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U.S.S. EQUINOX

NCC-72381

SPECIAL ISSUE

CLASS: NOVA

LENGTH: 221 METERS

LAUNCHED: 2370

MAX SPEED: WARP 8

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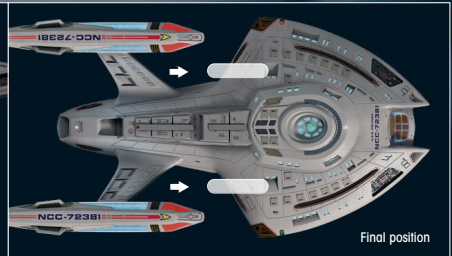
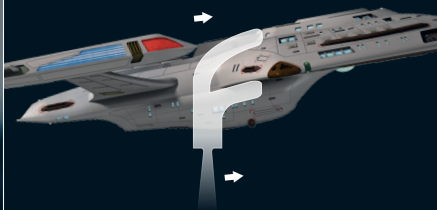
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Stand assembly:

Fix stand to back of saucer.



Final position

U.S.S. EQUINOX

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U.S.S. EQUINOX

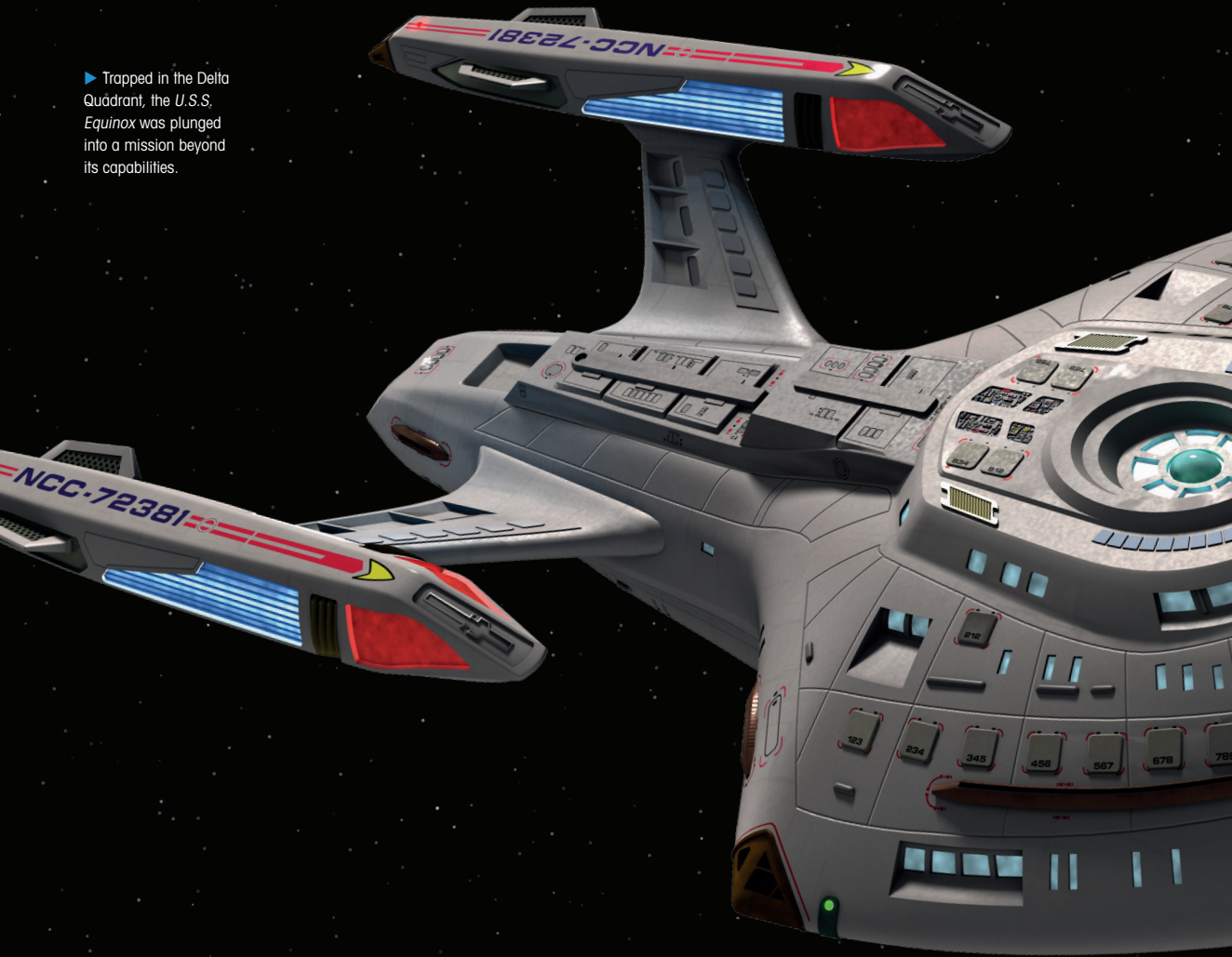
SPECIFICATION



| | |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| FIRST APPEARS: | EQUINOX (VOY) |
| LAST SEEN: | EQUINOX, PART II (VOY) |
| REGISTRY: | NCC-72381 |
| DESIGNED BY: | RICK STERNBACH, DOUG DREXLER |



▶ Trapped in the Delta Quadrant, the U.S.S. *Equinox* was plunged into a mission beyond its capabilities.



U.S.S.

EQUINOX

Stranded in the Delta Quadrant, the crew of the *U.S.S. Equinox* took desperate measures to survive.



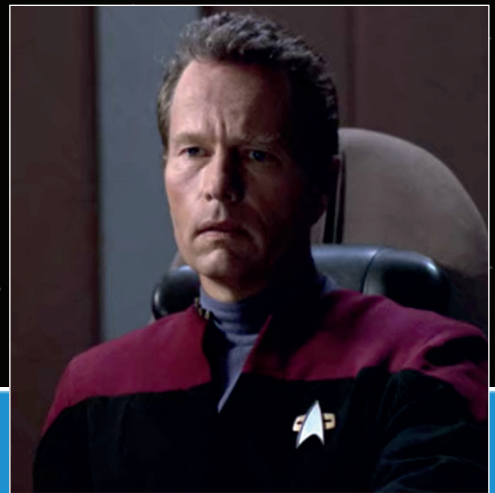
► Captain Rudolph Ransom was a noted Starfleet scientist, promoted to command of the *U.S.S. Equinox* after a celebrated first contact mission.

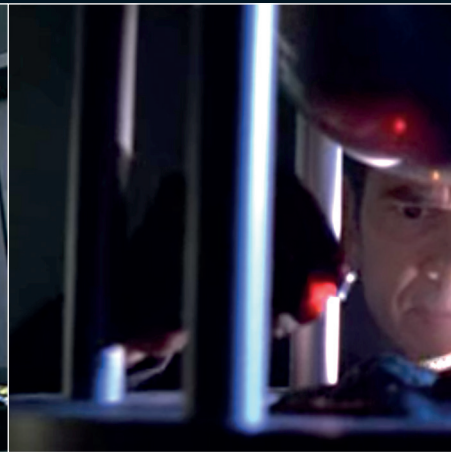
The *Nova-class* was a classification of Federation starship active in the latter half of the 24th century. Launched in 2370 out of the Utopia Planitia Fleet Yards above Mars, the *Nova-class* *U.S.S. Equinox* NCC-72381 was placed under the command of Captain Rudolph Ransom.

SCIENCE VESSEL

Nova-class starships such as the *U.S.S. Equinox* were developed as smaller, limited-range science and scout ships. The *Equinox*'s primary mission type was short-term planetary research as opposed to multi-year exploration carried out by larger ship classes.

Accordingly, the *Nova-class*' capabilities were limited in relation to its general mission parameters. The *Equinox* could maintain a maximum speed of warp 8 and its weaponry systems were minimal. Starfleet science vessels were generally not expected to engage in extreme combat scenarios.





▲ LEFT TO RIGHT

Voyager receives a desperate distress signal from the *Equinox*; the Doctor finds damning evidence aboard the *Equinox*; *Voyager* and the *Equinox* come under attack by nucleogenic aliens.

CAPTAIN AND CREW

The *Equinox* displayed a compact design, its primary saucer section ranged forward of the engineering section, effectively forming one primary hull. Dual warp nacelles were ranged to port and starboard above the engineering section to the aft of the saucer. In total, the *Equinox* was ranged across eight decks, its crew numbering around 80.

With an emphasis on research missions, the *Equinox*'s commanding officer, Captain Randolph, came from a science background. Making his name as an exobiologist, Randolph was promoted to captain after making first contact with

the Yridians, once thought to be extinct. Randolph was given command of the *Equinox*, his overall Starfleet experience perhaps not best suited to a high command position. This lack of experience became apparent in 2371 when the *Equinox* was pulled across space and stranded in the Delta Quadrant by the entity known as the Caretaker.

IN THE TRENCHES

Ransom's captaincy was put to the test almost immediately in the Delta Quadrant when the *Equinox* made disastrous first contact with the Krowtonan Guard. Ransom





ignored warnings that the *Equinox* had violated Krowtonan territory and held course. It was a decision that would cost him over half his crew in casualties and lead to a desperate battle for survival aboard a ship with limited capabilities.

The *Equinox* crew's experience led to a series of ruthless decisions running counter to the foundations of the Prime Directive. Through making contact with the Ankari, the *Equinox* encountered nucleogenic lifeforms worshiped as "spirits of good fortune" by the Ankari. After detecting high levels of antimatter in the aliens, Ransom authorized one of the aliens to be imprisoned for

study, leading to the creature's death. It was discovered that the remains could be converted into fuel to augment the *Equinox*'s warp drive, with some modification. This saw the crew embark on a systematic slaying of the creatures to power the ship and return home in months rather than years.

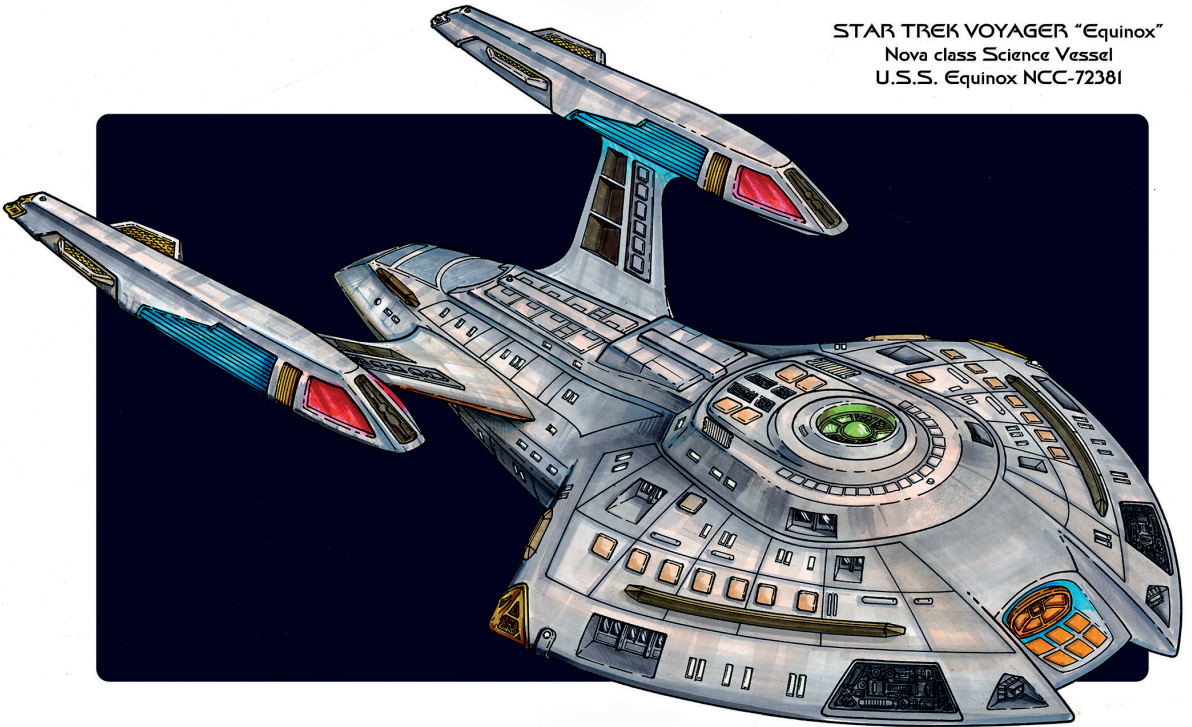
Ransom and his crew's actions brought the wrath of the aliens down on the *Equinox*, leaving the ship damaged and under attack. Sending out a distress signal, Ransom had no idea it would be answered by another stranded Federation starship – the *U.S.S. Voyager*. The resulting clash of captains would have fatal consequences...

▼ LEFT TO RIGHT

Captain Ransom and Commander Burke take desperate action; the fleeing *Equinox* comes under attack from *Voyager*; the final moments of the *Equinox*...



STAR TREK VOYAGER "Equinox"
Nova class Science Vessel
U.S.S. Equinox NCC-72381



sternbach 3-99

Designing the **EQUINOX**

When it came to designing the *U.S.S. Equinox*, Rick Sternbach found he already had a ship ready and waiting to launch.

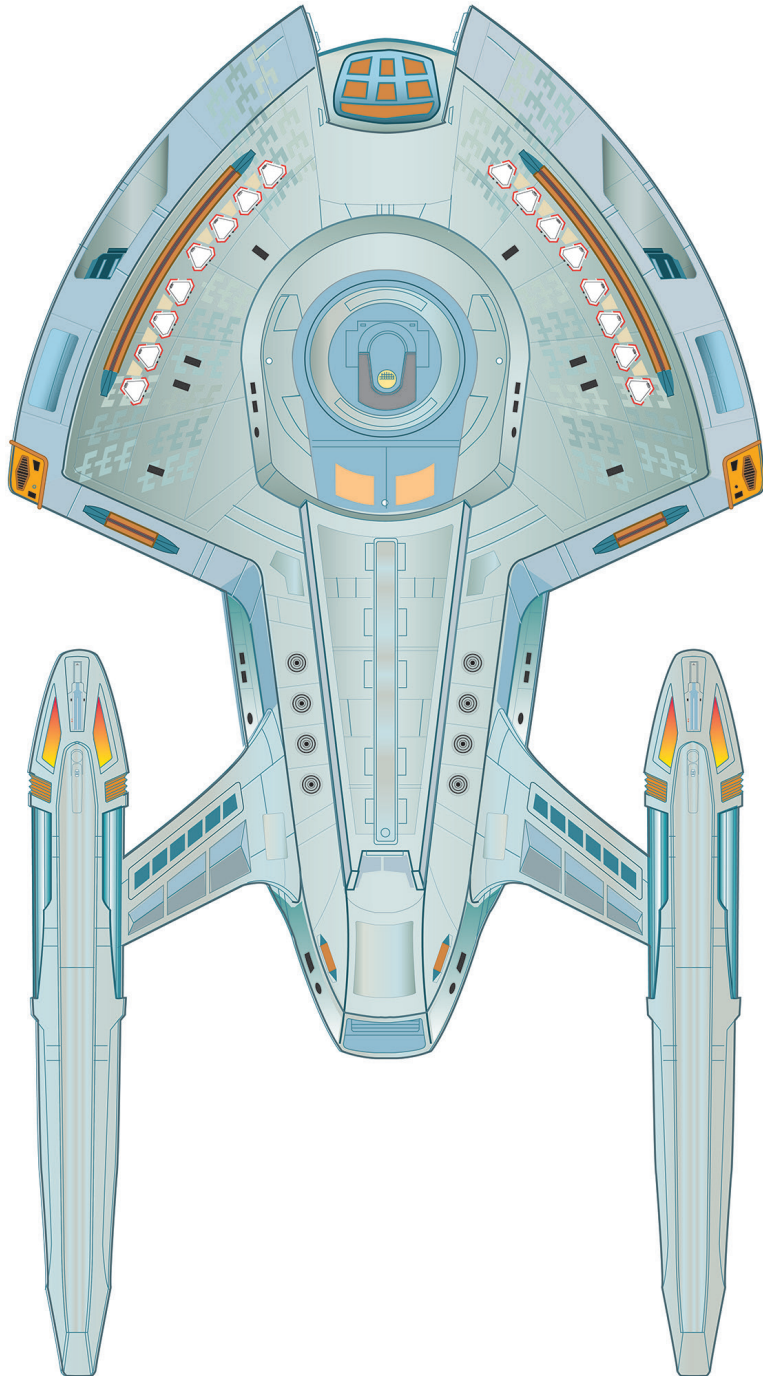
A new episode of any *STAR TREK* series from 1966 to the present often requires the creation of a never-before-seen space vessel, whether one used by an alien race, a new variant of an iconic design or a fresh addition to the fleet of Federation starships operated by Starfleet. For the season five finale of *STAR TREK: VOYAGER*, that was the task facing senior illustrator Rick Sternbach; 'Equinox' would require a new Starfleet science vessel of the same name.

"It was clear from the story synopsis and early script drafts that the *Equinox* was going to be a smaller vessel than *Voyager*," recalls Sternbach, "maybe a size range similar to the *Oberth*." The *Oberth*-class science vessel made its debut in *STAR TREK III: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK*.

Sternbach's usual method of working was to make various rough sketch doodles to lock down a shape and develop the new ship form there, but for the *U.S.S. Equinox*, the *STAR TREK* veteran already had a

▲ Detailed three-quarter view of the *U.S.S. Equinox* by Rick Sternbach, dated March 1999.

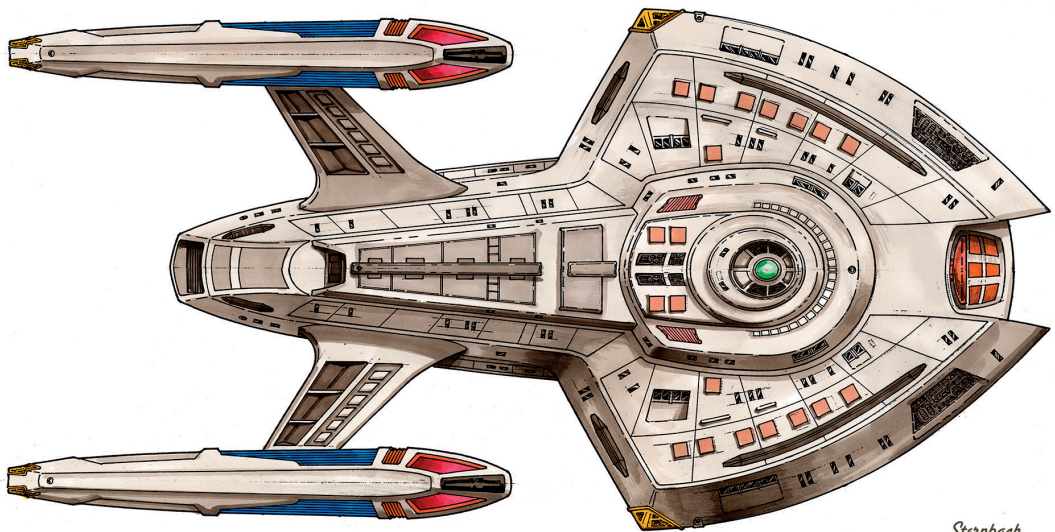
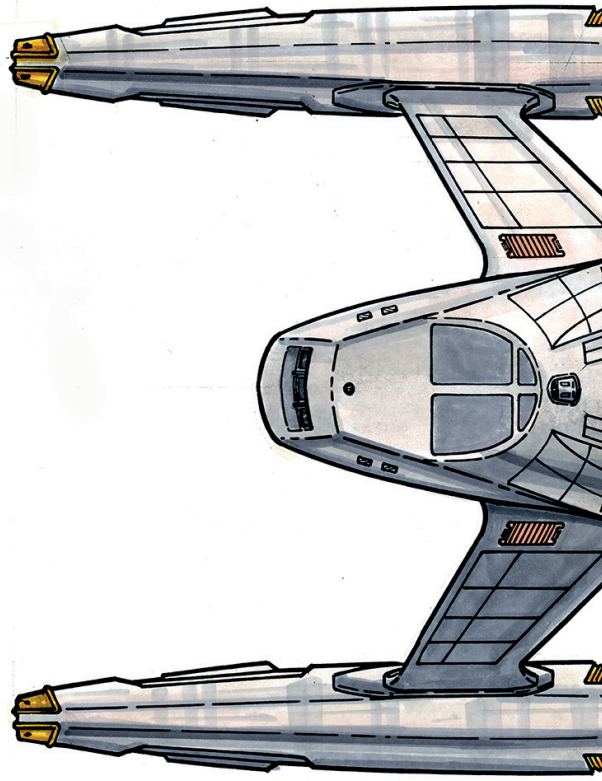
U.S.S. DEFIANT
Pathfinder Design



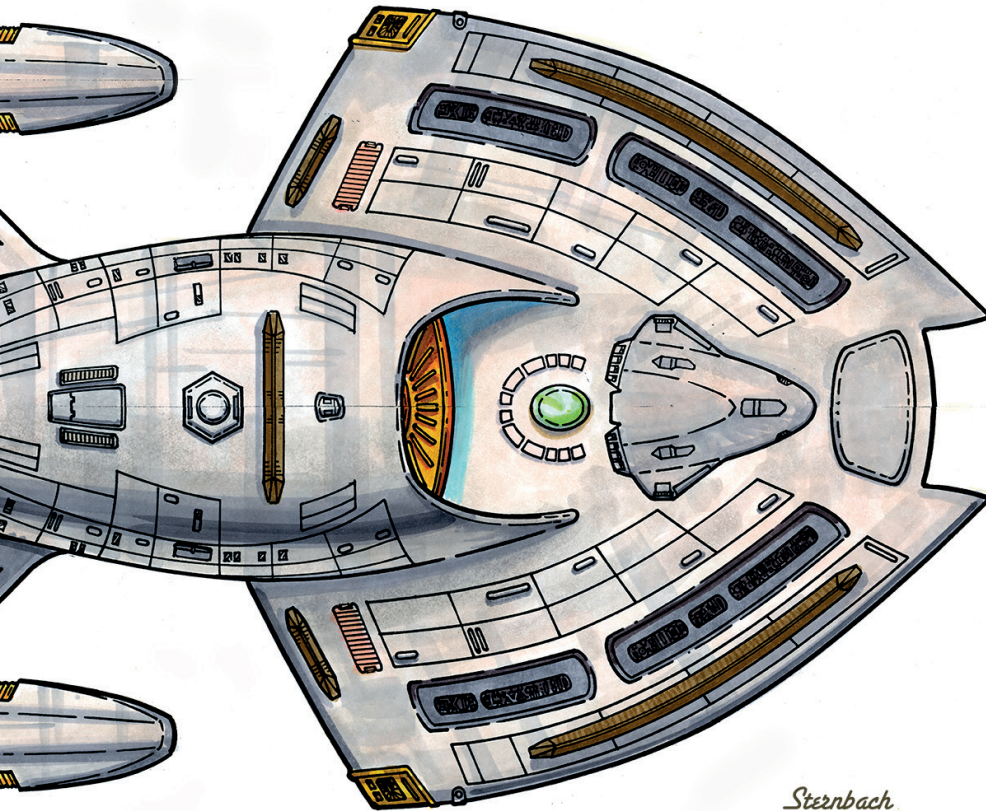
► The original basis for the U.S.S. *Equinox*. The *Defiant Pathfinder* featured in the 'STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE Technical Manual,' drawn by Doug Drexler from Sternbach's design.

detailed starship design that had not been seen before on screen. "I don't recall having done much in the way of preliminary doodles, mainly because I already had a design that, with some modifications, could easily fit the story requirements," he explains. "I had imagined an initial configuration for the *U.S.S. Defiant* for the '*STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE* Technical Manual' with the familiar forward and engineering hulls, pylons, and nacelles, before Starfleet tucked the nacelles in close and covered everything with heavy armor and more powerful weapons."

In the '*STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE* Technical Manual' (published in 1998), the *Defiant Pathfinder* project was depicted as an earlier part of the *Defiant's* development process to create a fast torpedo ship capable of penetrating defenses at high warp. Based on design sketches by Sternbach, *DEEP SPACE NINE* production illustrator Doug Drexler worked up the final detailed plan drawing of



Sternbach



Sternbach

◀ Further detailing from Sternbach on the dorsal and ventral elevations of the *Equinox*. Note the Waverider shuttle on the underside of the main saucer section.

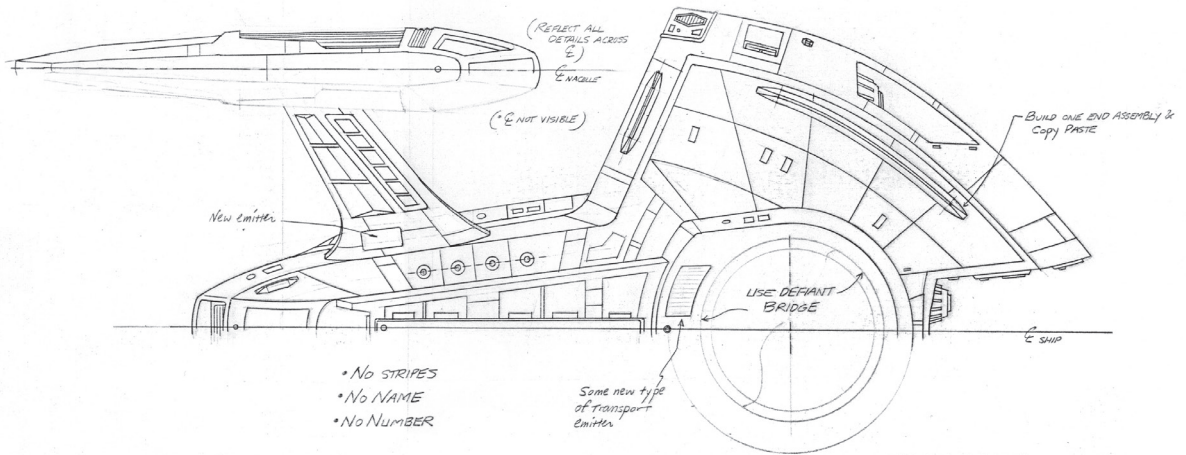
the *Defiant Pathfinder* variant. When it came to preproduction on 'Equinox,' Sternbach felt this proto-*Defiant* would be the perfect candidate to become the *U.S.S. Equinox*.

"When 'Equinox' came up as an episode, I also imagined a couple of Starfleet admirals having discussed the use of the *Defiant Pathfinder* as a new science vessel," Sternbach explains his in-universe logic to bring the ship from the pages of the book to the screen. "Some of the big weapons could be swapped out for sensor pallets and specialized long-range instruments. Made sense to me!

"I took the *Pathfinder* art to Peter Lauritson, our VFX producer, and asked him if we could work it up as the *Equinox*, since it had never been a screen-used design, and I

got the green light for sketches and drawings for the CG modeling process," continues Sternbach. "The top and bottom orthographic (straight-on) marker sketches of the ship that I drew got a little boost with a starboard elevation sketch from set designer Tim Earls, and then I was off to finish the full blueprints."

Earls' work on the side elevation drawing established that the *Equinox* had eight decks – this was an easy visual marker of size in relation to *Voyager*, the larger *Intrepid*-class ship having 15 decks. Sternbach established other design cues to indicate the *Equinox* was a smaller ship. "To show that the *Nova*-class *Equinox* was clearly a smaller starship, the windows visually appear a bit larger and there are fewer of them, as well as fewer



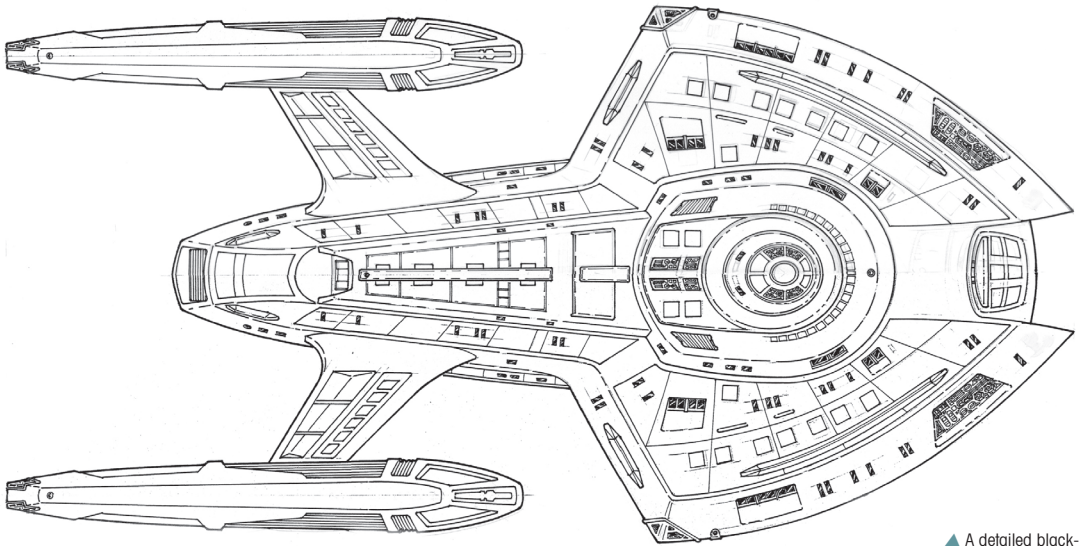
▲ Sternbach's original sketch of the *Defiant Pathfinder*, which Doug Drexler adapted for the 'Technical Manual.' This was the start of the *Equinox*'s development.

decks and escape pods. The ship does have everything else it needs, however, like phasers and photon torpedoes, transporter emitters, defensive shield grid, impulse engines, and a small shuttlebay."

A hallmark of Sternbach's work on starship design was thinking beyond the requirements of the script in establishing other design possibilities that may never be seen on screen. "The four little double hatches on the bottom of the engineering hull are suggestions of landing footpad bays, even if we never saw them used." And maintaining a tradition going back to the 'STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION Technical Manual' and the design of *Voyager* itself, a Captain's Yacht-type craft was also included in the exterior design. "The little AeroShuttle-type spacecraft, tucked up under the forward hull, is what I called the *Waverider* shuttle, also not used, but fun to include."

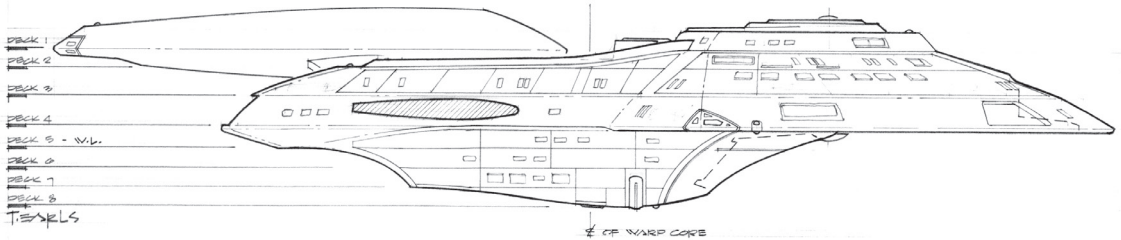
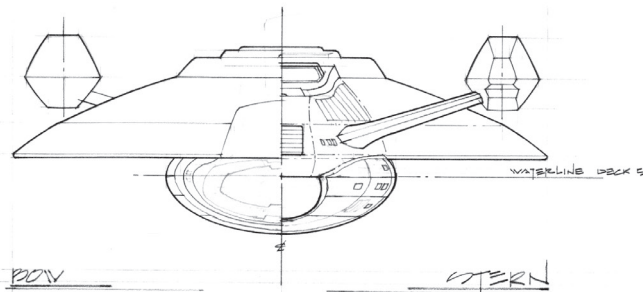
Sternbach's design was passed to digital FX house Digital Muse to be rendered as a computer-generated asset, as had become common by that point in the history of the *STAR TREK* franchise. The digital assets were later available to Rob Bonchune of Foundation Imaging, who modified them as the basis for the *U.S.S. Rhode Island*. This variant on the *Nova-class*, commanded by Captain Harry Kim, was seen in the *VOYAGER* finale, 'Endgame.'

"I did not come up with the name, but was allowed to come up with the NCC number and do whatever I liked to the shape," Bonchune commented on the *Rhode Island* on Doug Drexler's blog in 2009. "I always liked the ship, kind of like a small corvette starship, and I figured in a future time it would have been smoothed out and more organic. I tried to make her look like she was moving fast and slick, even standing still."



▲ A detailed black-and-white design drawing of the *Equinox* by Sternbach, ahead of coloring being added.

► Set designer Tim Earls produced elevation sketches, which helped establish the size and the number of decks on the *Equinox*.



U.S.S. EQUINOX NCC-72981 - PROPOSED STARBOARD ELEVATION



The VFX of 'EQUINOX'

VOYAGER's VFX supervisor Ron B. Moore looks back at the making of 'Equinox' and the joy of a season finale...

The season finales of *STAR TREK* shows traditionally ramp up the action and scope of the franchise, pushing the boundaries to create epic stories that will keep audience's eager to return for the following season. These crucial episodes also task each production department to step up and perform their best work after a full season of pressured deadlines to deliver a weekly television show. For *STAR TREK: VOYAGER's* VFX supervisor Ron B. Moore, a season finale always proved to

be a special time.

"During the season, we get to a point where we can be working on three, maybe four shows at a time," says Moore, a VFX veteran of movies and television whose time on *STAR TREK* dated back to the early days of *THE NEXT GENERATION*. "But the first show of the season and the last show of the season are unique. They're unique in the sense that, as we got to 'Equinox,' all these other shows start dropping away. So when we get to post production, it means that we

◀ One of the key visual effects shots of 'Equinox', supervised by Ron B. Moore, as Harry Kim faces a nucleogenic alien. The episode was an opportunity for the VFX teams to pull together.

have an opportunity to work as a team, because people have time to get in and help us."

When planning the visual effects for any episode of *STAR TREK*, Moore explains it always came to budget and negotiation in planning meetings alongside other departments. "When I go into a budget meeting, I want all the money I can possibly get. But it's a negotiation. At the end of that meeting, I understand what they want. It's like, 'how much is a car?' I'm going to budget for a Rolls Royce. I know when we walk out of the meeting, I'll probably get a Volkswagen. But I'm hoping for a Pontiac!"

LOOKING BACK

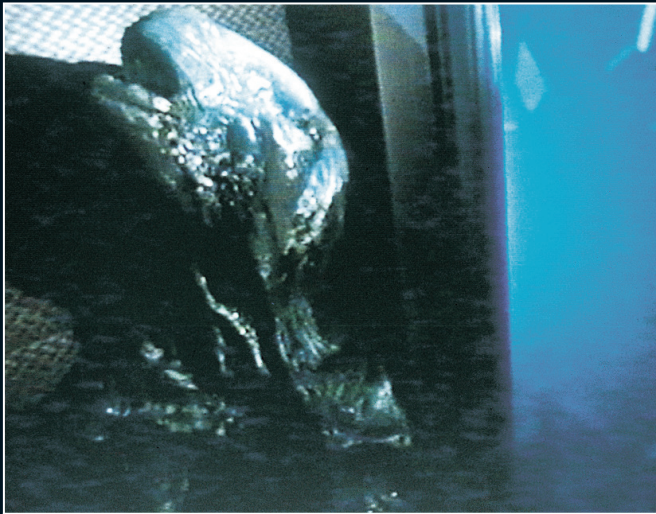
To prepare for this interview, Moore viewed 'Equinox' and 'Equinox, Part II', and admits that it is sometimes an odd experience to view work he made over two decades ago. "It absolutely is," he laughs. "After I watched it again, I saw Dan Curry's fingerprints all over it." Dan Curry was *STAR TREK*'s long-standing visual effects producer and Moore's colleague and friend for many

years. "The way we worked as teams, Dan would get involved, at other times, he would be off somewhere else. I could just see it in little things in some of the design that were Dan's influence. It was a real teamwork episode. We had all the facilities, it's the last show of the season so we have two teams, which means we have two editors, Dan could go in and work a bay, I could work a bay. That all showed up. And then, when we come to the beginning of the season, it starts all over again. It's the only show we have to deal with - for a little while."

The VFX requirements for 'Equinox' and 'Equinox, Part II' were far-reaching. They not only called for sequences involving *Voyager* and the newly designed *U.S.S. Equinox*, but complex shipboard sequences involving multiple actors, phaser blasts, rifts and nucleogenic aliens, often in the same shot. "They hate us a lot on set," Moore says with a knowing grin. "Because whenever they called the effects guys on the set, most of the people thought, 'Oh, my God!' Because we want to measure everything. We want to stop, we want to do this, and then it just

▶ As with many *STAR TREK* episodes, 'Equinox' featured a large quota of exterior starship VFX shots. Here, *Voyager* fires on the *Equinox*, all rendered in CGI.





▲ [Top] CGI footage of a deceased nucleogenic alien; [bottom] a challenging VFX shot featuring multiple elements, including phaser blasts and CGI elements.

makes the day drag. If you take one of those bridge shots, it may have been a couple of days, just to get the one scene, with all of the various angles. It's a very slow-moving process, which is why they sometimes hate us. We walk on the set and they think, "aw jeez, we're gonna be here all night!"

Moore has only admiration for the regular ensemble cast of *VOYAGER* and the guest stars who appeared in the show, such as John Savage (Captain Randolph) and Titus Welliver (Max Burke). However, he explains that one tricky element to get right in some

sequences between actors and VFX was a *STAR TREK* staple: a phaser blast.

PHASER HITS AND MISSES

"When we're shooting stuff," explains Moore, "a problem is a lot of the cast will come up with questions like, 'what's this thing going to look like? What's going to happen?' We don't know yet! We've vague ideas. I heard Brent Spiner say one time 'we walk in, we look at the X, we do this and we shoot the X.' A lot of times, that's it.

"With something like 'Equinox,' as I'm watching on the set, what I'm looking for is an eyeline I can work with? If an actor's looking to the right place, that if I put the creature there in this frame, will it be okay? I really wanted him to be over here, but if I do that, he's going to be looking into the next room. That doesn't work. The one thing I can do on set is reassure the actors that 'look, whatever happens, if I get the shot, and I tell you it'll work, I'll make you look good. If that phaser's pointing up well, I'll do everything in my power to put the creature so it looks like a game target. But dammit, try to aim at it!' We learned tricks over the years of trying to make it work. So those are the kinds of things that you're working on.

In addition to his VFX duties, Moore recalls that production on 'Equinox' coincided with one of Kate Mulgrew's famous on set St Patrick Day parties. "Those were great" says Moore with deep fondness. "I think of those parties every year on St Patrick's Day. It just probably wasn't a good idea to bring out the Irish whiskey and throw it out for everybody. We'd have singers and dancers, and they'd bring out all the Irish food. But to top it all, all the Bushmills! It was appreciated by everybody. Kate was exceptional. I think I actually still have a bottle of Kate's whiskey from those days."



"When you're working on something, when you're in the mix, you could never appreciate it," sums up Moore on his work on *STAR TREK* and revisiting 'Equinox.' "You know, all the people that are there, you know what you went through, you know, all of the pain and watching them, you can't help but see it as technical. I've had movies that I refuse to watch for a long time. And then you finally

sit down and watch them, it's time to get that feeling away. I felt that with watching this. I hadn't watched a *VOYAGER* in a long time. I always wish I could go back and tweak it right there. But with an episode like 'Equinox,' it was time for everybody to play. They put their work into it. When I watched the show again, that's what came out of it for me: watching my team soar."

▲ The nucleogenic aliens were a major part of the VFX work on 'Equinox', requiring detailed CGI to render these new creations.



▲ Moore always enjoyed working with Kate Mulgrew, who he found to be "exceptional" as *VOYAGER*'s series lead.



▲ VFX on *VOYAGER* weren't just starships and phasers: this split screen shot of the Doctor was achieved with motion control.



JOHN SAVAGE AS CAPTAIN RUDOLPH RANSOM

STAR TREK has frequently welcomed notable guest stars across its history, and joining their ranks for 'Equinox' and 'Equinox, Part II' was acclaimed special guest star John Savage as Captain Rudolph Ransom.

Savage's career began at the tail end of the 1960s, with a film and television career gaining momentum throughout the 1970s. Two roles brought the actor to wider prominence in the late 1970s – as Steven in the multi-Oscar winning *The Deer Hunter* in 1978, and the following year as Claude in the screen version of the musical *Hair*. He has rarely been absent from screens since, dividing his time between films, television and the theatre. In 1990 he played Father Andrew Hagen in *The Godfather Part III*, with other film roles including *The Thin Red Line* in 1998.

Shortly after this, the invitation came to sign on with Starfleet for the season five finale of *STAR*

TREK: VOYAGER as the conflicted commanding officer of the *U.S.S. Equinox*.

"They needed a captain. They didn't have a story yet, and I was excited," Savage said in an interview for 'Cinefantastique's Anna L. Kaplan in 2000. "It evolved, and every day, a new set of pages. I found quite an interesting moral struggle in the story. It wasn't simple, and it was very supported."

Savage was particularly impressed with *VOYAGER*'s lead actor, Kate Mulgrew. "She was admirable with her focus. I saw some wonderful possibilities and moments, like in the relationship with Captain Janeway, as man and woman, and also as captains, and as people. I just felt like I might have unfortunately overcomplicated myself, and had to be pulled straight by Kate. I didn't have to be. She was generous. It was a good experience."



TITUS WELLIVER AS COMMANDER MAXWELL BURKE

On hearing of John Savage's involvement in 'Equinox,' actor Titus Welliver had no hesitation on signing up as Captain Ransom's first officer, Commander Max Burke. "When I found out he was going to do *VOYAGER* I said, 'I'm there.'" Welliver told 'TV Zone' magazine.

Welliver began his career with early film roles in *NAVY Seals* (1990) and *The Doors* (1991) and on television in *LA Law*, *Beverly Hills 90210* and *The X-Files*. Other film roles include collaborations with Ben Affleck, who directed Welliver in *Gone Baby Gone* (2007), *The Town* (2010), *Argo* (2012) and *Live By Night* (2016). He is perhaps best known for his TV roles as *Deadwood*'s Silas Adams, Man in Black in *Lost*, and Jimmy O'Phelan in *Sons of Anarchy*. Since 2014, Welliver has played the title role in *Bosch*, Prime Video's acclaimed adaptation of Michael Connelly's Harry Bosch detective novels.

Welliver expanded on his working relationship with John Savage in an interview for *STARTREK.com* in 2014: "Savage was lovely and, on some level, he'd really inspired me. I saw him do *American Buffalo* on Broadway when I was a kid. I remember just being blown away. I told that to John the first time I met him on the set of *VOYAGER*. He laughed and said, 'Aaaah, that was a long time ago,' but for me it was a privilege to work with him."

As a self-confessed *STAR TREK* and science-fiction fan, Welliver was thrilled to be on the *VOYAGER* set, telling *STARTREK.com*, "Although a lot of the instrumentation on the bridge is practical, as far as there's writing and it's illuminated and all that stuff, they typically put the graphics in after the fact. But just to be there on those sets, on that bridge, it was amazing. And it was just such a great group of actors."

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