

FORTNIGHTLY

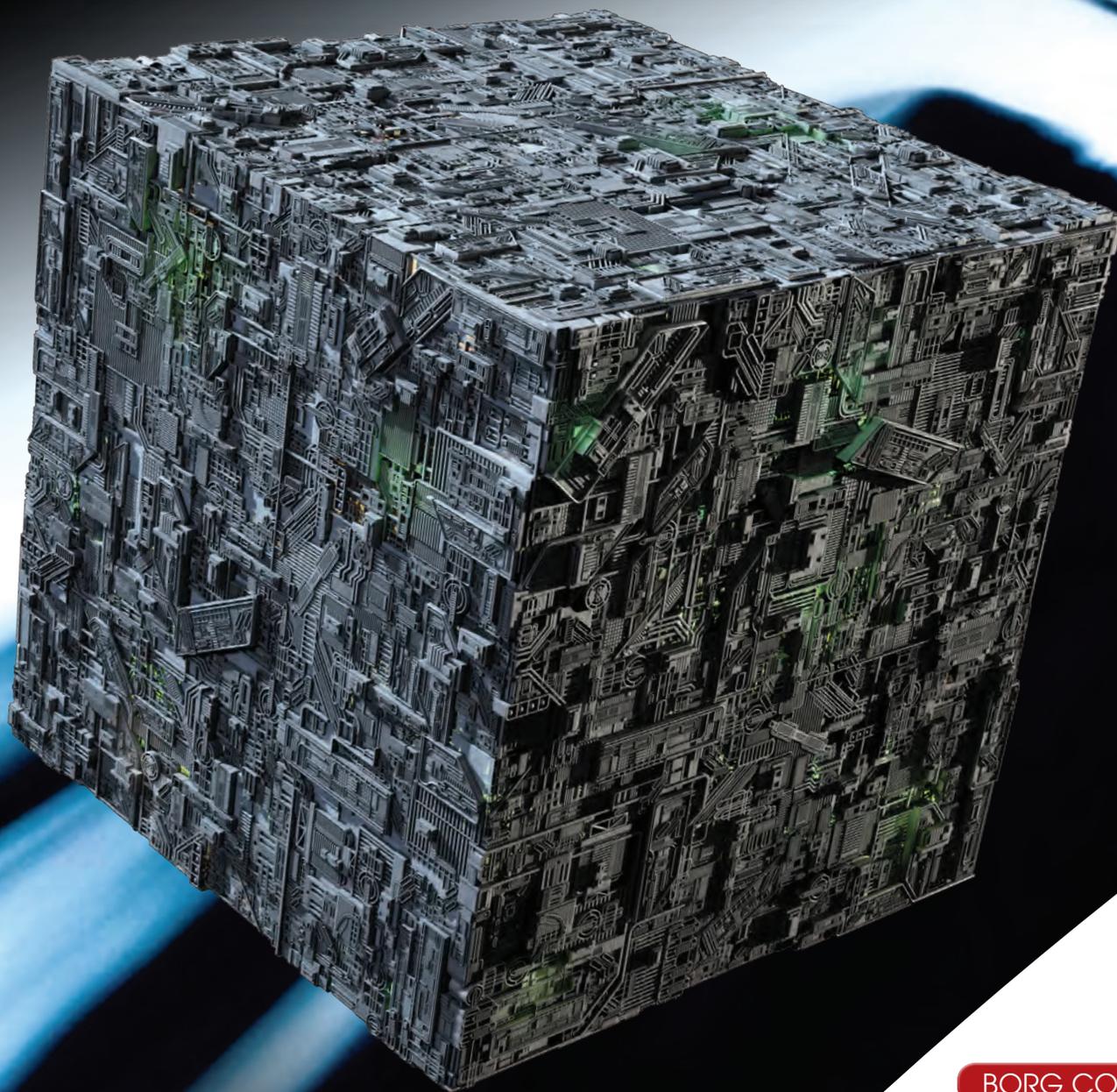
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BORG CUBE
FIRST CONTACT

BORG COLLECTIVE

IN USE: 2373

CREW: 5,000

DIMENSIONS: 3,037 m³

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Stand assembly:

Place the ship
down on to
the stand



Final position



FIRST CONTACT

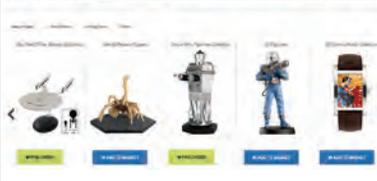
BORG CUBE



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BORG CUBE

(FIRST CONTACT)

SPECIFICATION



OPERATED BY: THE BORG COLLECTIVE

IN OPERATION: 2373

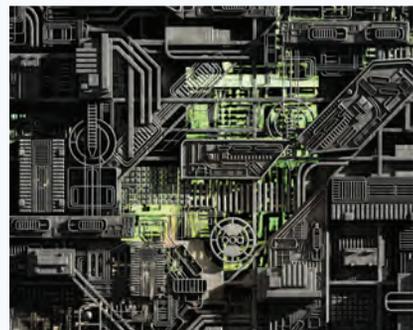
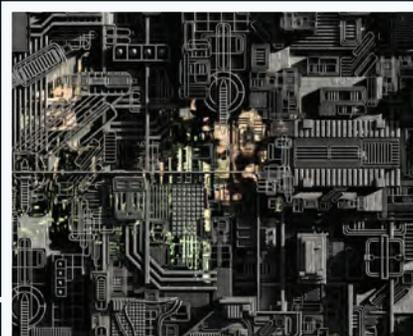
DIMENSIONS: 3,037 METERS³

CREW: 5,000

PROPULSION: TRANSWARP

WEAPONRY: DISRUPTOR BEAMS, PROJECTILES,

CUTTING BEAMS



▼ Looking like a teeming city crushed into a cube, a colossal Borg ship invaded Federation space on a relentless course to Earth. It was an ominous portent of mass destruction, as the Borg believed just this single cube could blast through Starfleet's defenses and assimilate Earth.



BORG CUBE

In 2373, a Borg cube containing a Borg Queen battled a Starfleet armada on its way to assimilate Earth.

DATA FEED

Borg cubes were decentralized in structure, meaning no specific area was responsible for a vital function. Instead, all vital systems were duplicated throughout, making them highly resistant to damage.

A Borg cube attempted to assimilate Earth and fought at least 30 Federation ships in the Battle of Sector 001 in 2373. It appeared to be the same as the two previous Borg cubes encountered by Starfleet.

The stark, Brutalist-looking cube was massive and measured over three kilometers per side, resulting in an internal volume of more than 27 cubic kilometers. It was largely made from tritanium and contained thousands of Borg drones. Normally, a cube was run by 5,000 drones, but numbers varied widely and could be as high as 179,000 drones.

As with other Borg cubes, it was equipped with an array of weaponry. These included cutting beams, high-power disruptor beams and high-yield torpedoes. Its defensive systems included ablative hull armor and a regeneration shield

matrix that could almost instantly repair damage.

The cube could achieve very high warp speeds, more than matching Starfleet's fastest ships, and attain even faster velocities through its transwarp technology. It used a network of transwarp corridors and hubs, and was able to safely travel through them without breaking apart from extreme gravimetric shear by projecting a structural integrity field in front of it.

BORG LEADER

The Borg cube that invaded Federation space and headed to Earth in 2373 included several features that had not been seen on cubes before. Most notably, it contained a Borg Queen. Previously, the Borg had never shown signs of a hierarchical command structure on their ships, but the Queen appeared to be the focal point of the Borg collective consciousness. She seemed to have overall authority over the other drones, directing and coordinating their tasks. Whether this was true or not was not clear, but the fact that the Queen referred to herself as "we" and "I" interchangeably suggested that she was more



◀ Vice Admiral Hayes commanded the fleet that engaged the Borg cube in 2373. Before mobilizing the fleet, Hayes contacted Captain Picard and ordered him to stay away because he believed Picard would be a liability after his previous partial assimilation. In the battle, Hayes's flagship was destroyed, but Hayes survived.



▲ The Borg cube had no discernible features or systems on its exterior surface, which looked the same on each side. Like all Borg cubes, it had green energy glowing between gaps in its hull. Its energy weapon beams were also green and appeared to emanate from emitters that were mainly located down each edge of the cube.

like the personification of the Borg collective's will rather than the supreme leader of the Borg.

This Borg cube also carried another Borg ship within it that had not been previously encountered. This smaller, spherical Borg ship was launched through a circular hatch in one of the cube's sides. It appeared to be an escape vessel as it was launched seconds before the cube was destroyed. The sphere was roughly 600 meters in diameter and contained the Borg Queen and hundreds of drones. It was able to form a temporal vortex by projecting chronometric particles in front of it, allowing it to travel back in time.

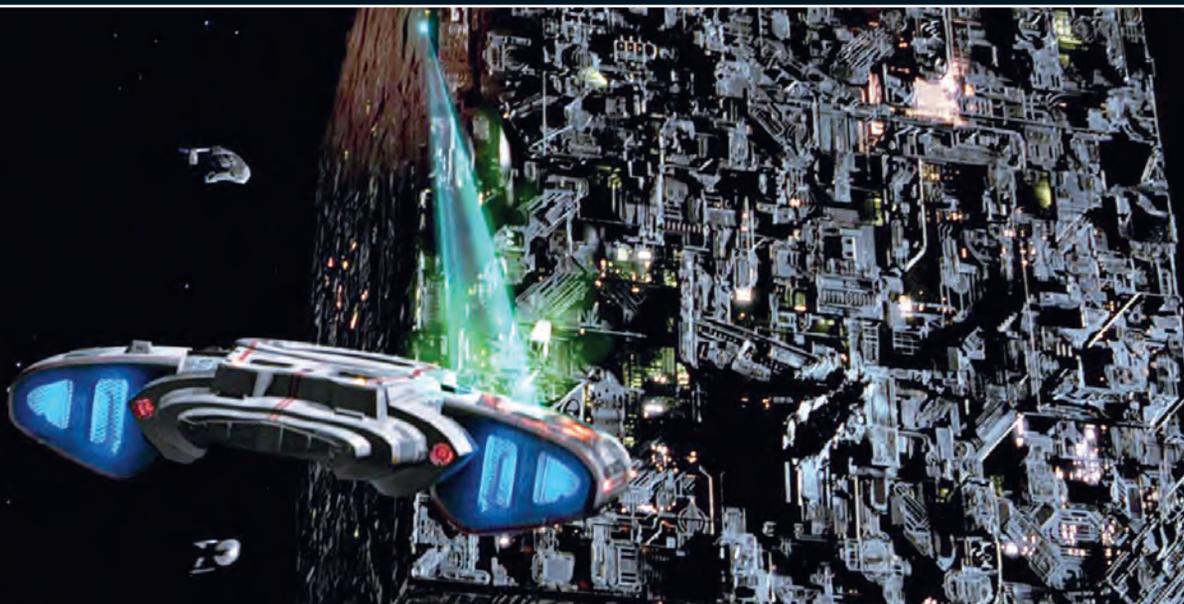
In 2373, the Borg made a second attempt to destroy Starfleet and assimilate Earth with just one cube. Its incursion was first reported by *Deep Space 5* when the cube obliterated a Federation

colony on Ivor Prime. Vice Admiral Hayes, who was in charge of Starfleet's response fleet, contacted Captain Picard and ordered him to stay away from the Borg cube. Hayes felt that Picard's previous traumatic experience with the Borg and his partial assimilation to become Locutus in 2367 would bring an "unstable element to a critical situation."

ENGAGING THE BORG

Hayes's fleet, which consisted of at least 30 ships, was mobilized in the Typhon sector and ordered to intercept the cube. Listening to a broadcast of the battle, Picard was unable to stand by helpless as the fleet was suffering heavy losses and took the *U.S.S. Enterprise NCC-1701-E* into the battle.

As the *Enterprise* arrived, much of the fleet had already been destroyed, including Hayes's



◀ In the opening exchanges during the Battle of Sector 001, the highly-maneuverable *Defiant* made several fast strafing runs. It unleashed its phaser cannons and a barrage of quantum torpedoes at the cube without causing any significant damage. Eventually, the *Defiant* was hit and lost shields and weapons, but the crew was rescued by being beamed to the *Enterprise-E*.



◀ Picard's residual link with the Borg allowed him to know exactly where the cube was most vulnerable.

▶ The cube was repeatedly hit, which caused fluctuations in its power grid. Seconds before it imploded, a sphere was launched through a circular hatch in one of its sides.

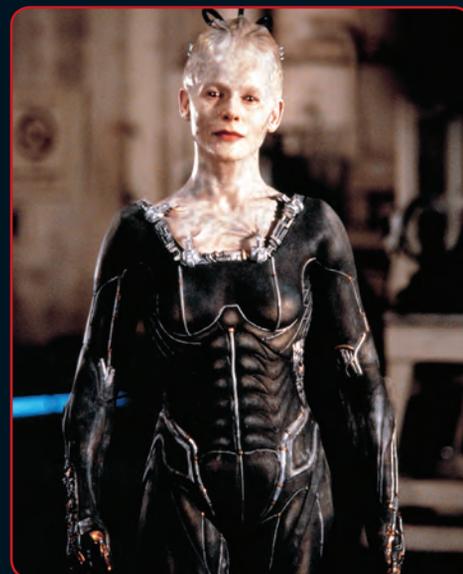


flagship, which resulted in Picard taking charge of the remaining ships. He used his knowledge of the Borg from his residual link with the collective to launch an attack on the cube. Every available ship was ordered to target their weapons at a seemingly non-critical point on the cube. The sustained onslaught caused massive damage to the Borg vessel as its power grid became unstable.

Before the cube exploded, it launched the sphere which entered a temporal vortex. The *Enterprise-E* was able to follow the sphere and destroy it. During the Battle of Sector 001, the Borg inflicted high losses on Starfleet, much as they had done previously during the Battle at Wolf 359. However, once again, through the heroic efforts of the *Enterprise* crew, Earth was saved and saved the population from being assimilated.

DATA FEED

The Borg Queen was first encountered by Starfleet after the Battle of Sector 001 in 2373. Before this event, the Borg showed no signs of a hierarchical command structure, but the Queen appeared to formulate their plans and coordinate their activities. She talked about bringing "order to chaos," but she did display emotions, unlike all other drones. Despite her importance, the Borg collective still continued after she was killed by Captain Picard.



THWARTING THE BORG

The Borg cube that headed for Earth in 2373 was confronted in the Typhon sector by Vice Admiral Hayes's fleet. This consisted of at least 30 vessels, which were much better armed and prepared than the previous Starfleet armada that fought a Borg cube in 2367, at the Battle of Wolf 359. Despite the preparations made by Hayes's fleet, the Borg cube managed to slice through it with comparative ease.

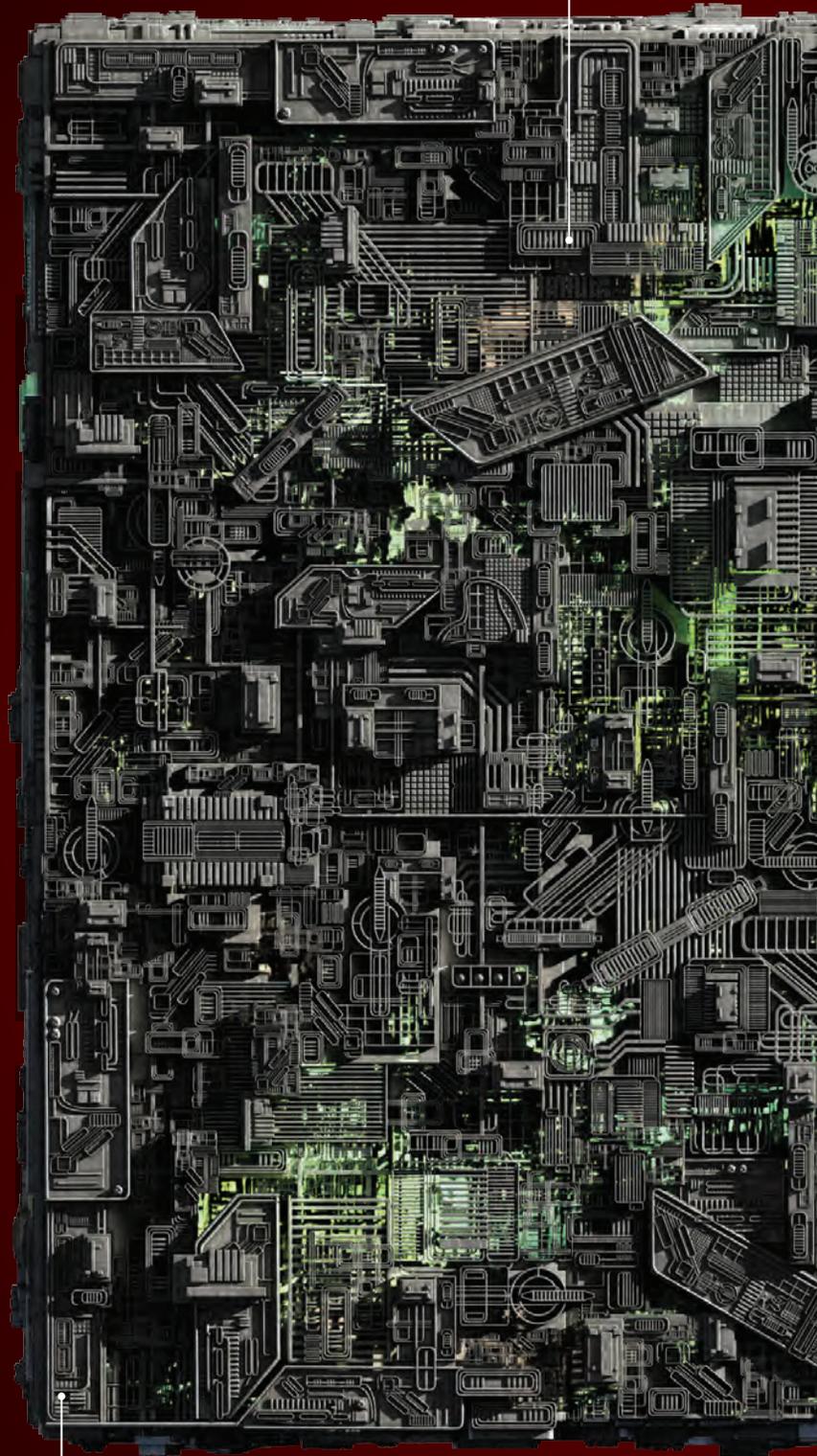
The Borg cube mainly used its beam and projectile weapons on Hayes's fleet rather than its cutting beam. Before long, many of the ships had been destroyed or were inoperative, including the *U.S.S. Defiant NX-74205* and Hayes' flagship.

The fleet had caused damage to the cube's outer hull, but it continued on its way to Earth. Requests to Starfleet Command had called for reinforcements, but it was Captain Picard and the *U.S.S. Enterprise-NCC1701-E* that really made a difference, despite being specifically ordered to stay away. Thanks to Picard's residual connection with the Borg after his horrifying time as Locutus, he could "hear" their thoughts and knew where to attack the cube. He was instrumental in not only destroying the Borg cube, but he also thwarted the Borg's subsequent plan to prevent the formation of the Federation by altering history.



▲ The Battle of Sector 001 resulted in carnage as dozens of Starfleet ships were destroyed in seconds by the cube, until Captain Picard and the *Enterprise-E* arrived and turned the conflict in Starfleet's favor.

Ablative hull armor



Disruptor beam emitter

Projectile launcher



Sphere launch hatch



Transwarp conduit emitter



Structural integrity field emitter

Structural integrity field emitter

NEW WEAPON

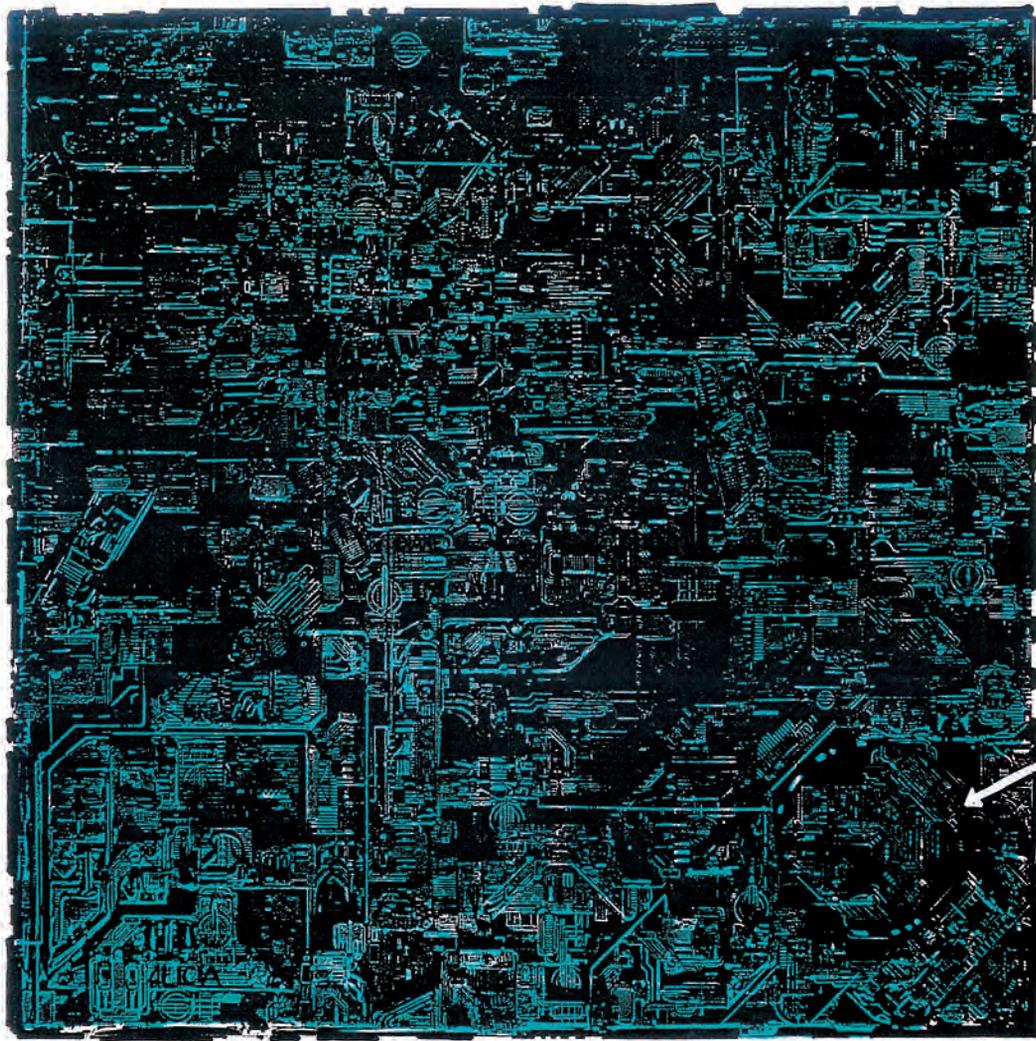
Quantum torpedoes were specifically developed by Starfleet in preparation of a second Borg invasion. The *U.S.S. Defiant* NX-74205 was the first Starfleet ship to be equipped with the new torpedoes in 2371.

CAUSALITY LOOP

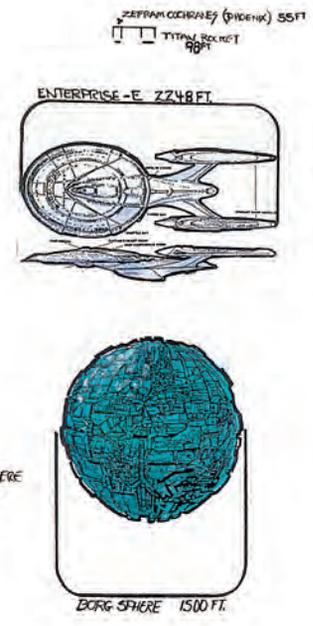
Seven of Nine would later describe the event in which the crew of the *Enterprise-E* intervened in the Borg's plan to change history and prevent the first warp flight as a "Pogo paradox".

FIGHTING FLEET

In addition to the *U.S.S. Enterprise-E* and the *U.S.S. Defiant*, the vessels that engaged the Borg cube at the Battle of Sector 001 included four *Saber*-class ships, five *Steamrunner*-class ships, three *Oberth*-class ships, two *Norway*-class ships, two *Akira*-class ships, two *Miranda*-class ships, and one *Nebula*-class ship.



SIZE COMPARISON CHART



BORG CUBE 9000 FT.

DESIGNING THE BORG CUBE FOR **FIRST CONTACT**

Several geometric shapes for a new Borg ship were considered for *STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT* before settling on a more detailed cube.

▲ Throughout the design process, the size of the ships kept changing, which affected the amount of surface detail on the Borg ship. Once the size of the cube was finalized, Eaves drew up a size chart showing how the other ships in the movie compared with it.

When the Borg came to the big screen, *STAR TREK*'s producers wanted everything to be bigger and better, including the Borg's ships. The task of rethinking the Borg fleet for the movie was given to concept artist John Eaves. By that time, Eaves had been working in the art department of *STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE* for over a year, and he made such a good impression that he was one of the first people

production designer Herman Zimmerman recruited to work on *STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT*. The only established ship was the Borg cube, and it wasn't surprising that the writers decided that the Borg should also have spherical ships. The sphere was always intended to be a smaller ship that the Borg Queen used to travel back into Earth's past, but at this stage the cube was nowhere to be seen; in early drafts of

► Ricardo Delgado came up with this obelisk for a new type of Borg vessel because it carried over the theme of the ancient Egyptians as an influence for the look of the Borg Queen. Delgado saw that several Borg spheres could be carried in circular hatches near the top of the obelisk.

FIRST CONTACT, the assault on Earth was carried out by a large tetragon.

With this brief in mind, Eaves settled down to work on the two designs. He started out with the sphere, which was more straightforward, and its design process was covered in issue 10 of this collection. The design of a new larger Borg ship was much more complex and more torturous for Eaves as he went down several dead ends before circling back a few times.

Eaves wasn't the only illustrator working on the movie and coming up with design concepts. Ricardo Delgado, another *STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE* veteran, had been asked to take a look at the Borg themselves. In his spare time, he threw out a couple of designs for their ships.

EGYPTIAN INSPIRATION

His designs for the Borg Queen and her drones were heavily influenced by the ancient Egyptians, so he suggested that the still-undefined larger ship should be an obelisk with a sphere set into the top. His version of the sphere was radically different to anything seen before; one half would be made up of traditional Borg panels, but the other half would be a forcefield that contained gaseous energy, which the sphere used for fuel.

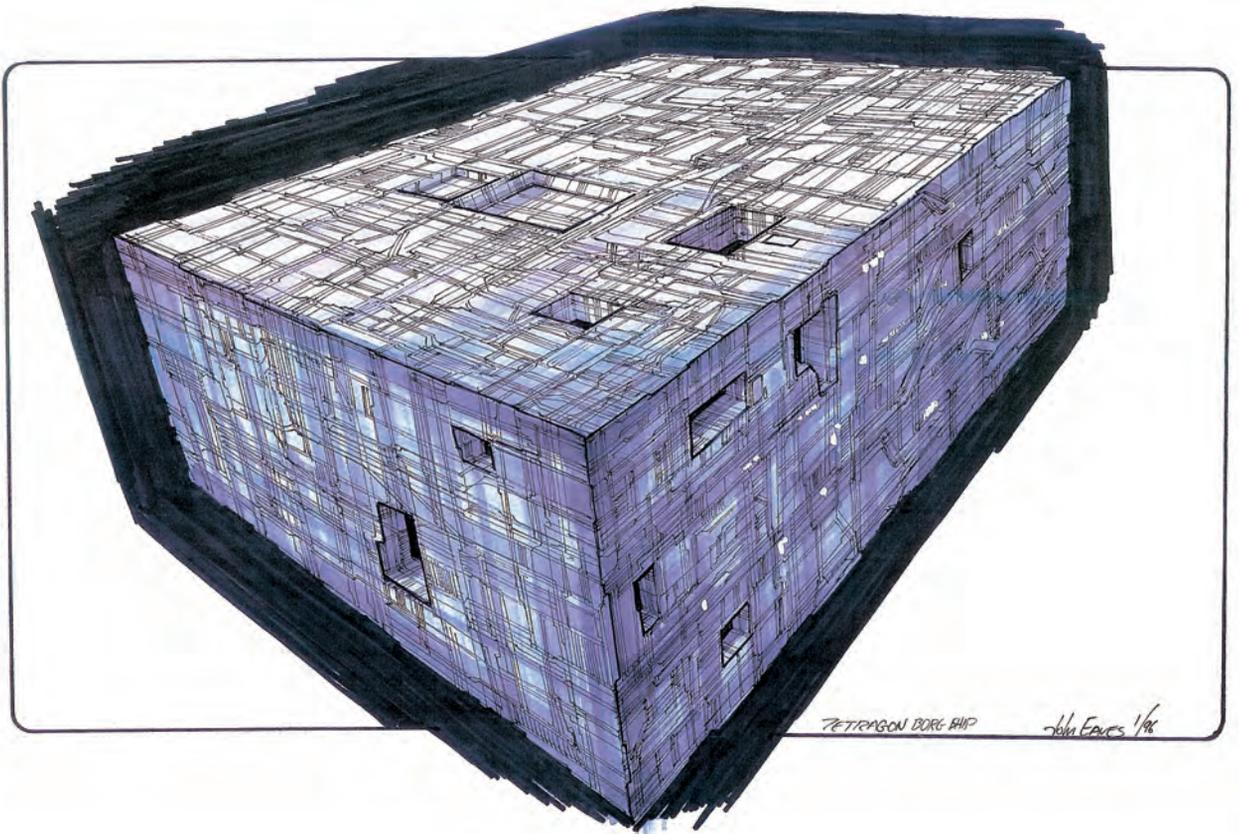
Meanwhile, Eaves was producing his own designs for the larger Borg ship. Rather than a cube, he started off with a rectangular-shaped ship, which resembled a huge brick. The hull surface began as fairly smooth, but it did have a few inset passageways where a much smaller ship could fly into and along it much like a shallow trench. The producers liked the direction Eaves was taking, but they didn't want the surface to be smooth and asked for it to feature more Borg detail.

TOO REGULAR

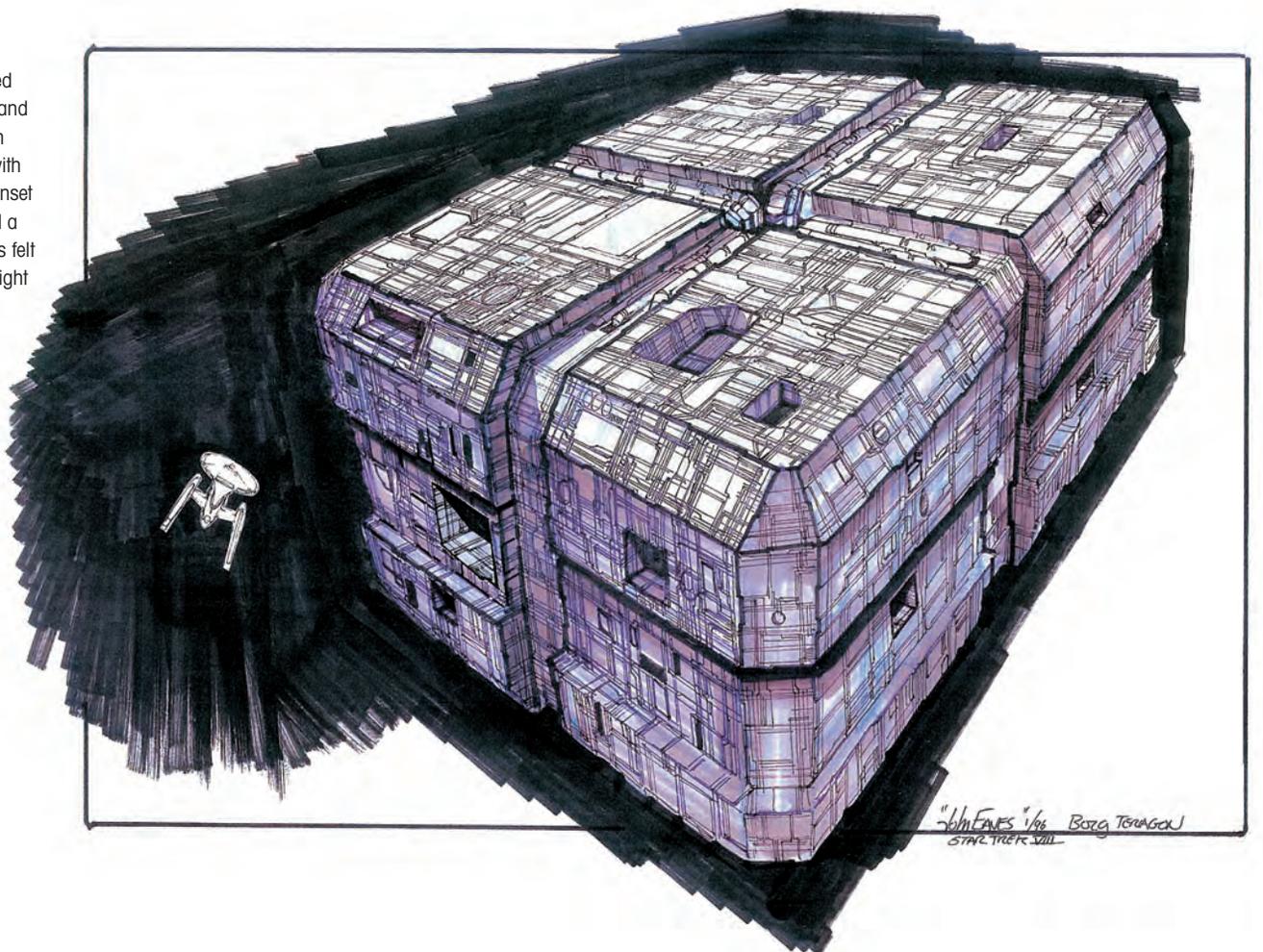
Eaves's second pass suggested there would be more paneling, and showed large, recessed areas. "The next one had very lateral planes and a very uniform shape," said Eaves. "The producers liked the idea of the detailing on it; it had

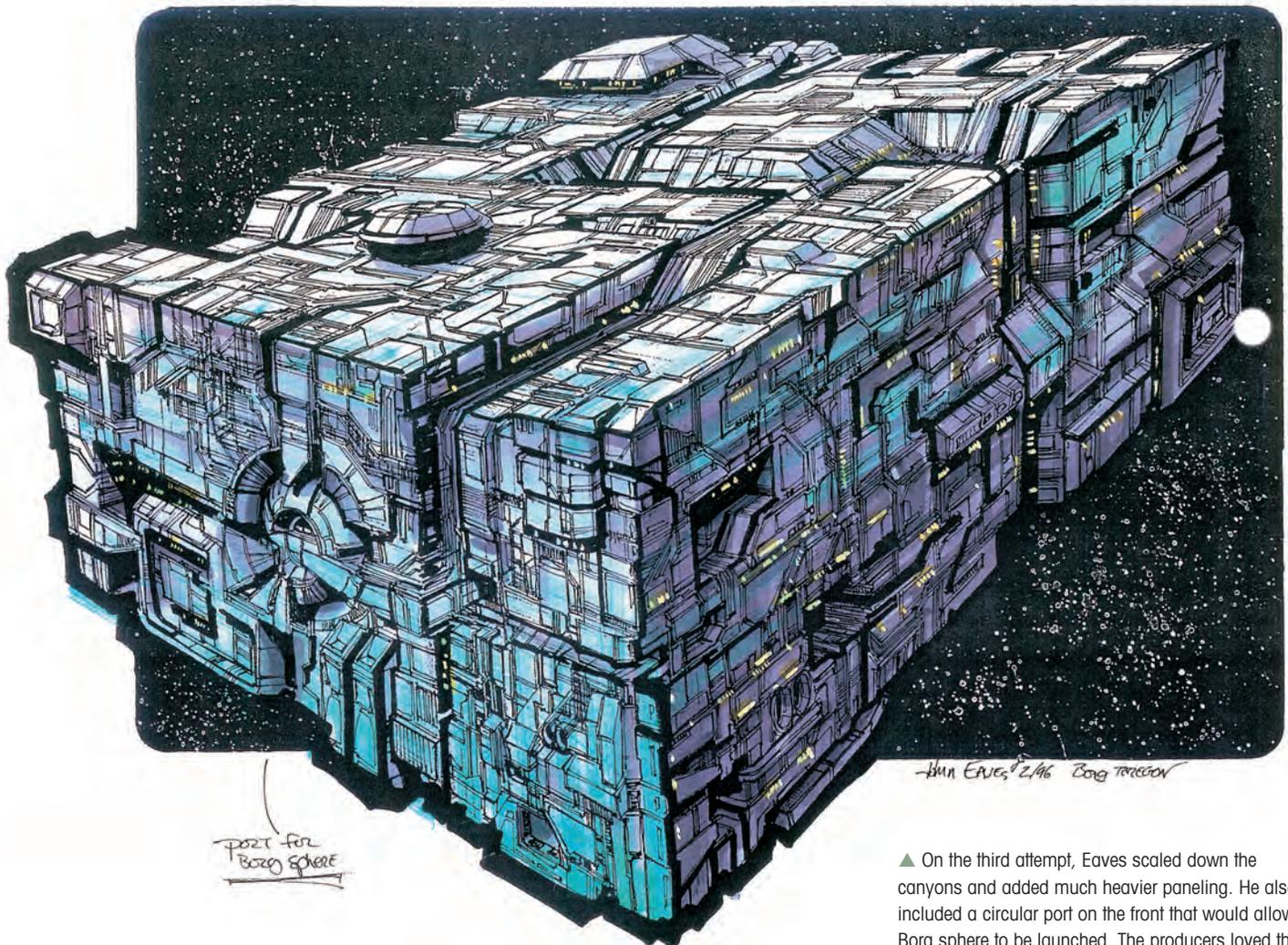


► When Eaves was first asked to design a new large ship for the Borg based on a tetragon shape, he drew up a rectangular brick-shaped vessel. The hull was largely smooth, although there were a few openings leading to the interior. The producers liked the rectangular shape, but they wanted more familiar Borg detail on the surface.



► On the second attempt, Eaves added more surface detail and broke up the smooth rectangular shape with beveled edges and inset trenches that formed a cross. The producers felt it was going in the right direction, but it still looked too regular, and they asked Eaves to make a third attempt.





▲ On the third attempt, Eaves scaled down the canyons and added much heavier paneling. He also included a circular port on the front that would allow the Borg sphere to be launched. The producers loved this design, but ultimately a decision was made at the last minute to revert to the familiar cube shape for the Borg.

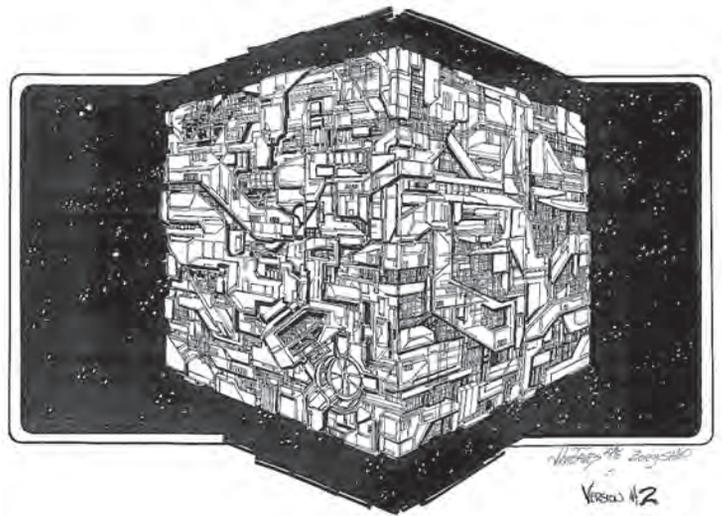
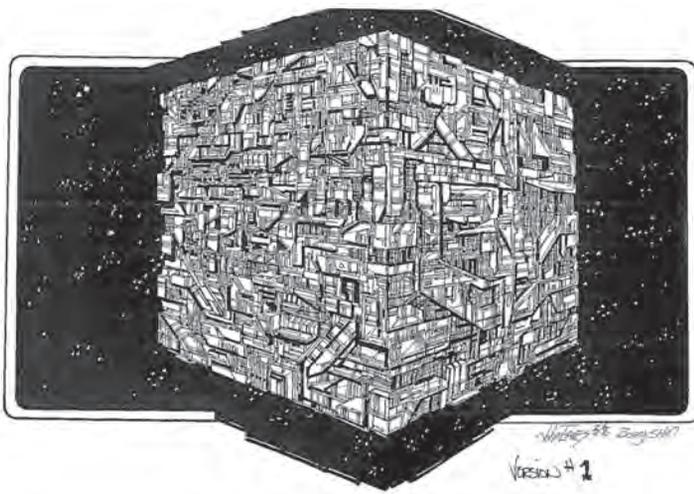
ribbon-shaped canyons. They liked the feel of that, but they felt that the pattern was too regular and too mathematical.”

BACK TO SQUARE ONE

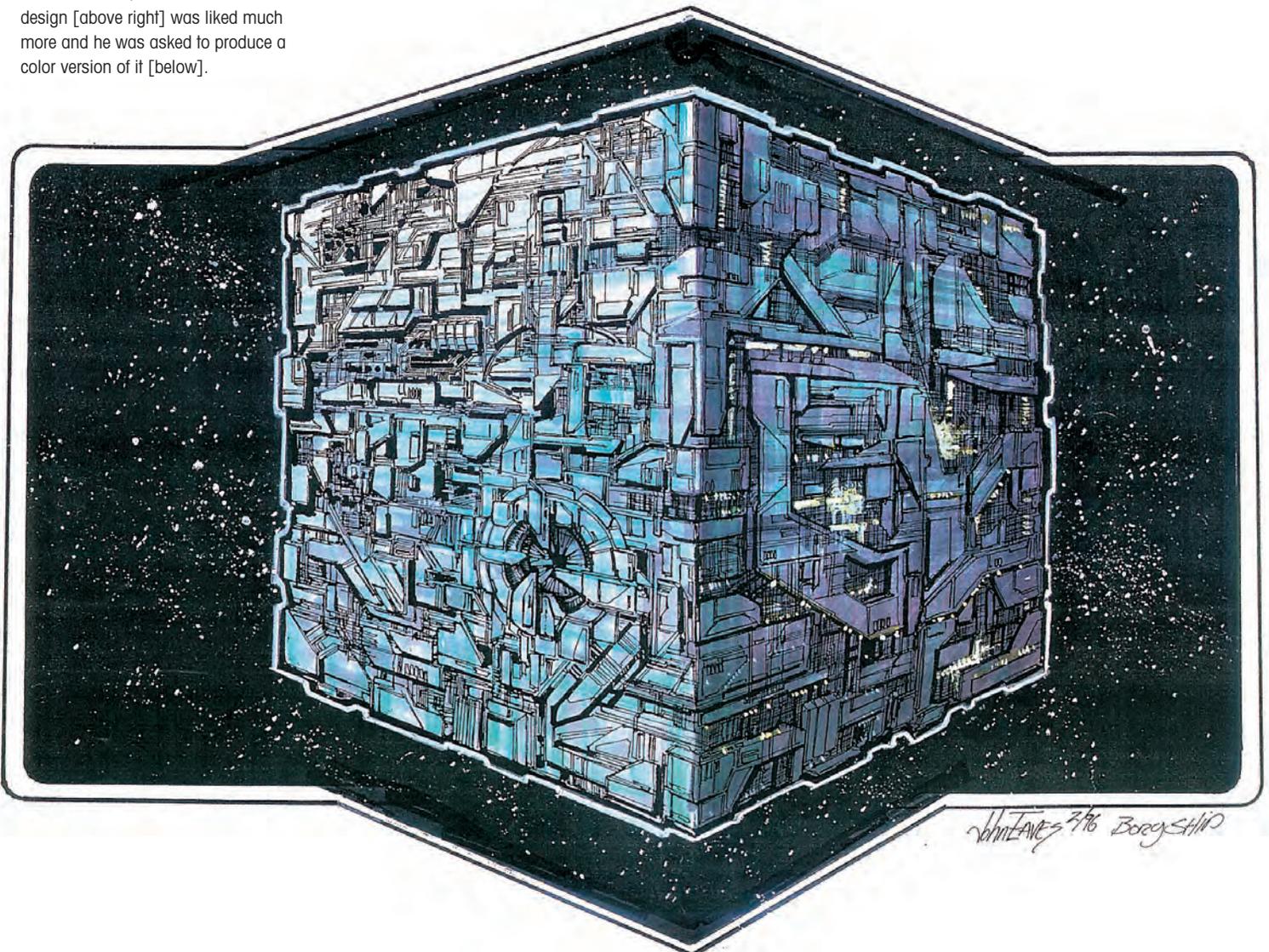
So, in his third pass, Eaves concentrated on breaking up the design of the ship and avoiding any kind of regular pattern. He also deepened the trenches and included a circular hatch where the sphere could emerge. The producers felt that Eaves had hit the nail on the head with this design and approved it, but much to Eaves’s frustration a week or so later they came back and told him to revert to a cube shape.

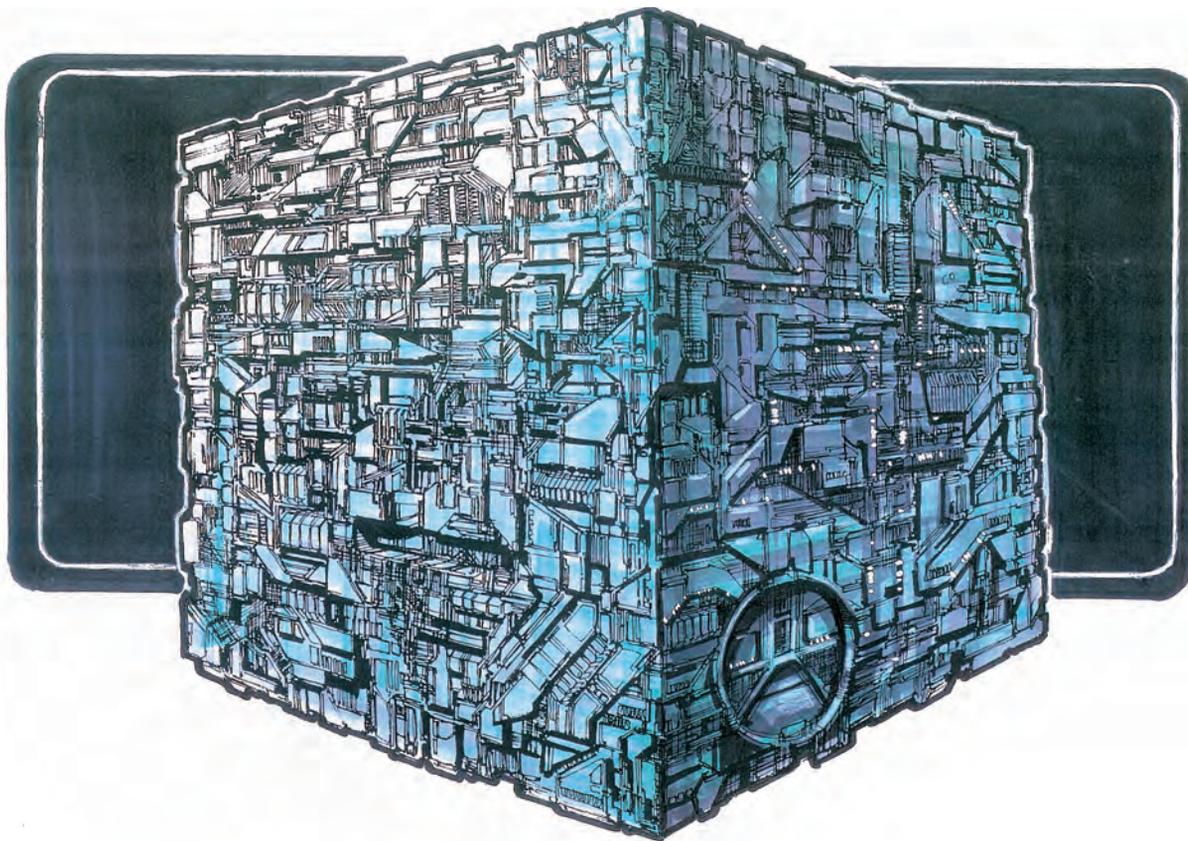
When Eaves drew his first Borg cube, it was supposed to be vast, so the surface was filled with

detail. As Eaves said, nobody really liked the look of this cube. “The first one was really overly detailed,” said Eaves. “That was where I started incorporating 45-degree lines all through it. They liked that; it was very intricate, but it was too busy, so they had me go with version two. That had the same breakup; I started putting a heavier panel on top of it and incorporating the escape hatch. That was more the direction the producers wanted, so Herman Zimmerman had me do a color pass on it. That one had the sphere hatch on the left-hand side; for the very final pass they had me put the hatch on the right side and they went back to a little finer detail. It was almost going back in a full circle back to the first sketch. It had a little bit of the heavier panel but more of the fine-scale stuff.”



► Once the Borg tetragon idea had been dropped, Eaves was asked to redesign the cube. The producers felt that his first attempt [above] had far too much detail, while his second design [above right] was liked much more and he was asked to produce a color version of it [below].





◀ Eaves' final design for the cube had similar detailing to the last version of the tetragon, but he added a lot of 45-degree angles to the paneling. The studio model was based on this drawing, but the escape hatch was covered up to keep it as a surprise for the audience when the sphere emerged.

When you look at Eaves's drawings, the hatch the sphere emerged from was easily identifiable; this wasn't the case in the movie, when the sphere emerged from a concealed hangar. Eaves explained that the change was actually made while the model was being constructed.

CONCEALED ENTRANCE

"As the model went on, they decided to keep the door hidden, so it wouldn't be seen during the attack and wouldn't be revealed until the very last moment," said Eaves. "On all the drawings you could see where the port was; that established where on the cube that hatch was located, but, in fact, you never saw it except for that one scene where it opened, so really it could be anywhere."

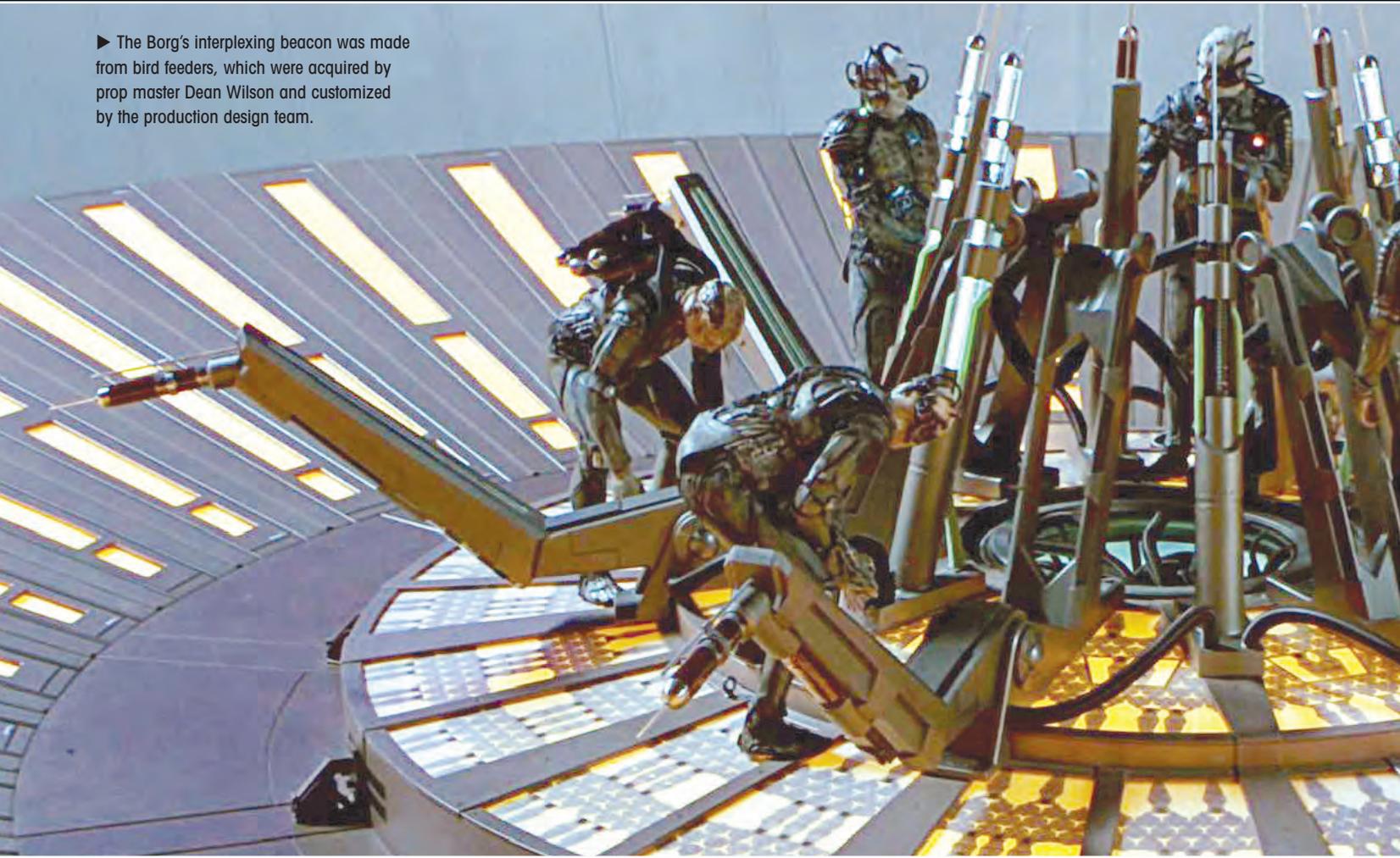
Eaves's final concept illustration of the Borg cube was sent to Industrial Light & Magic, where model makers John Goodson, Barbara Affonso, Giovanni Donovan and Jon Foreman built the studio model. Thankfully, Eaves did not have to draw every individual hatch and panel because they would be almost impossible to replicate in brass etch, the

material that was largely used to build the model. Eaves also liked the idea that the modelers were in on the creative process as they used their own judgment to interpret his drawings.

The main reason why the Borg cube had to be remade was because the original version of the cube for the television show wasn't refined enough to stand up to cinematic scrutiny. Despite this, the studio model of the cube built for *FIRST CONTACT* was slightly smaller than the television version. It was just a 30-inch square model, but detail was added with layers and layers of brass etch, plus the use of many paperclips. They may have been a surprising low-tech item to use, but they were very effective in embellishing the surface.

The revised Borg cube model was designed and built with much effort and much expense, but it was only used in *FIRST CONTACT*. Of course, Borg cubes often appeared in *VOYAGER* over the subsequent years, but they were CG models. The physical studio model from *FIRST CONTACT* was eventually sold at the '40 Years of *STAR TREK: The Collection*' auction in 2006 for \$96,000.

► The Borg's interplexing beacon was made from bird feeders, which were acquired by prop master Dean Wilson and customized by the production design team.



CREATING BORG

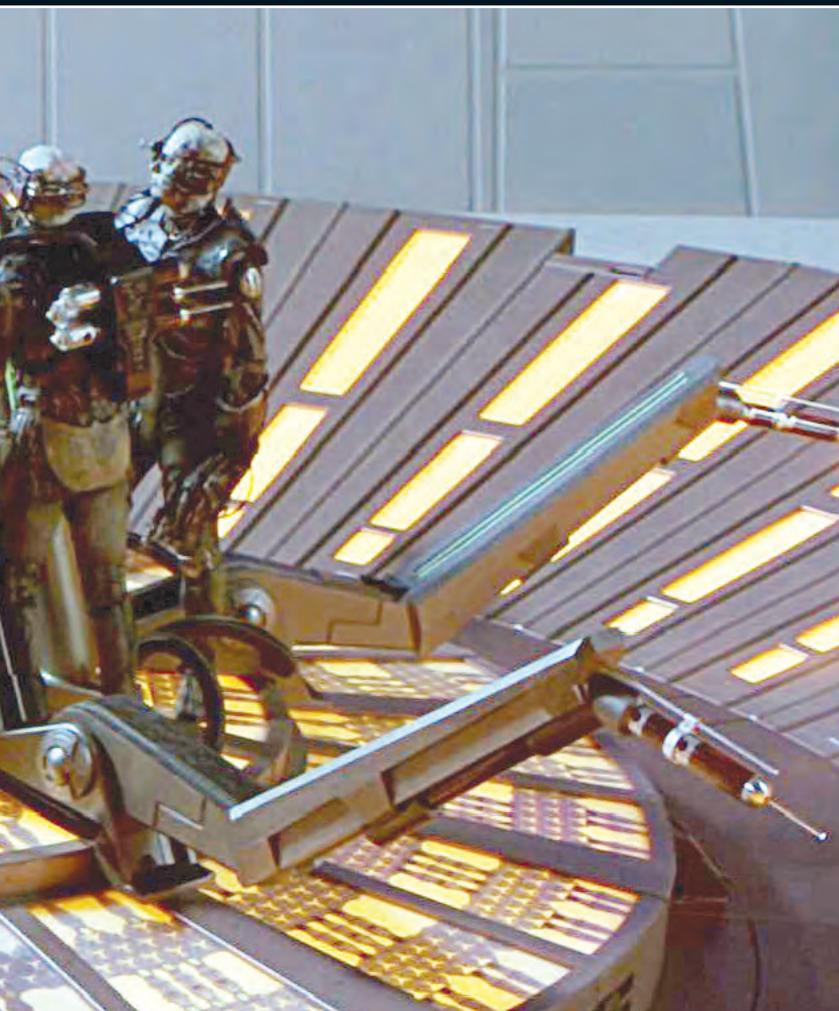
TECHNOLOGY

In *STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT* some of the Borg's hi-tech equipment had distinctly low-tech origins, including bird feeders and a cigarette lighter.

What do you use to build props for a large Borg interplexing beacon and a small Borg neural processor? These challenging tasks were left to Dean Wilson, who was prop master on *STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT*, and the movie's scenic artist Alan Kobayashi.

In the Dixon Hill holodeck scene, Captain Picard blasted a drone with a Tommy gun, and then in a fit of rage ripped apart its chest cavity. He was looking for a neural processor, a small piece of Borg technology fitted to all drones that recorded the information sent to them from the collective.

Attaching the neural processor to a tricorder, Picard learned that the Borg were planning to turn the *U.S.S. Enterprise* NCC-1701-E's deflector dish into an interplexing beacon. This was a type of subspace transmitter, which was powerful enough to reach the Delta Quadrant and call for reinforcements.



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- bilingual French/English packaging
- case pack: 4, cu. ft.: 2.0, wt.: 8 lbs.

5101-4 BIRD FEEDER

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- heavy-duty acrylic and stainless steel construction — indestructible by squirrels
- includes quick release tray — saves seed and simplifies cleaning
- large, 3 lb. seed capacity
- six feeding stations
- bilingual French/English packaging
- case pack: 4, cu. ft.: 2.0, wt.: 8 lbs.

Includes easy to remove tray - saves seed and simplifies cleaning.

Rather than build a neural processor prop from scratch, Kobayashi surprisingly found exactly what they could use in his local electronic store. A wooden barrel was filled with surplus promotional cigarette lighters, which featured flashing red LEDs. They were the perfect props for their needs, and Kobayashi bought the entire stock of 150 to make sure they had plenty of backups. The lighters were first opened and drained of their fluid before the clear outer case was detailed to create an intricate Borg memory chip.

Meanwhile, Wilson found what he was looking for in an even more unusual place. He discovered parts for a Borg interplexing beacon in the 'Top Flight Birdfeeder' company catalog, which described an item as: "Finch feeder, heavy-duty acrylic and stainless-steel

construction. Indestructible by squirrels!"

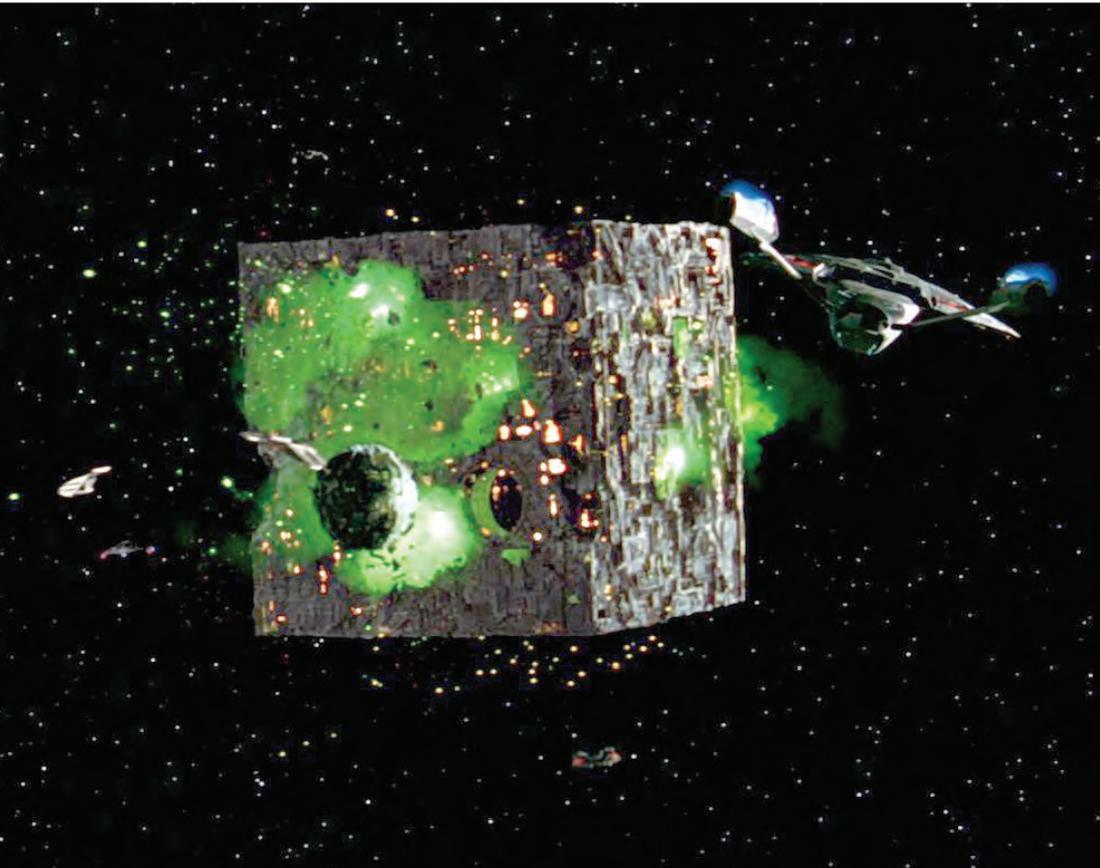
Wilson ordered 60 of them because he needed multiple power packs for a key scene in which Borg drones constructed an interplexing beacon on the deflector dish of the *Enterprise-E*. The drones plugged these power packs into the beacon one by one, bringing it up to full power while Picard and some of his crew desperately tried to stop them. The bird feeders were opened, neon lighting was installed, the interior wrapped with colored gel, and contacts were fitted so that the power pack would instantly light when plugged into the Borg beacon. These props made out of the bird feeders weren't just thrown away at the end of the film, but were reused throughout *DEEP SPACE NINE* and *VOYAGER*, mostly as organic sample containers.

▲ Prop master Dean Wilson saw this advertisement for bird feeders and thought that if neon lights were installed inside them, they would make effective parts in an interplexing transmitter.

▼ A Borg neural processor was made by converting a lighter with a clear plastic housing, which had internal flashing red LEDs when a button was pressed.



ON SCREEN



TRIVIA

The bartender [pictured below] featured in the Dixon Hill holodeck scene from *STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT* was played by Michael Zaslow. He also appeared as Darnell in *THE ORIGINAL SERIES* episode 'The Man Trap,' and was the first 'red shirt' to be killed. After Darnell's death, Dr. McCoy almost said his famous phrase when he uttered, "Dead, Jim" rather than his full well-known saying, "He's dead, Jim."



Watch closely and actor Adam Scott can be spotted as the conn officer on the *Defiant* during the battle with the Borg cube in *STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT*. Scott actually auditioned for the role of Lieutenant Hawk in the film, but lost out to Neal McDonough. Scott is perhaps most famous for playing Ben Wyatt in 'Parks and Recreation.'



FIRST CONTACT was originally going to be called *STAR TREK: Resurrection*. This had to be dropped because the fourth Alien movie was announced, revealing its title to be 'Alien: Resurrection.'

FIRST APPEARANCE:	STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT
MOVIE APPEARANCE:	STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT
DESIGNED BY:	John Eaves

KEY APPEARANCE

STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT

The Borg are back in Captain Picard's worst nightmare. He wakes to a message from Vice Admiral Hayes telling him that a cube is headed their way, which confirms Picard's greatest fear. It also reveals that Picard is still haunted by his experience years earlier of being assimilated into Locutus.

A spectacular space battle breaks out as dozens of Starfleet ships try to stop the massive Borg cube on its relentless way to Earth. Hayes's fleet are swatted aside by the enormously powerful cube, while the *U.S.S. Defiant* NX-74204 bravely makes several strafing runs, but takes a battering.

The *U.S.S. Enterprise* NCC-1701-E arrives just in time to save the *Defiant* crew before attacking the cube. Picard's latent connection with the Borg means he knows where the cube is vulnerable. The remaining fleet hit the cube again and again causing the cube to explode, but a smaller spherical craft emerges from the debris.

The Borg are far from finished, and the sphere travels into the past to change history by stopping Zefram Cochrane's first warp flight. Without this key event, the Federation would never have existed, but the *Enterprise-E* follows the sphere in a desperate attempt to stop the Borg and preserve the true timeline.

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