

STARSIEGE 2845

**Location Design Document
Location_FCV_VARGAS.pdf**

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20 December, 2004

1. PURPOSE

To provide a set of descriptions and design guidelines to the concept artists, modelers and mission designers for the *Verity Vargas* location of the single player campaign. This location is present as a briefing and vehicle configuration area for approximately ten missions spanning two chapters, and as one true mission in chapter one, encompassing roughly 13 unique sets. As the *Vargas* and then as her sister ship, the *J. Ambrose Gierling*, it is used for the environment between missions through chapter one and most of chapter two.

Ideally we would like this set (serving double duty as both the *Verity Vargas* and the identical *J. Ambrose Gierling*) to serve as both the location for mission 1-3 and as the "shell" between missions, so that the immersion factor is never interrupted by an impersonal menu screen. Menus would be accessed via terminals at appropriate places in the ship. Thus the HERC configuration screen would be accessed in a real HERC bay, while Scannex updates would be accessed via the player character's personal computer in his or her room. Accordingly, this document will occasionally present "before" and "after" descriptions of the same location: "before" for normal, between-mission operations, and "after" for mission 1-3, when Cybrid ships literally ram their way into the vessel and all hell breaks loose.

2. LOCATION OVERVIEW

FCV *Verity Vargas* is one of two *Titanic*-class flagships that form the centerpiece of the Artemis Pursuit Armada. She is a gigantic vessel, designed as a combination carrier and battleship, fully ten kilometers long and home to an entire armored division with infantry and logistical support (~40,000 soldiers and several thousand HERCs).

The *Vargas* has the rough outline of a spindle, a long cylinder that bulges in the center and tapers at either end. Think of a Mon Calamari cruiser (the wingless variety). Within the outlines of this general silhouette, however, her lines share the general look of human construction. Rather than an MC-80's organic curves and rounded surfaces, the *Vargas* is blocky, angular, and looks highly machined. Her hull bristles with the turrets of naval batteries and is dotted with the ports of missile launchers. The result of this layout is that about half of her total turrets and weapon emplacements can fire forward, giving her impressive forward-facing firepower. Rather than a single obvious superstructure containing all the machinery of command and control, her hull has a number of superstructure "islands" which increase fields of fire and serve various functions: bridge, communications arrays, exofighter and omnifighter hangar bays, etc. These islands are not of uniform size, but all share the multi-deck, step-pyramid shape that we see in the troopship concept. Many of them have fins that mount sensor and comm antenna arrays. These fins may be a hundred meters tall or so, but are small compared to the overall bulk of the ship.

The *Vargas* was designed from the keel out with both the XGE sublight drive and the Xavier-Ryu gravity warping FTL drive. Both technologies are characterized by the hexagonal grids of cache tech, but the panels glow orange rather than green to

reflect the human engineering which has gone into the gravity drives. Visually, these technologies are represented by about twelve to fifteen long, low blisters on the hull. These are oblong sections of orange-colored cache tech, perhaps two hundred meters wide at their widest and about fourteen hundred meters long on average. The blisters are not exactly symmetrical in size or in position: rather, the visual effect should be that the islands, turrets, hangers, and missile ports were placed on the hull deliberately and the blisters were placed wherever they would fit within that framework. At the same time, the blisters should be roughly distributed all around the hull. They should be clearly visible on her hull from all viewing angles, since they operate by enveloping the ship in a powerful gravitic field.

Besides the gravitic drives, the *Vargas* has four conventional thrusters, which are used during combat maneuvers. These are situated at the rear of the ship, arranged in a square around the vessel's stern so that they ring the hull as it tapers. Again, think of a Mon Cal cruiser. The thrusters themselves should be rectangular in shape rather than circular.

In addition to its role in ship-to-ship combat, the *Vargas* serves as one of the primary transport vessels of the Armada. She carries just under two hundred troopships, each of which is capable of serving as a base center and is housed within its own hangar bay on the ventral flanks of the *Vargas*. These hangar bays serve as launch chutes for the troopships or much smaller strikeships, which are berthed with their noses pointing towards the hangar doors and ready to launch at a moment's notice. Besides these launch chutes, the *Vargas* also carries two hangar bays which handle exofighter and shuttle traffic, as well as the dropships that are not kept ready for immediate launch. The smaller of these two hangar bays is nestled in amongst the thrusters at the very rear of the ship. This is used for recovering troopships and conveying them back to their launch chutes. It should be big enough for one of the troopships, but need not be capable of handling a huge amount of traffic at once. The larger hangar bay is situated on the top of the vessel, on her forward quarter, and is capable of handling a large volume of traffic. The look here is like the hangar bays we see on the troopship concept, but obviously writ much larger.

2. MISSION SETS

Location: Corridors (*before*)

In general, the interior of the *Vargas* is far from pristine and sterile. The decksole is constructed of tough non-slip material, and frequently the internal armor which honeycombs the ship forms at least one wall of a corridor, or the floor or ceiling. The interior should share the same slightly worn, heavily machined look that we use for the exterior of human vehicles. Following are a few descriptions for the look of the *Vargas'* corridors in general.

Corridors in the "residential" areas of the ship—the areas around the crew quarters and briefing rooms—are the most comfortable corridors in the ship. The decksole is solid rather than being composed of serrated grates. A dark strip of abrasive non-slip runs down the center of the corridor, and there are acceleration couches spaced along the walls which restrain their occupants with relatively comfortable crash webbing rather than the heavier-duty shock harnesses. There are flat-screen monitors set into the walls which display advertisements for events aboard ship, both recreational and military, and provide directions to important areas the player may wish to get to (briefing rooms, launch bay, etc.). Despite these amenities, these are

corridors aboard a warship, not a hotel. Within the limits of playability, the corridors are cramped and narrow with low ceilings. There should be room for about three SCARABs to walk abreast. Every few dozen meters, the corridor is interrupted with a recessed blast door, ready to slam shut in the event of pressure loss or other disaster. The whole feel of the *Vargas* should be reminiscent of a submarine.

A few corridors between sections of the ship are major thoroughfares. The decksole here is composed of heavy duty gratings that solidly grip a crewman's boots. Airport-style slidewalks are installed at the sides of the corridor, while the center area is left free for utility vehicle traffic. At at least one point the player should pass a long window which lets him see part of a troopship sliding past through a massive hollow section of the *Vargas'* inner hull on its way back to its launch chute. The slidewalks run past long strips of monitors advertising everything from this week's galley special to the latest casualty lists. More such advertisements are displayed on monitors suspended from the ceiling, which is higher here than any other corridors aboard the ship. Where there is space, paper fliers attached to pegboards advertise card games, martial arts clubs, and other informal crew activities. These thoroughfares are a source of community for the crew of the *Vargas*, and as the player walks through them he should feel surrounded by the optimism of the entire Armada. It is an optimism not of naïve recruits but tough veterans who are here to kick ass and chew bubblegum, and ran out of bubblegum last war.

The decksole in engineering is the same sort of nonslip grating found throughout the rest of the ship. There is a distinct contrast between the relatively open space of [main engineering](#), which is designed around the alien technology of the warp core, and the rest of the engineering section of the ship. The rest of engineering should feel underground. The corridors are shaped more like tunnels than halls and the lighting is normally dim. Both walls and ceiling in engineering are crowded with pipes, conduits, grates, and access panels. In places these intrude so much on the corridor that there is barely room for a single SCARAB to maneuver. The pipes and conduits are constructed of armor plate, making them very tough while at the same time presenting them directly to the engineers for maintenance and repair. Through the clear sections of the conduit housings can be seen the flicker of electricity, the glow of plasma, and glowing cores of orange cache tech. The blast doors here are placed at frequent intervals; when a blast door is present the pipes are encased on a solid block of armor that serves as a door frame so that the blast door can create an airtight seal. Overhead wires provide convenient moorings for portable work lights.

Corridors in the "business" sections of the ship (e.g., around the launch bays and the bridge) have the same heavy duty grating decksole found in engineering and between sections. Ceilings here are still low and the corridors are still narrow, but there is room for at least two SCARABs to walk abreast at all times and sometimes (e.g., in front of a hatch) widens to the size of a small living room. Instead of comfortable acceleration couches, the wall occasionally has banks of individual bucket seats that feature rigid over-the-shoulder shock harnesses. The walls are largely devoid of decoration, though occasionally a paper flier is affixed to the wall. Instead, monitors display directories and colored strips on the wall direct the player towards his different destinations. The walls and ceiling feature grab bars spaced at frequent intervals, as these areas of the ship absolutely must be navigable in the event that artificial gravity fails. Blast doors are obvious and imposing, and even hatches have a built-up, armored look to them. At every blast door there is a small console that can be used to manually override the door mechanism, and an accompanying locker which contains cutting tools.

(after)

During mission 1-3 Cybrid assault shuttles literally ram their way into the ship, shoving aside internal armor and bulkheads through brute force. In many places we should see corridor walls peeled back as if from an exit wound, rather than blasted apart as if they were made of concrete blocks that had crumbled. Empty Cybrid boarding pods with their noses shoved into the corridor through the wall will provide obstacles and cover. Burning and burned-out utility vehicles will litter the thoroughfares, as the player treads underfoot the proud propaganda and advertisements of the Armada. The signs of fighting are everywhere: human corpses of both the naval and ground branches of the FCF, shattered SCARABs, and the broken forms of Cybrid Inquisitors and Infiltrators. Blood is blasted onto walls and stains the decksole, smeared in trails that lead to dead humans. Many corridors are barred by makeshift barricades made of half-closed blast doors, utility vehicles, and even conference tables or personal furniture. These makeshift barricades should bear the signs of heavy fighting: scorched blast doors, blasted furniture, burned and twisted vehicles, and piles of corpses. In other places heavy weapons fire has blasted holes into corridor walls and ceilings, revealing broken pipes and sparking power conduits. Many lights will be shot out or suffering from erratic power, plunging many areas of the ship into total darkness or oppressive, nightmarish strobe lighting.

As a result of Nagashima's treachery, most of the *Vargas*' blast doors will fail to close. Nevertheless, because most of the mission takes place in the bowels of the ship, the player will normally be playing in atmosphere. Thus it is appropriate to have fires burning. In the latter half of the mission (after Dawo kills Nagashima) the player will be confronted with at least one depressurized section of the ship, when a Cybrid boarding pod smashes all the way through to the corridor just in front of him, and the player will have to find a SCARAB to traverse this and any other depressurized sections.

Location: Sliptube (before)

Due to the massive size of the *Vargas*, she is laced with a series of transport tubes which let crew members quickly navigate her bulk. These 'sliptubes' run vertically, horizontally, and diagonally in all dimensions (sometimes simultaneously, curving through the ship almost like a roller coaster), criss-crossing the ship. Passengers step into lozenge-shaped cars which are shot through the tubes at high speed like bullets through a coil rifle. The cars come in different sizes but are generally large enough for at least one SCARAB, and large cars can fit several SCARABs at once. They have acceleration couches with crash-webbing restraint for use by normal passengers, and overhead grab-bars for standing passengers. A sliding hatch on the side of the car allows for entrance and exit, something like a subway train.

(after)

Sliptubes may be found at many points throughout the ship, but we intend for one to be the joint between two maps, both within the *Vargas*. We hope this will help mitigate certain level-design problems associated with the troopship hangar bay, but it also provides a convenient narrative device because at one point during the mission Dawo's sliptube car is going to crash and he will have to fight his way through the a section of tube on foot. At this point the front of Dawo's car will have been torn open by enemy fire, and the mangled car itself will lie at a drunken angle in the tube, jamming the way back. The tube is black and perfectly circular, ringed with the electromagnets which propel the car. There is little in the way of debris that can fall in here, but several electromagnets spark dangerously from impact damage or failures in the power distribution system.

Location: Dawo's Quarters (before)

Dawo is a captain in the Third Colonial Rangers, and his rank gives him a single room aboard the *Vargas*. His quarters are not large, but they do contain several amenities such as an attached head with a personal shower, a small closet containing spare uniforms and several floor-length Martian "dustcloaks" in drab brown, and a projection "window" which for all intents and purposes serves as a porthole that displays a breathtaking view of the majesty of space, and occasionally an escorting starship. Above his bed is a hanging of Masai or Martian artwork.

The lighting in Dawo's room is calm and subdued, reflecting the lower light levels he is used to as a native of Mars rather than Earth. A brighter spotlight draws a visitor's attention to a traditional Masai hunting spear, a gift from Dawo's father which is proudly displayed next to his work station. Dawo's desk is where Dawo receives Scannex updates, personal correspondence, and other flavor text between missions. There is a deliberate contrast between the grim work that occurs at the work station and the ordered majesty in the window beyond.

As the player enters Dawo's quarters he sees the bed first. The painting is hung above the bed's left side, so that it too faces the hatch as the player enters. Continuing from the view of the entering player, the hatch to the head is on the left hand wall. Dawo's desk is against the right hand wall, with the projection window above it so that Dawo can look up from his computer and see open space. His prized spear is upright in a small stand to the left of the desk, in the far corner of the room from the hatch. The closet is on the wall to the right of the work station, so that if the player made a right immediately upon stepping through the hatch the closet doors would be on his right.

(after)

After Mission 1-3, Dawo's quarters will be transferred to an identical compartment aboard the *Gierling*. The four walls and the head are therefore indistinguishable from his room aboard the *Vargas*, except that the textures are those appropriate to the imperial vessel. There are two additional differences: the painting of Mars above his bed is gone, replaced by a painting of the Cybrid attack on the *Vargas*; and his Masai spear leans against the wall in the corner of his room, rather than standing upright and illuminated in its display stand.

Once Dawo lands on Nemesis, in Mission 1-6, he will spend his sack time in a lander which serves as a temporary barracks. (See Document: [Location_NEMESIS.pdf](#), Location: *Lander Interior-Barracks*)

Location: Flag Bridge (before)

This is the *Vargas'* flag bridge, where Admiral Nagashima and his staff dictate strategy for the naval units of the colonial component of the Pursuit Armada. It is also the stage for Dawo's confrontation of Nagashima.

This is not a *Star Trek* bridge. *Babylon 5* offers a better model (especially human ships pre-Minbari contact). The duty stations resemble miniature cockpits (sans canopy) or simulator pods, with well-padded reclining chairs designed to help the bridge crew withstand high-gee burns. Sturdy crash webbing and rigid over-the-shoulder shock harnesses are used in tandem to lock the bridge crew into their seats, securing them against even the most violent shocks the ship can withstand. The console banks present all of a crew member's controls and displays to him as he reclines without having to look left or right, just as a fighter pilot would find in the

cockpit. Also like a fighter, each of these stations is a densely but efficiently packed nest of displays and controls. Although all the consoles and duty stations are attached to the deck, the walls and ceiling of the flag bridge are studded with numerous emergency grab bars for use in the event of gravity failure. Armor, rivets, and gray metal are much in evidence. This is not a room where an academic admiral would feel at home. It is a tough, no-nonsense space where rough men do violence.

The walls of the flag bridge are actually a single sphere of protective armor, so from the interior it appears to be a dome. The oppressive atmosphere created by the armor is broken by a wide band of projection windows running along the circumference of the dome at eye level, so that officers can look out onto space when their eyes are not glued to their consoles. Although this band of windows appears to offer a view to the outside of the ship, they are only very convincing monitors and should be obviously such if they are destroyed.

The center of the deck dips down into a large pit where the flag admiral can view the disposition of his fleet in a huge holographic projection. (During mission 1-3 this plot is crowded with human and Cybrid ships in confused combat, while the icon of the *Vargas* blinks an angry red to indicate that she is being boarded.) The rest of the deck forms a donut-shaped disk around this holographic plot, with a raised level towards the rear of the bridge. The duty stations for running the ship are on the intermediate level above the pit but below the dais, oriented forward to protect their users against emergency acceleration. They form clusters of several stations each for the tactical, communication, astrogation, and coxswain sections. At the rear of the compartment, on an elevated dais that lets him overlook both the holographic plot and the activity of the bridge, is the admiral's chair. This is a larger, somewhat throne-like version of the duty stations below. It is flanked by several more stations for the admiral's staff.

(after)

The flag bridge is the one place on the *Vargas* in mission 1-3 which should not have suffered any visible damage. The contrast between this and the rest of the ship should strike the player immediately, the final proof of Admiral Nagashima's complicity in the Cybrid attack. Despite the fact that the bridge equipment itself shows no signs of fighting, about six bodies in naval uniforms—Admiral Nagashima's staff—lie dead across the bridge, their blood blasted across their duty stations. One has crawled nearly to the hatch that Dawo will enter by before he was killed. Another is slumped over one of the duty stations on the lower level. All but one of the others have been shot dead in their shock harnesses on the admiral's dais, forming a grisly tableau for the player when Dawo first sees Nagashima. This last officer will be engaged in a firefight with Nagashima when Dawo and Navarre first enter the compartment, thus allowing Nagashima and his staff officer each to accuse the other of being the traitor.

Location: SCARAB Storage (before)

This area is one of many bunkers scattered throughout the *Vargas* which is used to store her complement of SCARABs between destinations. It contains a hundred and twenty suits. The lights are normally kept off, as this is primarily a storage facility. The hardshells themselves are suspended four deep by sturdy clamps in files on overhead racks, somewhat like the droid soldiers in *The Phantom Menace*. This makes "cold storage" a dark, foreboding space, dominated by giants in shadow. Several cherry-picker platforms and forklift-type vehicles are present to move the hardshells from their storage racks to one of the four maintenance pads at the center of the area. These are little more than empty antistatic pads cleared on the floor

where routine hardshell maintenance can take place. Around the perimeter of the maintenance area, however, are a number of workbenches, repair kits, work lights, and diagnostic tools.

This is not a space that human beings frequent, which should be signified by the look and feel of the room. Bulkheads should be unpainted, the lighting (when on) should be somewhat inadequate. The pipes and conduits of the ship's lifeblood are visible running along the walls and ceiling.

(after)

Cold storage bunkers all over the ship are naturally high-priority targets for the Cybrid boarders, and during mission 1-3 this location (and any others like it that Dawo runs across) should look like it's been hit by a tornado. Pieces of SCARABs are torn off and flung across the room or blasted into scrap. The utility vehicles are ruined and overturned; maintenance tools are strewn across the floor. The racks which the hardshells were stored on are bent or broken off. The lights are dead. The room should look like a giant's graveyard as the player picks his way past the broken hardshells, stalked by Inquisitors that blend in with the dead SCARABs and the shadows.

Location: Dropship Hangar Bay (before)

This is one of dozens of spaces aboard the *Vargas* which house her complement of launch-ready dropships. This space is actually a titanic airlock, with great bay doors at both the front and rear of the space. After a troopship has launched, it is reinserted into one of these stalls by traversing an enormous open corridor that runs through the center of the ship (this is the same space we see at one point through a window on one of the thoroughfare corridors), where it enters the hangar from the rear, ready to go. The walls of the hangar are lined with a dozen or so work bays which a HERC can be walked into for reconfiguration, since there is no room for such work aboard the troopships while in transit. If a HERC needs maintenance or reconfiguration, it is walked off the troopship by a tech and into one of the stalls, where it can be serviced. These bays are great stalls that present a work crew with the catwalks and platforms on robotic arms (autoyokes) needed to access every square inch of a HERC, with room to spare in the stall for pallets of ammunition, drums of reaction mass, internal components, and other paraphernalia of HERC configuration. Throughout the campaign the player will see many such stalls, as they are necessary at whatever base the player is operating out of. At the base of one of the dropship ramps a quartermaster's desk has been set up along with a number of vehicle configuration stations. These are used to configure the player's squad before missions. These workstations, like the HERC stalls, will be encountered throughout the single-player campaign.

The autoyokes are a ubiquitous feature of HERC configuration stalls, and allow one tech to do the work of ten. An autoyoke consists of a small platform with a safety railing on an articulated, telescoping arm. Below the platform is a large, heavy-duty claw which can be used as a crane. The platform also boasts a number of probes and robotic grippers of various sizes. These are used to interface with diagnostic ports outside and inside the HERC. They are controlled by the tech using a pair of feedback gloves mounted on a control console on the safety railing. The autoyoke itself can be bolted to the deck, or it can be mounted on a wheeled platform like an ordinary cherry-picker. The look of an autoyoke is essentially a cross between a very mobile crane arm and a robotic spider.

Though the HERC stalls are necessarily large, they are dwarfed by the dropship. The troopship dominates the hangar physically and spiritually, casting long shadows over the space which are pierced in places by the harsh floodlights of the work spaces. Large air intakes and ducts extend down the walls to evacuate and repressurize the hangar. Because the ship is so huge, the walls are necessarily also high, and observation windows pierce the wall. Some of these observation rooms also have hatches by which players can enter the hangar bay onto a catwalk, then descend to the floor of the hangar via ladders and elevators.

When this set is used as a between-mission ready area, the dropship in the bay will be a strikeship. A strikeship is by no means a small vessel—no ship that can carry ten HERCs can be described as “small.” Nevertheless, because these hangar bays accommodate both strikeships and the much larger troopships, the hangar will potentially swallow up the strikeship visually. When the strikeship is present, it should be well lit by floodlights so that the player’s eye is drawn to it in the midst of the shadows. During mission 1-3 the strikeship is replaced by an enormous troopship, which is the ship Dawo will escape the doomed *Vargas* aboard (coincidentally preserving the player’s inventory of vehicles and components from blowing up aboard the ship).

The ship’s domineering presence and huge size compared to the individual HERCs in the work stalls should bring home to the player the awesome scale of the Pursuit Armada. The dropship’s nose is pointed eagerly towards a gigantic, heavily reinforced bay door. The space is strewn with the detritus of HERC configuration and maintenance and is starkly lit by floodlights, while work lights strung on power cables festoon the work bays. The entire feel of the space should be one of imminent activity rather than solemn readiness.

Two side notes. First, ideally we would like a few of these HERC stalls at all times to actually have vehicles in them that the player will recognize as his. One way to do this would simply be to have one or two of the configs in the player’s inventory appear in the stalls, just as configured. A cooler option would be for one or two of the configs used in the *last* mission to appear in the stalls, with the damage they sustained during that mission. Ideally, one or two components of those configs (weapons, or even internal components) would be on utility trucks or pallets within the stall, giving the impression that techs are working on them. We think this would be a great additional touch to the game and its immersion factor, but if it turns out to be too resource-intensive we understand. As a last resort, the hangar bay can simply be modeled with a vehicle or two in it, and the same vehicle will appear between every mission.

Second, we realize that the troopship model (which will form the centerpiece of several planetside bases) is going to be huge—possibly so huge that the rest of the level would not fit in a map with the troopship in it. We have no problem dividing mission 1-3 into multiple maps; in fact, we are expecting to do so. However, we are hoping that the troopship hangar bay (complete with the full troopship model from the planet bases), Dawo’s quarters, Dawo’s briefing room, and the corridors that connect them all *will* all fit onto one map so that the player can have the experience of visiting those three separate locations between missions in Dawo’s shoes (or, later on, walking between the hangar bay, Sunder’s quarters, and Sunder’s briefing room, which will simply require using imperial rather than colonial skins). We’d like to use that same area between ten missions over chapters 1 and 2.

(after)

The player will never get an opportunity to visit this hangar bay before mission 1-3. This is important, because although the *Vargas* set contains only one hangar bay, this hangar bay will serve double duty. During mission 1-3 this hangar bay is *not* the one that Dawo usually launches from (he will be unable to reach that) but rather another hangar bay that members of the Rangers have managed to secure temporarily and are holding for as long as possible so that humans aboard the *Vargas* can evacuate in the troopship there. Dawo probably enters the hangar bay after a sliptube ride and then gets into the hangar bay itself through one of the upper catwalks rather than the "front door," so the player should not be able to tell that he is in fact walking into the same hangar bay he has before. After all, it will look different, it will have a different ship in it, and he will not be following a familiar path to it. Additionally, any identifying numbers on the wall (e.g., hangar bay 64) should be replaced by different numbers for purposes of mission 1-3 in order to sell the illusion that this room is a different set.

This hangar bay has seen its share of fighting during the invasion. A Cybrid boarding pod has punched through one wall and lies beside the troopship, dwarfed by the human ship. The occupants of that pod lie dead beside it, gunned down by one of Dawo's squadmates who has managed to get into a HERC and is holding down the bay. Other Cybrid bodies (and parts of bodies) are on the deck from subsequent attempts to take the bay. Other damage is visible from the general pounding the ship has taken: some of the catwalks have broken loose or are hanging precariously; broken glass from blown-out observation windows crunches underfoot. Ammunition and crates of spare parts have also been knocked from their pallets. Tanks of nanites and reaction mass have been broken, spilling their contents onto the deck.

Location: Engineering (before)

Main Engineering comprises the *Vargas'* primary power plant and the guts of her Xavier-Ryu warp drive. The corridors in this section of the ship are tubular rather than rectangular. Conduits covered in armor plating, access panels, and clear plastic crowd the walking space, giving the entire section the feel of a submarine. The engineers who work here are in daily, hands-on contact with their technology, not separated from it by layers of computers and remote interfaces.

The engineering compartment is designed around the warp drive, which is an alien multistory structure of smooth black metal and orange hexagonal panels. The structure itself features many cylindrical or disk-like bulges that are large enough to walk on, to which guard rails have been bolted. It is cocooned in catwalks, autoyokes, and ladders, giving the *Vargas'* engineers the ability to crawl over every inch of the alien technology. A catwalk circles the very top of the compartment, from which engineers can reach the conduits which provide power to the warp drive. It is from these conduits that Dawo will enter Main Engineering, making his way down the warp drive to the control deck below.

The warp drive is several decks tall, but it does not actually pierce any full decks. Instead, partial platforms fill the space between the ceiling and floor. These platforms connect the catwalks, anchor the autoyokes, and provide the floor space for computer consoles, acceleration chairs, and docking niches for SCARAB-type worksuits. Thus the space around the warp drive is not at all wasted, but the player should still get a dizzying sense of vertigo by looking down from the top.

This is a very different sort of space from what the player has experienced elsewhere on the ship. Not only is it comparatively open, it is vertically rather than horizontally

oriented. This is in deliberate contrast to the narrow corridors and service tubes found elsewhere in engineering country, for two reasons. First, it drives home to the player that the warp core is still alien technology, because it intrudes like a giant splinter into the flesh of the ship. Second, by the time Dawo gets here he will be in a SCARAB, so we want him to be able to use his jets to full effect.

At the bottom of the warp drive the deck becomes a solid floor again, with more consoles and docking niches. The consoles here should all have heavy-duty acceleration chairs such as those found on the bridge. A large double-wide blast door leads to the rest of the ship. One wall displays a large blueprint drawing of the *Vargas*, which during mission 1-3 features various sections highlighted yellow, orange, or red to indicate the damage caused by the Cybrid invasion. The chief engineer's duty station is situated beside a holographic representation of the same. The primary fusion reactor is visible through a rectangular porthole close to the chief engineer's station. Beside that porthole is an airlock with heavy duty blast doors, through which the reactor itself can be accessed.

We are aware that the layout of engineering, with its warp core running vertically through the center of the compartment, may seem reminiscent of the engineering rooms familiar from *Star Trek*. This similarity should be mitigated as much as possible. The walls of engineering should be crowded with pipes, catwalks, and platforms. The warp core itself is something that can actually be walked upon, climbed, and crawled over. The platforms, catwalks, and ladders that surround it should prevent the player from ever viewing the entire warp core at once, and by breaking up the room visually should reinforce the "submarine in space" atmosphere of the ship.

(after)

A major Cybrid goal in attacking the *Vargas* is to capture its grav drives. Engineering has therefore been spared the worst of the invaders' ravages. However, the humans in engineering put up a serious fight and several attempts to retake Engineering have been made since by colonial infantry. Thus there are no boarding pods in Engineering itself, but the space shows the signs of heavy infantry fighting. Consoles have been smashed or shot out, railings have been shot away, catwalks are hanging by a thread. Pipes and conduits have been broken despite their armor plating. Dead bodies are everywhere, including a few Cybrid infantry. A few engineers have made it to their worksuits (crosses between SCARABs and *Aliens*-style power loaders), which have been shot down and lie broken across the catwalks and railings.

Location: Third Rangers Briefing Room

This is where Dawo will receive his actual mission briefings for the beginning of the campaign. The room is a small amphitheater, with room for about thirty "audience" members. The back wall is a large two-dimensional display which is used to display maps and the like; a smaller three-dimensional holographic projector is situated in front of the briefing officer's podium. Unlike the briefing room we see in *Return of the Jedi*, this room has a gritty feel. The audience sits in sturdy chairs which have restraining harnesses or crash webbing built in, suggesting that they may be required to sit here during high-gee emergency maneuvers. The internal armor which runs throughout the *Vargas'* hull is much in evidence along one wall.

This space is used for mid-level briefings. By the time anybody meets here the big decisions have been made and strategy has already been planned. The room is used for presentations, so it should feel more official and declaratory than comfortable and informal.

Location: Sunder's Quarters

Sunder Cain's quarters aboard the *J. Ambrose Gierling* are a single compartment identical in layout to Dawo's aboard the *Vargas*. However, Sunder keeps a very different sort of room. It is an incongruous mishmash of clutter and noble arrogance. His bed is unmade, and the debris of living is strewn about the floor: books, clothes, even dishes of food. The lighting in the room is bright and uncompromising. On the other hand, Sunder's knighthood is on conspicuous display. His knight's saber and a dueling handgun are displayed horizontally on a dresser by his bed, like a samurai's daisho, so that the pistol is displayed beneath the curve of the saber. A pair of wickedly curved khanjars are likewise displayed ornamentally by his desk workstation. Where Dawo had artwork on his wall, Sunder has a medal case which displays his various decorations for valor and service to the Empire. Ostensibly his room is that of a blue-collar criminal elevated to the rarified heights of knighthood. In fact, "Sunder" uses the state of his room to further his cover story as a Blood Eagle Knight. He wants those who see his quarters to be struck at once with both his exalted station and his utter disregard for the opinions of his fellow human beings.

As the player enters Sunder's room, he is immediately confronted by Sunder's desk. Sunder never sits with his back to a door. His medals are on display on the wall opposite the hatch, so that they too immediately draw the attention of any visitors. Against the far right wall is his bed, with its dresser and dueling weapons positioned at right angles to it along the wall opposite the hatch. At the foot of the bed, in the near right corner relative to the hatch, is the hatch to Sunder's head. His closet is situated identically to Dawo's.

Location: Blood Eagle Briefing Room

This is the conference room in which Sunder will receive his briefings. As a knight captain, Sunder outranks Dawo considerably, and his higher status is reflected in the more collegiate atmosphere of the room. This is a room where real command decisions are worked out. It should feel official, but with a touch of the Round Table to it. Perhaps twenty knights are situated around a conference table, which has a small holographic projector and flatscreen work station built into it in front of every seat. At the head of the table is a larger holographic projector, which is frequently used by the crippled Eun Alba to conduct these briefings. The seats are less industrial and more comfortable than those in Dawo's briefing room. The ceiling is lower. The walls are decorated with hanging banners bearing the crests of each of the Armada's divisions, plus banners for the Great Human Empire, the Free Colonies, and the Armada itself. The Blood Eagle's banner is hung at the head of the table.

3. LIST OF ASSETS

Location: Exterior

Miniature *Exemplar*-class invasion carrier (suitable for use in cut-scenes as either or both the FCS *Verity Vargas* or ISS *J. Ambrose Gierling*)

Troopship recovery bay (partial set, suitable for use in cut-scenes where troopships are being recovered, in conjunction with the existing troopship model), *or*

Miniature troopship (suitable for use in cut-scenes where troopships are being recovered, in conjunction with miniature *Exemplar* model)

Various miniature human warships, transports, and exofighters (suitable for viewing through windows and/or in cut-scenes)

Location: Dawo's and Sunder's Quarters

Bed
Personal desk\\console\\workstation, with computer
Ceremonial Masai spear
Masai spear display stand
Assorted colonial clothing on hangers (including dustcloaks)
Assorted knight clothing on hangars
Shower
Toilet
Sink
Martian landscape painting
Dresser/chest of drawers
Personal debris—e.g., books, discarded clothing, food trays from the galley
Dueling- pistol and sabre display stand
Dueling pistol
Khanjar desk ornament
Medal case

Location: Dawo's and Sunder's Briefing Rooms

Medium-sized holographic projector
2-D map wall
Podium
Crash chair with shock harnesses
Regular chair
Conference table with personal consoles
Feudal-style unit banners
Small-sized holographic projector

Location: Cold Storage

Overhead SCARAB storage rack
Tool chest
Work benches
Mobile cherry-picker platform
Stand-mounted work light

Location: Flag Bridge

Heavy-duty duty station
Admiral's duty station
Large holographic projector (including spherical holographic display of the space battle)
Railings
Zero-gee grab bars

Location: Troopship Hangar Bay

HERC configuration and repair stall
Airport-style utility trucks
Autoyoke
Strung work light
Reaction mass canister
Assorted missile and ammunition pallets
Warning light
Assorted metal crates\\boxes
Pallette of crates
Pallette of reaction mass canisters

HERC weapons
Internal components
Mobile crane
Chief tech's desk
Troopship
Strikeship
Hangar door
Rear hangar door
Chief tech

Location: Sliptube

Sliptube car
Ruined sliptube car
Sliptube terminal

Location: Engineering

Xavier-Ryu gravitic drive core
Assorted engineering consoles
Assorted power and fluid conduits
Blast doors for conduit-lined passageways
Conduit diagnostic terminals
Elevator platform
Worksuit docking niche
Zero-gee worksuit
Fusion reactor

Location: Corridors

Acceleration couches with crash webbing
Overhead panel lighting
Emergency strip lighting
Large blast door
Medium blast door
Small blast door
Heavy-duty hatch
Regular hatch
Wall-mounted monitor
Ceiling-mounted monitor
Slidewalk
Assorted rubble and debris
Cybrid boarding pod