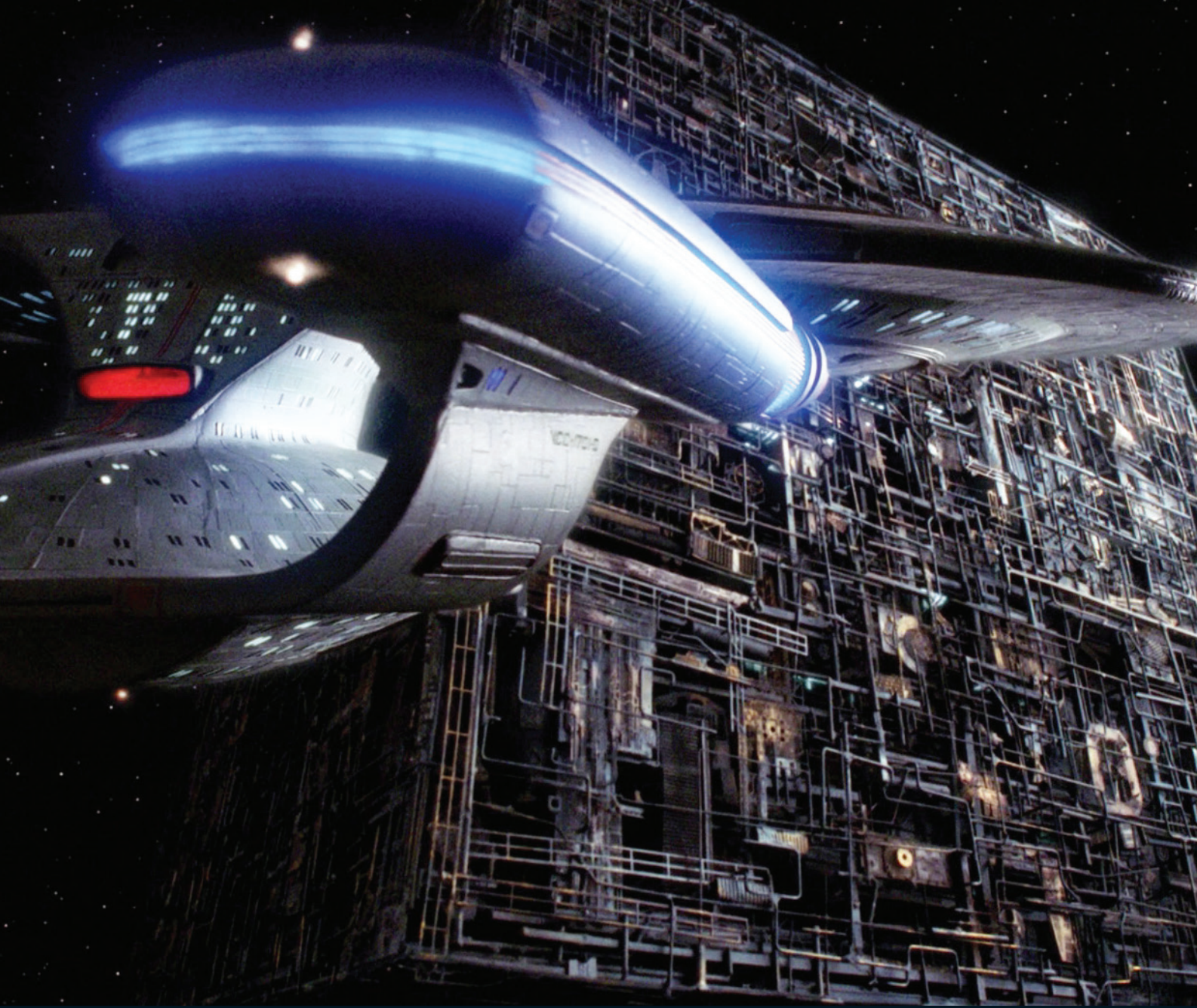
One of Miarecki's models, which became known as the *New Orleans* class, combined a *Galaxy*-class saucer with the secondary hull from an *Excelsior* class ship. This ship had extended nacelles that were made by bondo-ing multiple parts of the nacelles together. In order to indicate that the ship was smaller than the *Galaxy* class he scaled up the escape pods, implying that the saucer was smaller than Picard's ship.

Ironically the producers felt that the study models didn't look different enough to the *Enterprise-D* so Okuda and Sternbach made some ingenious modifications. "We dug into the model box," Okuda says, "The goal was to break up the lines so it would have a

different visual footprint." In the case of the *New Orleans* class they added two marker pens on the top of the saucer and one on the underside, painting them to match the rest of the hull.

These models were relatively small and not intended for filming but when the script called for the *Enterprise* to encounter the wreckage of the fleet that attacked the Borg they seemed like the perfect solution.

Okuda and Sternbach "customized" Miarecki's models by attacking them with a small drill to replicate the damage inflicted by the Borg. Okuda gave the ships names and registries, with the *New Orleans* class model becoming the *U.S.S. Kyushu*. Finally, it was ready to make a blink and you'll miss it appearance on screen.



MICHAEL PILLER ON

THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

▲ *The Best of Both Worlds* provided movie-quality action and turned the show into a TV phenomenon. The cliffhanger at the end of part I really had audiences on tenterhooks as they eagerly anticipated how the story would unfold.

Michael Piller talked about the events surrounding the creation of *The Best of Both Worlds*, his role in writing the episode and how it cemented *THE NEXT GENERATION* as the must-see TV show of its time.

Something extraordinary happened between *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION*'s third and fourth seasons, and it was all due to the episode *The Best of Both Worlds, Part I*. Audiences had been drawn in by the cliffhanger ending, and, as they watched the reruns over the summer, they realized that *TNG* had come into its own. The characters had grown, and the writing had become consistently compelling. The cliffhanger had also created a sense of expectation, and viewers could not wait to see how it was resolved.

Deciding exactly how the crew of the *U.S.S. Enterprise* NCC-1701-D would defeat the Borg was executive producer-writer Michael Piller's first task. What was remarkable was that this strategy to lure people in had not been planned, but only emerged out of necessity.

"The cliffhanger came about because Paramount was having trouble closing a deal with Patrick Stewart," recalled Piller. "John Pike, the studio's head of television, came to Rick Berman and I and said, 'I need a cliffhanger because if we can't solve the problems we're having in the negotiations we may have to kill Picard.' So my



▲ When Michael Piller wrote the first part of *The Best of Both Worlds*, he gave no thought to how the story would unfold the next season.



▲ Maurice Hurley was the head writer on *THE NEXT GENERATION* in its early days, and he had a major hand in creating the Borg.

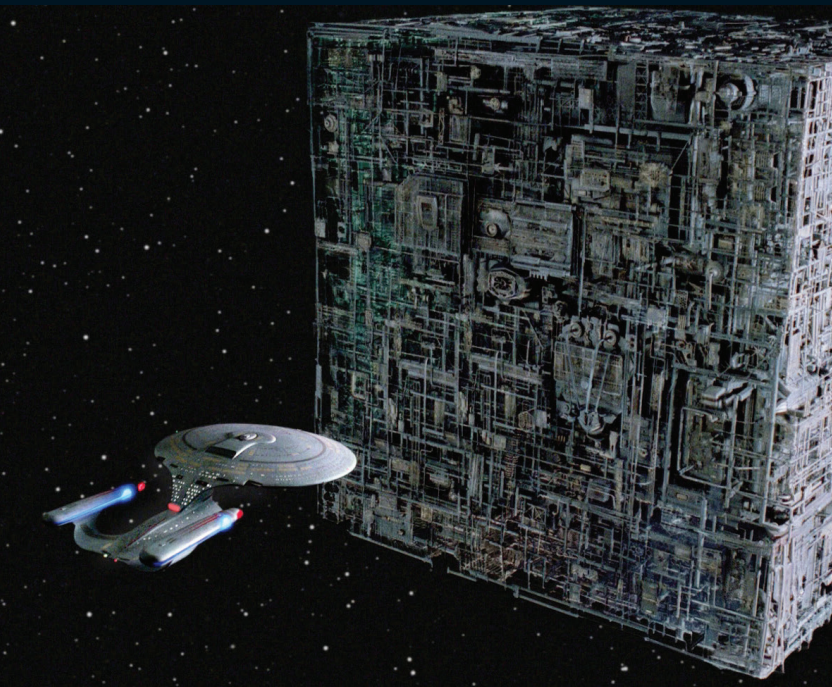
job was to come up with a story in which Picard might be dead at the end of the season."

BORG ORIGINS

In fact, there had been some debate about bringing the Borg back at all. The cybernetic race had been dreamed up towards the end of the first season when the then head writer Maurice Hurley began working on a concept Gene Roddenberry had for a race of insect cyborgs.

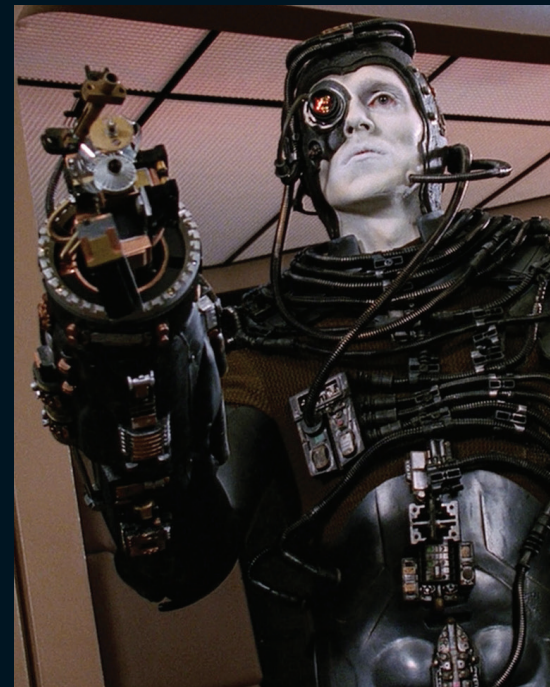


◀ Hurley designed the Borg as a counterpoint to Q. He saw Q as an unreliable god and the Borg as an unstoppable devil with Captain Picard stuck in the middle. Hurley also helped provide the voice for the Borg in their first appearance in *Q Who*.



◀ In a fit of pique at not being allowed to join the crew of the *Enterprise*, Q sent the ship to the Delta Quadrant where they first met the Borg. Picard felt he could reason with them, but he was very badly mistaken.

▶ Hurley imagined that the Borg were like insects, with countless individuals working selflessly for the good of the whole. Also like insects, he saw them as feeding on death, laying waste to populations like a plague.



▼ The Borg did not actually appear in *The Neutral Zone*, but Hurley had planned that they were the mysterious force who destroyed the colonies along the border of the Neutral Zone.

Hurley recalled, "In the episode with the Borg (Q *Who*), Q asked Picard if he could join the crew of the *Enterprise*. 'Take me with you,' Q said. 'Make me a part of your crew.' Picard said, 'No. You're an imp. You cannot be trusted.' And Picard was correct. Q, who was kind of a vengeful 'God,' didn't have a very good resumé.

"Q said, 'You need me.' Picard replied, 'No, we don't.' Now, Q (God) got pissed at Picard's

(mankind's) arrogance. He was going to teach Picard a lesson. So, he showed Picard the future – what awaited the Federation: the Borg."

Hurley said he designed his Borg to be the devil incarnate, so they had to be unstoppable and genuinely terrifying, and they would be closely linked with death, which was something he had always connected with insects. "Insects exist in corruption, death, filth," said Hurley. "They work as a unit, and sacrifice themselves for the good of the whole. They are relentless, merciless, and efficient. As an adversary, the Borg represented hell in its totality. They were so terrifying that Picard, to save himself, at last admitted his own impotence (mortality), and begged Q (God) for mercy: 'Please, Q, I am just a poor, weak, ignorant man – help me!' The arrogance – gone, replaced by humility. Picard pleaded with the God he shunned for his salvation."

LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

Obviously, the kind of metaphorical issues Hurley wanted to raise couldn't be dealt with in a single episode, and in his role as the show-runner he planned to pay repeated visits to the Borg throughout the second season. In fact, he'd already introduced the Borg in the final episode of the first season, *The Neutral Zone* -- they were responsible for the attacks on the Romulan and Federation colonies. He revealed that the

Romulans would also have featured in a subsequent episode when they had their own confrontation with the Borg.

"*The Neutral Zone* was the first evidence of the Borg," said Hurley. "I brought forward survivors from the present time, tied them to the Federation's future, and also signaled the demise of the Romulans. In the second season, I planned to have a Borg scout ship completely destroy the Romulan civilization, but still not completely reveal that it was the Borg; they would just have been this mysterious alien race. For a while, we would have maintained the mystery while at the same time increasing the threat. I wanted Picard to realize that he was swimming with sharks that could strike at any time."

In Hurley's original plan, Q *Who* would have taken place after the destruction of Romulus, and thus Q would have solved the mystery at the same time as he was thrusting Picard face to face with the devil. The Borg would then have become recurring villains.

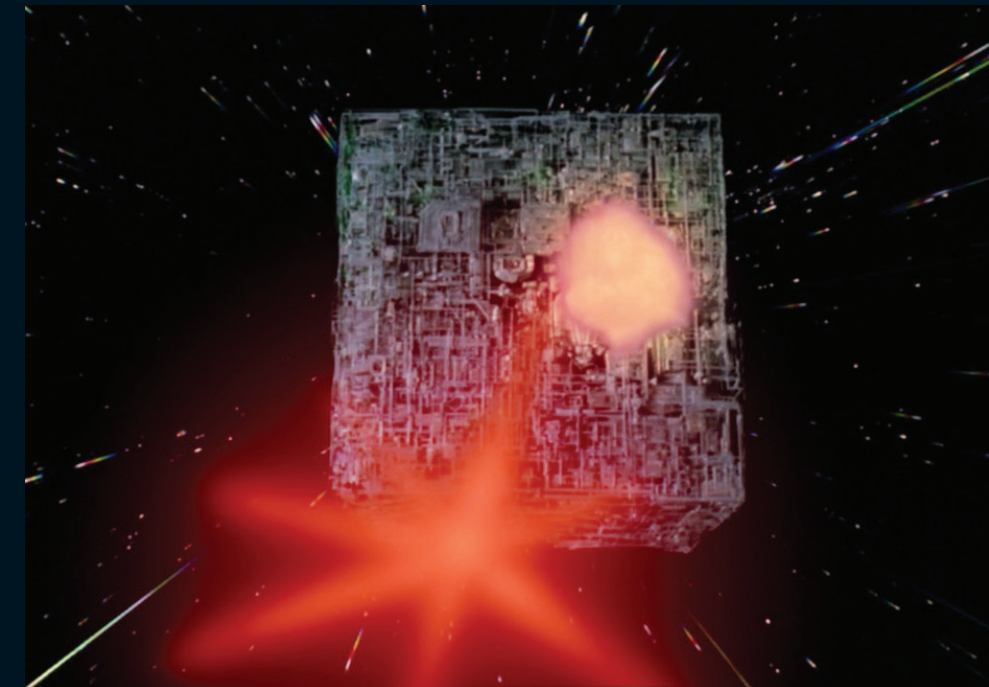
"My plan was to examine in subsequent episodes the relationship between Picard, Q, and the Borg," said Hurley. "On one side, an erratic, undependable god; on the other, a relentless, merciless, indestructible devil, with Picard and the Federation in the middle."

PASSING THE TORCH

Sadly, a writers' strike at the beginning of the season left the writing staff in chaos, from which they never recovered. As a result, only one Borg episode made it to the screen. Then, at the end of the year, Hurley left *STAR TREK*, handing the creative reins over briefly to Michael Wagner, who soon passed them on to Michael Piller.

Piller knew nothing about Hurley's plans for the Borg, but he did know that the Borg had been a success, and he recalled that the writing staff frequently discussed bringing them back. He was interested in the Borg because he felt they tapped into humanity's fundamental fears.

"I thought that Hurley's concept touched a psychology in not just our audience, but in people everywhere – it really explored the fear of losing one's individuality to a homogenized, corporate, global society," said Piller. "I think the best villains don't just scare you by their technology, they



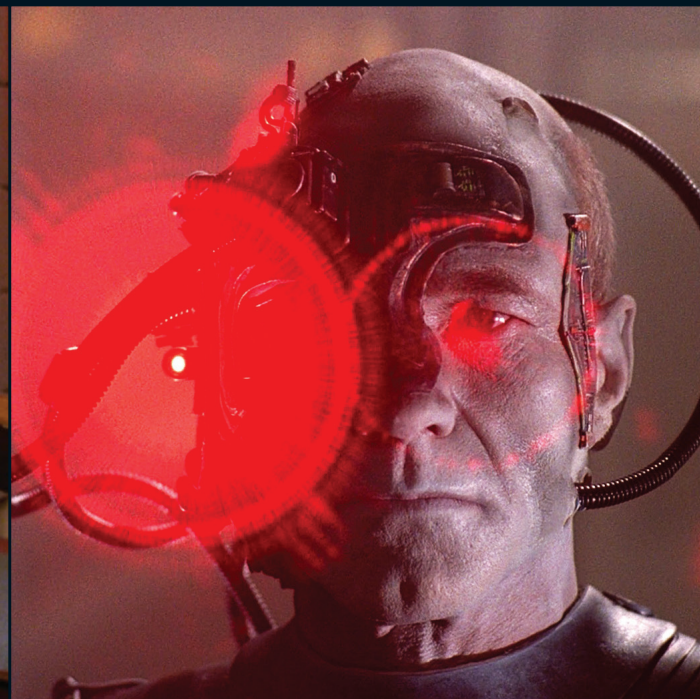
scare you by what they mean to you in a much more fundamental, personal way. That's why I thought the Borg were so great – that was why they emerged as such memorable villains. They represented something in contemporary life that scares the hell out of us, and it went to the heart of what *STAR TREK* had always done, representing contemporary themes through alien manifestations."

Although he was interested in the Borg, Piller didn't manage to come up with a suitable story

▲ The Borg represented a threat that had never been faced before, and no matter what Picard did, they continued to come after his ship.

▼ With Picard powerless to stop the Borg, he had to turn to Q, who sent the *Enterprise* back to Federation space with a click of his fingers.





▲ At the end of season three, Picard was captured by the Borg. There was a concern that all the Borg could say was "Resistance is futile." This did not make for good drama, so Piller decided to turn Picard into a voice for the Borg by having him taken.

▲ As Locutus, Picard gave the Borg a 'face' and a voice, helping to personalize the hive. Initially, Piller thought about having Data assimilated as well, but it was decided to just use Picard to keep things more straightforward.

for them until the end of the third season, when he was asked to develop a cliffhanger. Piller's genius idea was that they would end the season with Picard being captured by the Borg. That way, if Patrick Stewart and the studio didn't come to an arrangement, the captain could simply disappear. If Stewart returned (as he did), Piller could use him to address a perceived weakness in the Borg.

"Rick Berman had mixed feelings about the Borg," said Piller. "As I recall, he had a problem with the fact that the definition of them as a swarm didn't allow you to have a central voice, a character to play with, a larger-than-life personality. I thought that making Picard that voice would be interesting. My first pitch to Rick was to do the Borg, but that both Data and Picard were taken, and that in essence the Borgian combo was half Picard, half Data. But Rick said, 'Why make it so complicated? How about just having Picard be the one who's taken and make him Borgified.' So we did that."

Now that everyone had agreed to do the Borg, Piller had to do some research. He said he didn't have much to go on, but what had been established worked so well that he didn't feel the need to change it.

"I went back and looked at *Q Who*. The Borg were in it for maybe a third of the show, because most of it was *Q*, so obviously a lot of stuff had to be filled in. But I'm a strong believer, if something

works, don't fix it. So I just took that and I didn't change anything. What I did was fill in the details. I expanded, I came up with a common voice for them all, and then, of course, I created Locutus, a name which I got out of the dictionary about language – I think it's a Latin word for language – because they needed a spokesman."

SURPRISING REACTION

So, keeping the Borg as powerful as he could – on the grounds that the bigger the enemy is, the more effective they are – Piller brought them back and painted the *Enterprise* and the entire Federation into a corner.

"We went down that road and made *The Best of Both Worlds, Part I* the first *STAR TREK* cliffhanger, and it really punctuated a wonderful season for us, the third season of *TNG*, and we were as surprised as anybody by the reception of the cliffhanger," said Piller.

"First of all the idea of a cliffhanger itself was received as some kind of major breakthrough, *TV Guide* did a closeup on the first episode, and it got people talking. You could see something happening all summer long, and then of course the payoff to *The Best of Both Worlds*, and even more into *Family* the third episode where Picard went home to recover from his emotional trials, just went through the roof in the ratings, and that's when *STAR TREK* became a phenomenon. And

that was why every time there was a rating period they would bring the Borg back!"

RESOLVING THE STORY

Piller freely admitted that when he returned to his office for season four he had no idea how to resolve *The Best of Both Worlds* and beat the Borg. "When I wrote the first half I really wasn't planning on coming back to the show," said Piller. "I thought, 'My job is to write a really great cliffhanger here, and it's somebody else's job to work out how to wrap it up.' But Gene Roddenberry came in and persuaded me to come back, so I had to confront the issue.

"I made a structure for the story I wanted to tell, and started writing it, but it wasn't until I actually

got to the scene where I had written 'The crew figures out how to beat the Borg' that I realized how to do it," continued Piller. "What happens when you are really involved with your characters and you are letting them talk, is that they become collaborators, in a sense. So I was one of a group of people who were working on the problem – I worked on it with Data, and Riker, and Guinan, and the whole group. How to defeat the Borg became clear to me in the very moment that it became clear to them. The hive mentality that was its strength was also its weakness. It was almost dictated to me by the crew. I had goosebumps when I felt the characters say what they said about the hive mentality. There's no other feeling like that in the world."

► *THE NEXT GENERATION*'s first two-part story was an enormous success, but Piller felt they could not return to normal immediately after the Borg had been defeated. He wanted to explore the trauma that Picard had gone through.



◀ Piller thought that he might leave his job with *THE NEXT GENERATION* at the end of season three, and he had not given much thought to how *The Best of Both Worlds* would end. It was only when he remained in the job and began writing the second part that Picard's solution to send the Borg to 'sleep' came to him.

◀ At first, Rick Berman was resistant to the idea of taking Picard back to his family on Earth to recover, but Piller persuaded him that it would be a good idea. As it turned out, *Family* actually had higher ratings than *The Best of Both Worlds*.

ON SCREEN



TRIVIA

Captain Rixx, who commanded the *New Orleans*-class U.S.S. *Thomas Paine*, was the first Bolian to be featured on *STAR TREK* in the episode *Conspiracy*. The species was named after Cliff Bole, who directed this first season installment. Rixx was played by Michael Berryman, who had earlier appeared as the Arkenite display officer [pictured below] assigned to Starfleet Command in the feature film *STAR TREK IV: THE VOYAGE HOME*.



According to the *STAR TREK* Encyclopedia written by Mike and Denise Okuda, the U.S.S. *Rutledge* NCC-57295 was a *New Orleans*-class ship. The *Rutledge* was once commanded by Captain Benjamin Maxwell. In the 2340s, Miles O'Brien was transferred to the *Rutledge* as an enlisted crewman, and he was later promoted to tactical officer aboard the ship.



The *New Orleans* class only appeared once on screen as the U.S.S. *Kyushu* NCC-65491 in the 'graveyard' scene at the beginning of *The Best of Both Worlds, Part II*, and its class name was never spoken aloud.

- FIRST APPEARANCE: BEST OF BOTH WORLDS, PART II (TNG)
- TV APPEARANCES: STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
- DESIGNED BY: Ed Miarecki

KEY APPEARANCES

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

Best of Both Worlds, Part II

Having captured Captain Picard and partially assimilated him into the Borg Collective as Locutus, the Borg Cube resumes its course to Earth.

The failure to use the deflector dish as a weapon has left the U.S.S. *Enterprise* NCC-101-D stranded, but their actions have given Admiral Hanson time to assemble a defensive fleet. It consists of 39 starships, including at least one *New Orleans*-class vessel - the U.S.S. *Kyushu* NCC-65491. While the *Enterprise* makes repairs, the fleet have assembled at Wolf 359 waiting to intercept the Borg with everything they have got.

When the *Enterprise* finally reaches Wolf 359, the crew are met with a sight of unimaginable horror. All the Starfleet ships have been reduced to burnt out hulks as they drift lifelessly in space. The Borg Cube has cut through the fleet in a matter of minutes, and thousands of lives have been lost.

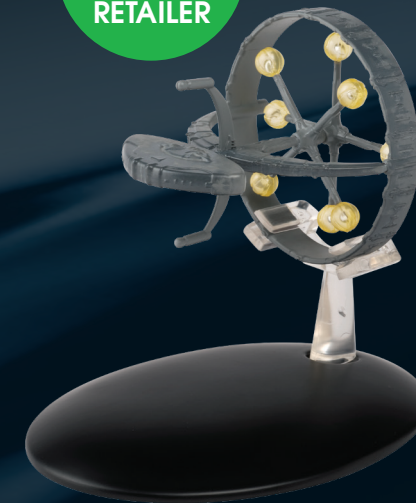
Riker devises a plan whereby he orders a saucer separation and the two halves of the ship attack the Cube. During the assault, Data and Worf use a shuttlecraft to board the Borg vessel and retrieve Picard. He is taken to the cybernetics lab on the *Enterprise*, but does any of his humanity remain intact and can he help them stop the Borg?

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