



STRIKE SUIT  
**ZERO**







# STRIKE SUIT **ZERO**



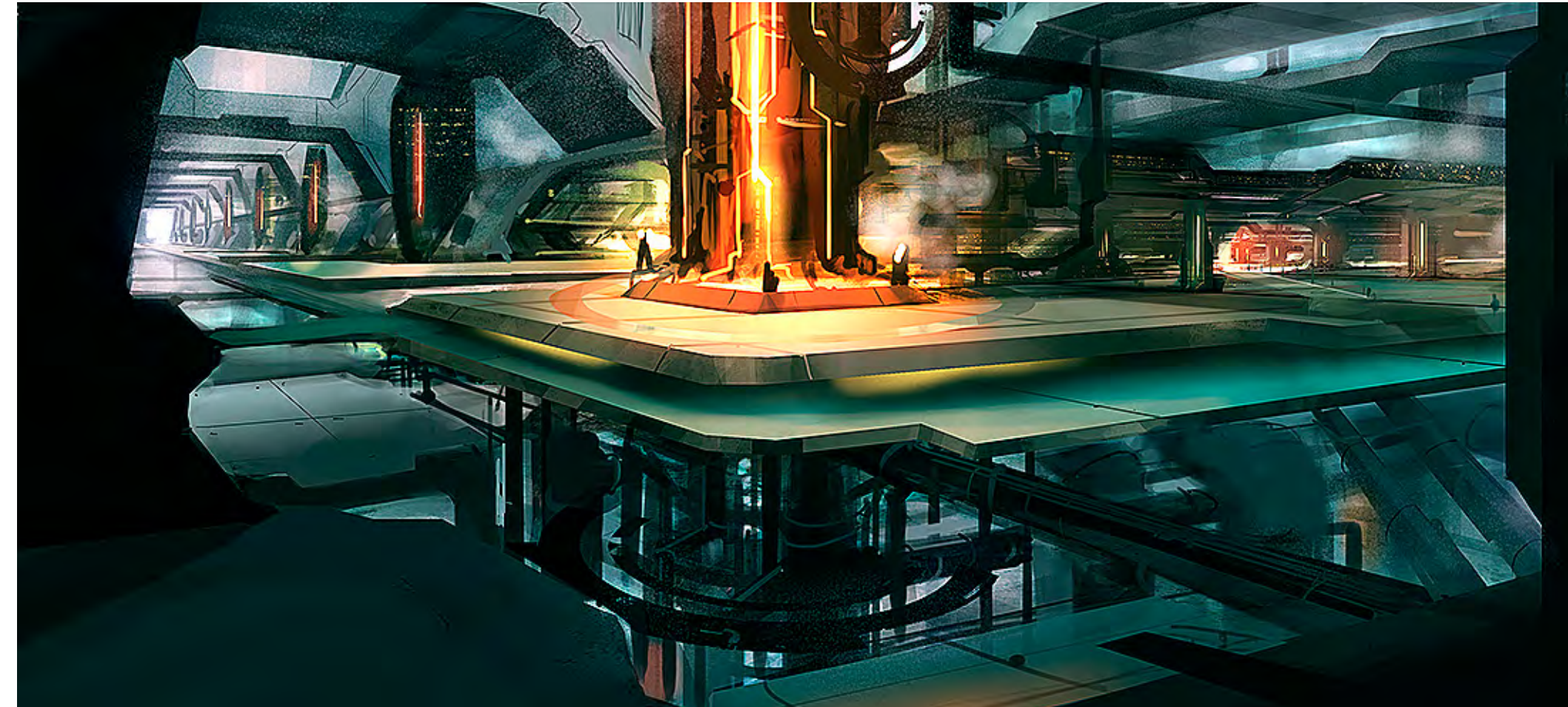
Welcome to the **Art of Strike Suit Zero**. Over the following pages, we'll take you on a journey through the creative process behind the game, from early concept work right up until the final designs.

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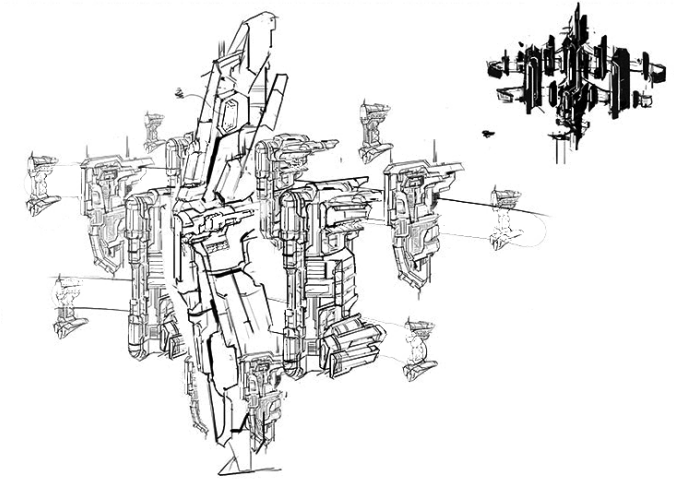
# FOLDER 001 // THE UNIVERSE

**THE STORY OF STRIKE SUIT ZERO STRIKE** is set 287 years in the future. The discovery of Fold technology has allowed mankind to reach the stars and colonize new worlds. However, demands for colonial independence have led to a war that spans the galaxy. As a result, the settings for our game vary from new worlds, deep-space stations to Earth itself. This is a universe of varying scales from small fighters to massive capital ships; of different locations from massive space platforms and mined nebulae to the wreckage of destroyed worlds.



## FILE SSZ0001 // SPACE PLATFORMS

DURING DEVELOPMENT we have explored various different designs for the space stations we needed as can be seen in the art work here. Originally, we were aiming for a larger sense of scale and trying to create vast cities in space that would populate our play areas and give us something to fight around. However, as we developed the game, it became clear that creating structures of this size would not complement the game play that the designers had planned for across the games missions.

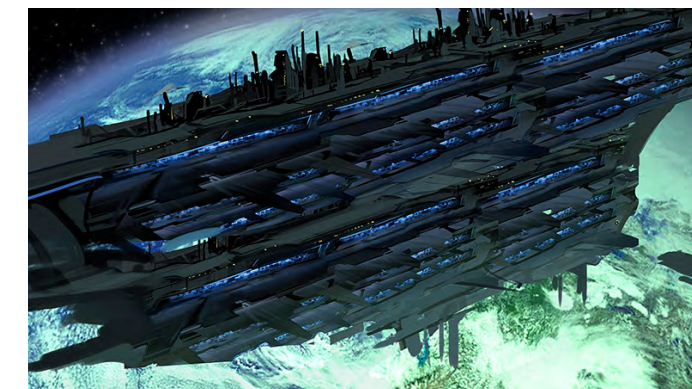






FILE SSZ0002 //

**WE WERE KEEN TO INTRODUCE  
MULTIPLE FOCAL POINTS IN  
SPACE TO ADD DEPTH TO THE  
SSZ UNIVERSE. HERE YOU CAN  
SEE IDEAS FOR FOCAL POINTS  
WITHIN AN ICE SETTING.**



FILE SSZ0003 //  
**CITIES IN SPACE**

We liked the idea of a heavily inhabited orbit around Earth and so experimented with the idea of enormous space colonies.

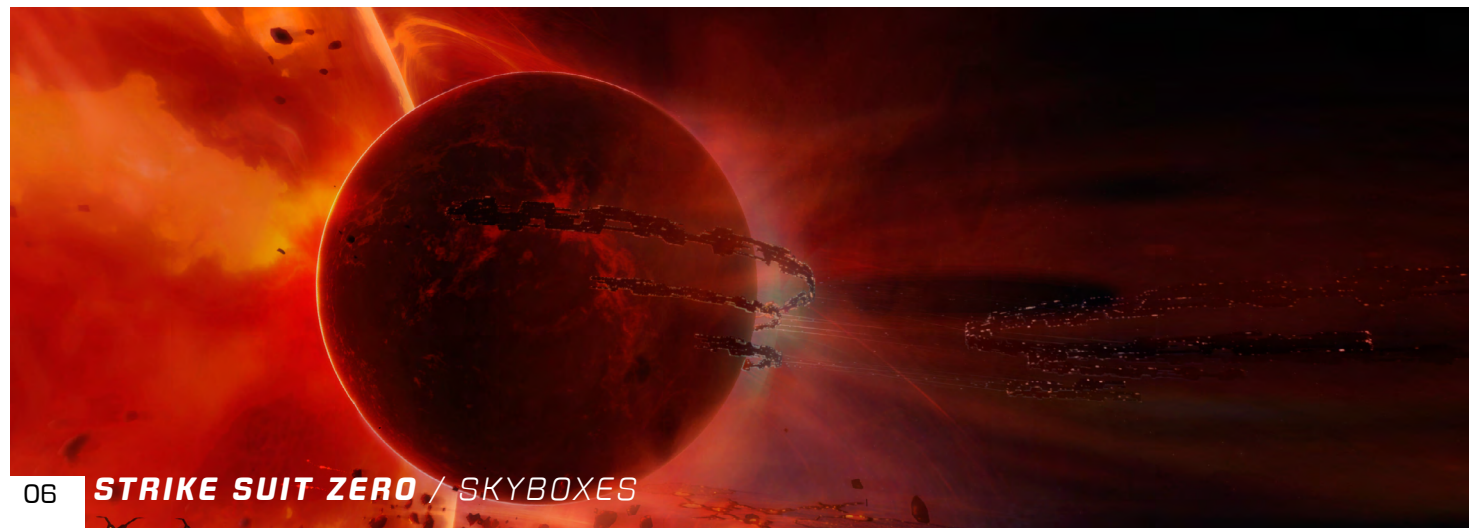


# FOLDER 002 // SKYBOXES

**WE WANTED THE BATTLES** in *Strike Suit Zero* to feel special, to be memorable. Part of achieving this would require us to develop dramatic backdrops to support and not detract from the game's grand narrative. Rather than limit ourselves to the vast blackness of the space our science describes, we used creative license to fill the space of our universe with colour and form to help create ambience.

FILE SSZ0004 //

**THERE ARE 12 SKYBOXES IN THE GAME,  
RANGING FROM NEBULAS TO DERELICT  
SPACE STATIONS TO THE SPACE ABOVE  
OUR VERY OWN EARTH.**





# FOLDER 003 // CINEMATICS

**WITH ANY NEW IP**, there is a lot of work to do when introducing the player to your world. With a sci-fi property – there is even more. We needed to give the player enough context to make sense of the game ahead of them. The bulk of this work fell to the cinematics. They bookend the game - both introducing the player to the world of *Strike Suit Zero* and ultimately resolving the story.

FILE SSZ0005 //

**FOR THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF THE GAME'S DEVELOPMENT – WE WERE ALWAYS HEAVILY INSPIRED BY THE HOMEWORLD CINEMATICS. THEY HAVE A LEISURELY PACE AND A SENSE OF AUTHORITY THAT HELPS YOU BUY IN TO THE NARRATIVE.**



**110.** Three hundred years ago, a huge comet entered the inner solar system on a collision course with the Earth.



**120.** The impact was devastating; killing tens of millions of people. But what lay within the comet's core was to prove even more lethal.



**130.** Within the comet's remains lay an immense alien spaceship.



**140.** Wars were fought over its ownership. Countries and societies crumbled amidst the conflict.



**150.** The victors formed a new global government and promised to bring a new era of peace and prosperity to the human race.



**160.** What followed in the wake of the impact and its alien core, now known as the Relic, was an oppressive regime the likes of which humanity had never witnessed.



**170.** As humanity colonised the stars, the Relic's shadow loomed across them. The ship was once an ancient weapon that had in aeons past patrolled the cosmos, leaving only death and destruction in its immense wake.



**180.** With no means to defend themselves, some communities scattered amongst the cosmos. Over time these disparate groups banded together and became a nomadic force fighting in a desperate struggle for their own survival.



**190.** These nomadic survivors came to be known as raiders and over the centuries they carved out their own niche in the galaxy. Stealing from whatever and whoever fell into their path.



**200.** Yet within their midst lay one of them that would change the human race's destiny forever.



**210.** The raiders originally began their lives as scavengers, using rudimentary robotic manipulators to salvage what they could from derelict space hulks.



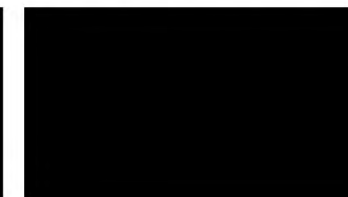
**220.** Over time the raiders started using these craft in more offensive ways and a new form of space fighter was created; the strike suit. These multipurpose fighters became the mainstay of the raider forces and caused havoc amongst the gov't ranks.



**230.** Unable to compete with the mobility of the raiders, the government instead responded by sheer force and nearly eliminated them all.



**240.** In the century since, the raiders have been created a new generation of transformable strike suits and are finally ready to strike back.





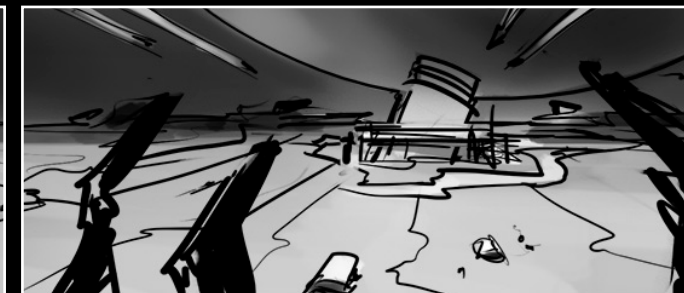
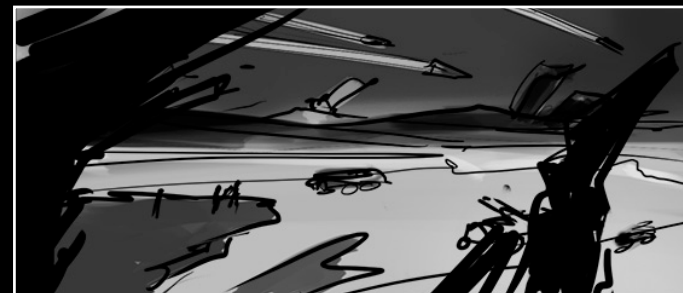
FILE SSZ0006 //

**"THEN THE COLONISTS  
FOUND THE SOURCE  
OF THE SIGNAL AND  
EVERYTHING CHANGED  
AGAIN..."**



**FILE SSZ0007 // EVOLUTION OF A SINGLE PANEL**

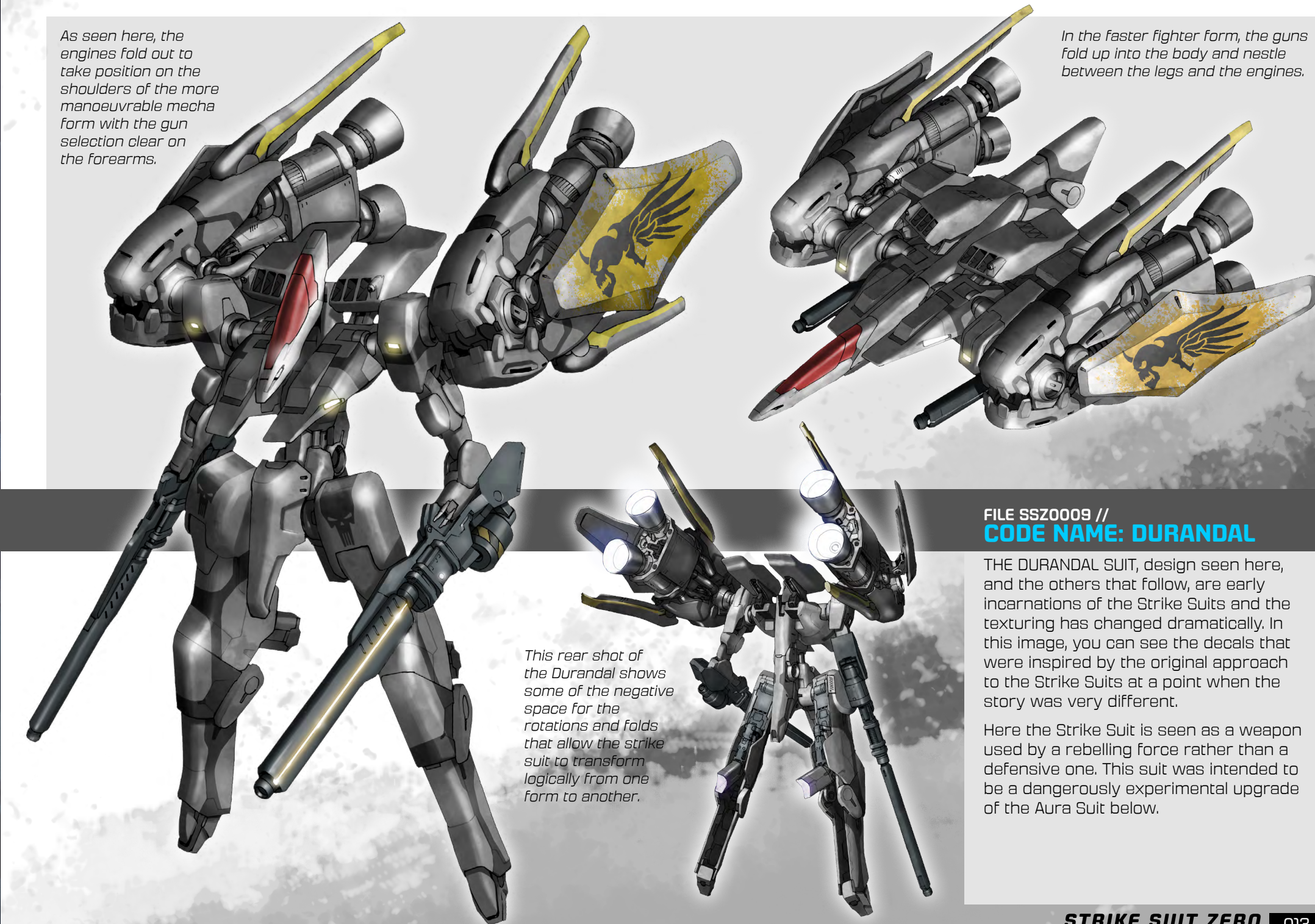
THESE IMAGES SHOW HOW THE PANELS EVOLVED. The initial scripted version of the entire prologue ran in a continuous pan from left to right – hence the 'wipe and fade' comment below. However it became clear to us that this consistent movement didn't work for this panel. The central image was too important to simply pan over so we altered the animation so it zoomed in toward it.





# FOLDER 004 // THE STRIKE SUITS

**THE STRIKE SUIT** sits at the heart of the Strike Suit Zero story and is also a large part of its future. Junji Okubo designed a full set of different Strike Suits for us beyond the one included in the game and we hope to release these amazing designs as playable ships later on. While the aesthetics of the suits were important, we were keen to empower Junji to create the functional sorts of designs he is known for. Each one is designed to fold and transform according to the space available - keeping the pilot and weapon position viable at all times.



*As seen here, the engines fold out to take position on the shoulders of the more manoeuvrable mecha form with the gun selection clear on the forearms.*

*In the faster fighter form, the guns fold up into the body and nestle between the legs and the engines.*

FILE SSZ0009 //  
**CODE NAME: DURANDAL**

THE DURANDAL SUIT, design seen here, and the others that follow, are early incarnations of the Strike Suits and the texturing has changed dramatically. In this image, you can see the decals that were inspired by the original approach to the Strike Suits at a point when the story was very different.

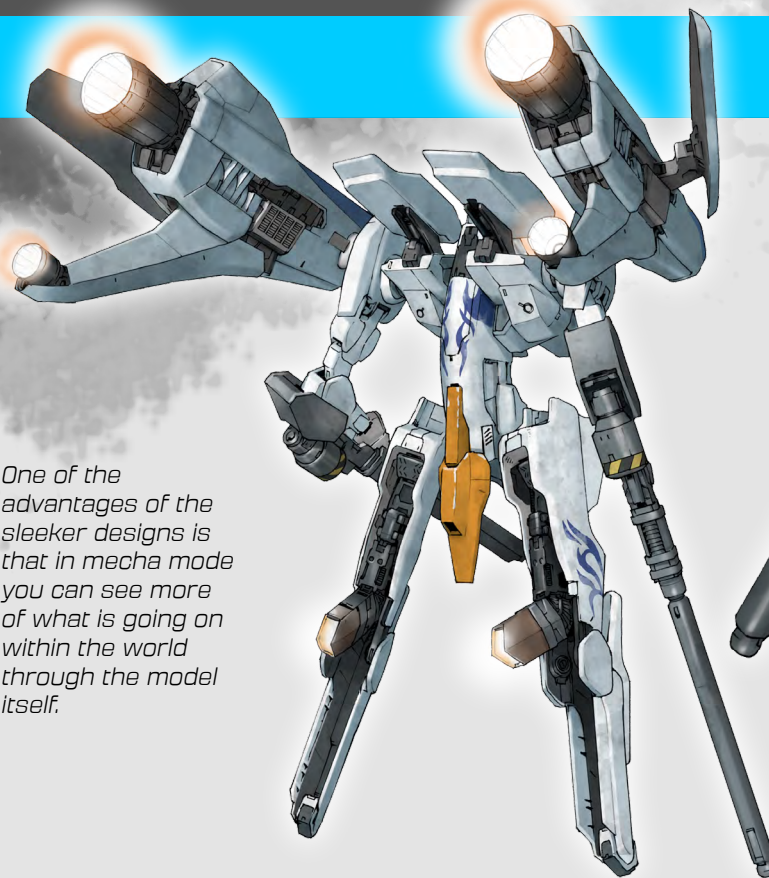
Here the Strike Suit is seen as a weapon used by a rebelling force rather than a defensive one. This suit was intended to be a dangerously experimental upgrade of the Aura Suit below.

*This rear shot of the Durandal shows some of the negative space for the rotations and folds that allow the strike suit to transform logically from one form to another.*

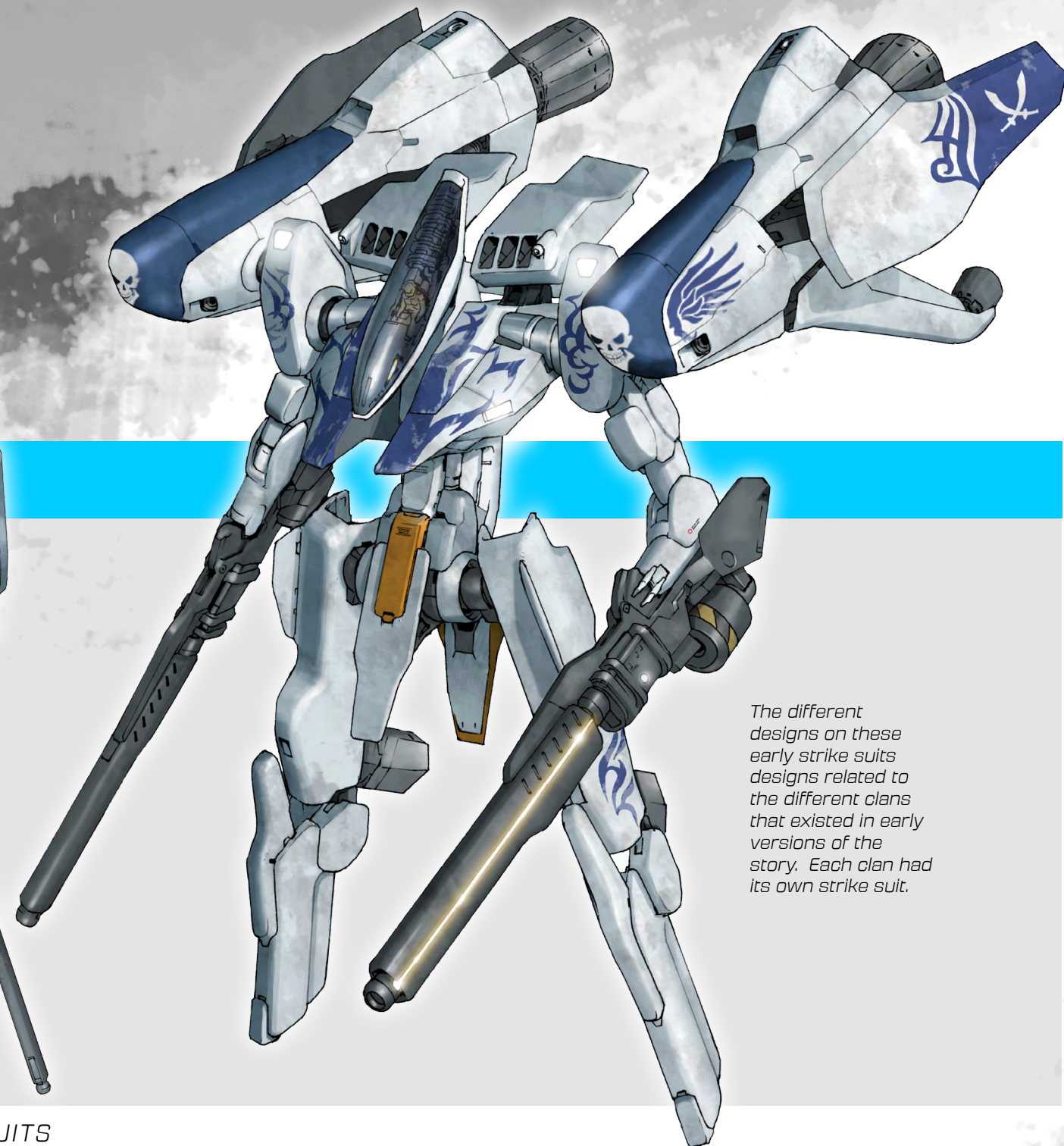


FILE SSZ0010 //  
CODE NAME: AURA

AS WITH THE DURANDAL, the Aura shows some early texture options we experimented with including skull and sword motifs. Whilst the Strike Suit shown here share a core skeletal structure – variations can be seen in the various components that make up the ship. The Aura was intended to be a balanced strike suit with average speed, average performance and good handling: capable in a large dogfight but mismatched for capital ship combat.



One of the advantages of the sleeker designs is that in mecha mode you can see more of what is going on within the world through the model itself.



The different designs on these early strike suits designs related to the different clans that existed in early versions of the story. Each clan had its own strike suit.

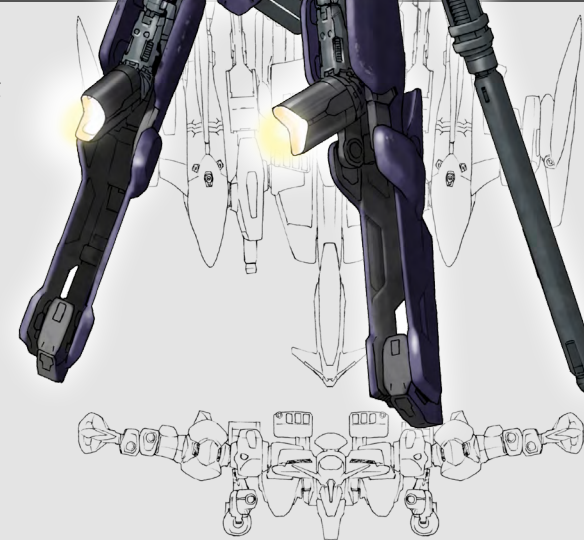


The stylised, extended shoulder-blade engines and the decals shown here are intended to give the Phantasma a tribal, almost voodoo, feel.

FILE SSZ0011 //  
CODE NAME: PHANTASMA

THE PHANTASMA is the most extreme of the strike suit designs show here and was originally designed as a light weight, high performance Strike Suit with mine laying capabilities. Ideally suited to fast hit and run tactics, as well as extended dog fights.

However, it would have had very weak armor and relatively weak shielding and as a result would not survive well against capital ships.





# FOLDER 005 // THE SHIPS

**WE WANTED TO KEEP THE MECHANICAL** design across Strike Suit Zero consistent and so Junji used the same design approach on the non-transformable ships as he did with the Strike Suits. There are two opposing factions in Strike Suit Zero, each with their own distinct style of technology. The game's different classes of ships; Fighters, Corvettes, Frigates, Cruisers and Carriers allowed us to provide a varied sense of scale and game play from the very small to the very large throughout the game.

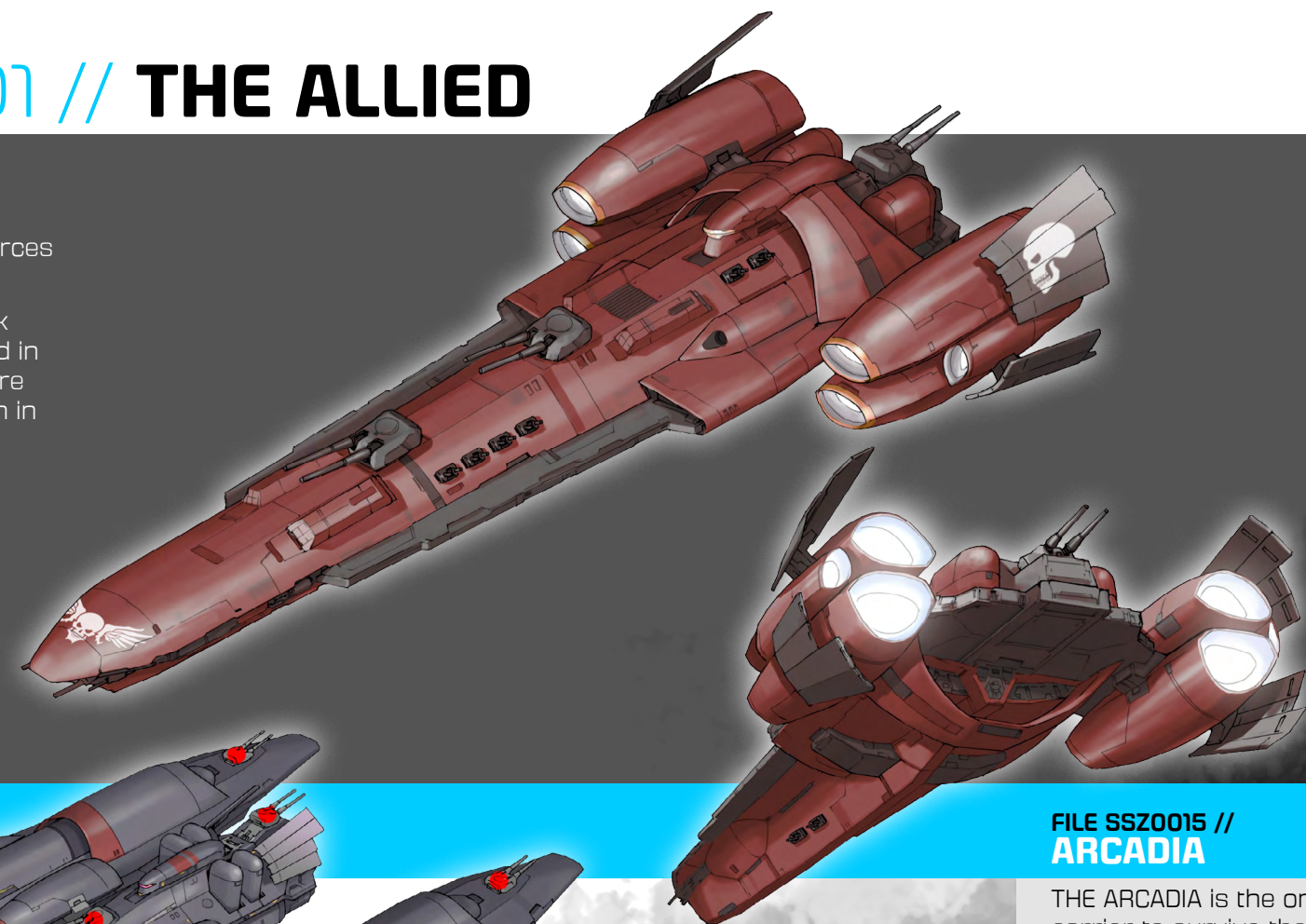


## FOLDER 005 .01 // THE ALLIED

FILE SSZ00014 // **ARGAMA**

ALLIED CRUISERS represent the Earth forces biggest asset in terms of fire power.

These massive ships represent the bulk of the remaining Earth fleet's power and in the game they are covered with far more turrets and weaponry than can be seen in these early designs.



FILE SSZ0015 // **ARCADIA**

THE ARCADIA is the only UNE carrier to survive the Colonial attack that takes place at the start of the story.

For much of the game it acts as a command ship for the fleet and is a central character in Strike Suit Zero.

The two arms of the carrier seen here are actually fighter launch bays and the ends unfold to allow fighters to launch.







FILE SSZ0016 // **SCYTHER**

THE SCYTHER INTERCEPTORS are rapid response craft specifically designed to intercept other small craft – primarily bombers.

They rely on speed and manoeuvrability over use of heavy armaments.

This is one of three allied fighter craft – all of which can be piloted by the player.



FILE SSZ0017 // **AXE FIGHTER**

FIGHTERS are multirole craft designed primarily for dog-fighting. The UNE Axe Fighter is the first craft you fly in Strike Suit Zero and is also the craft of choice for your wingman – Flight Team Leader Grace Reynolds. It's a solid choice with generous load-out slots that lacks the strength and the weaknesses of its more specialized sister ships – the Interceptor and the Bomber.



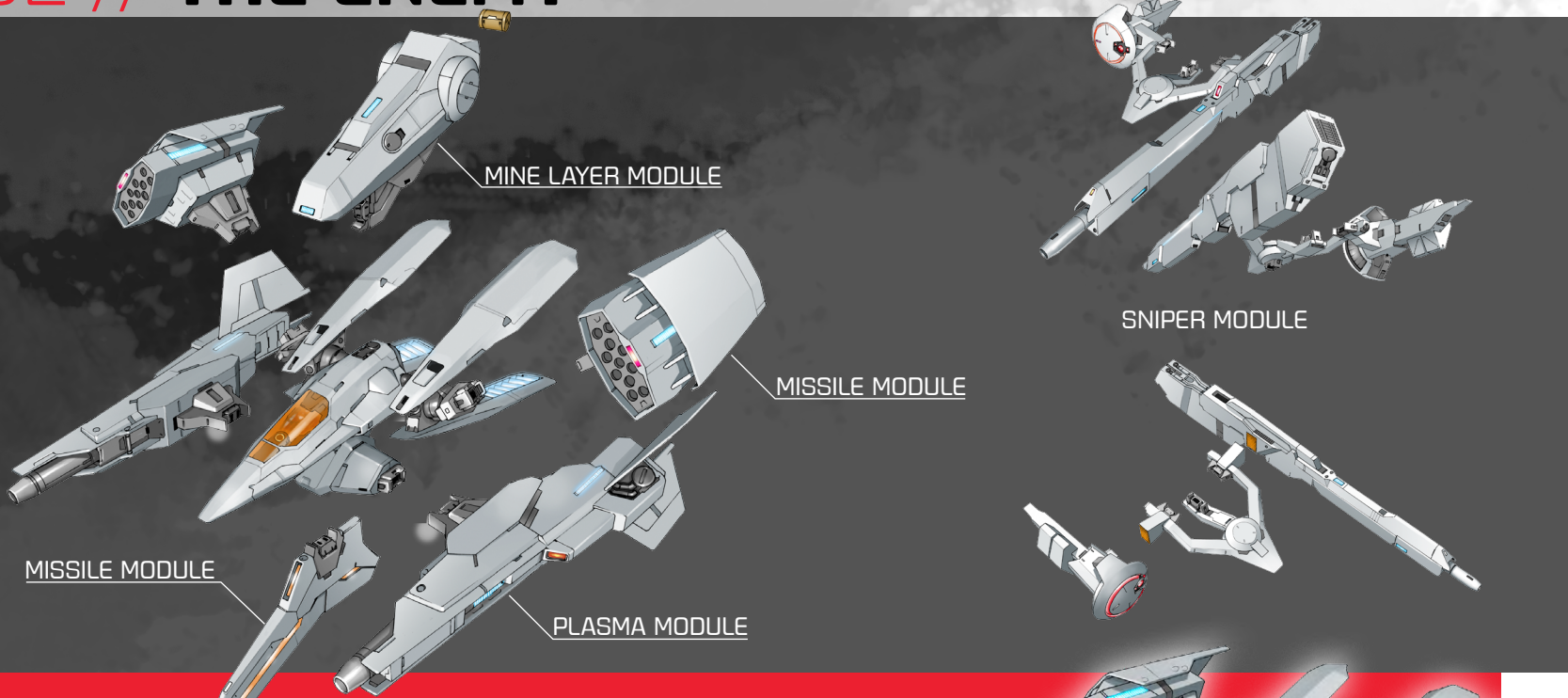


# FOLDER 005.02 // THE ENEMY

**FILE SSZ0018 //**  
**FIGHTER**

THE BASIC ENEMY FIGHTER was built around a modular design that allowed us to change the physical appearance of the fighters in line with their function – attaching missiles pods, plasma modules or long range sniper style weapons. These fighters form the bulk of the enemy forces.

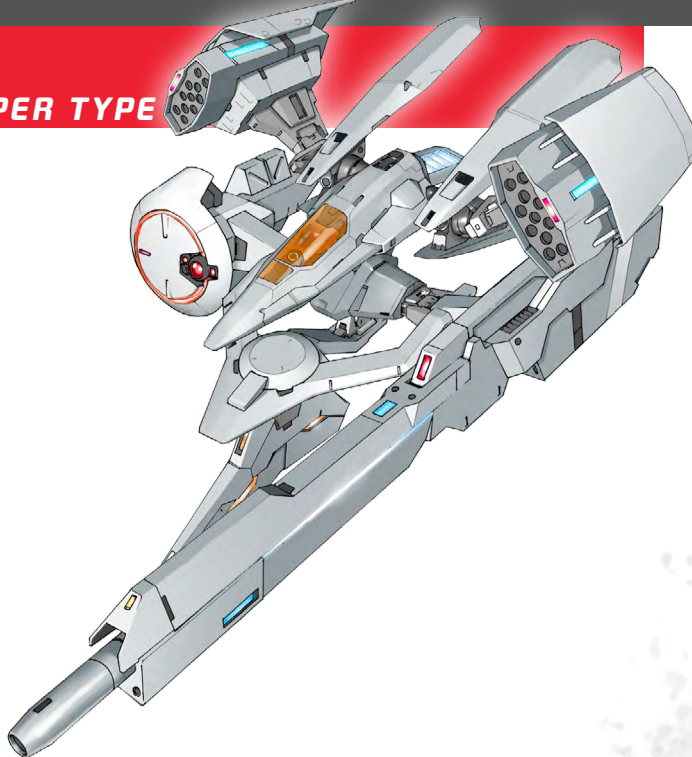
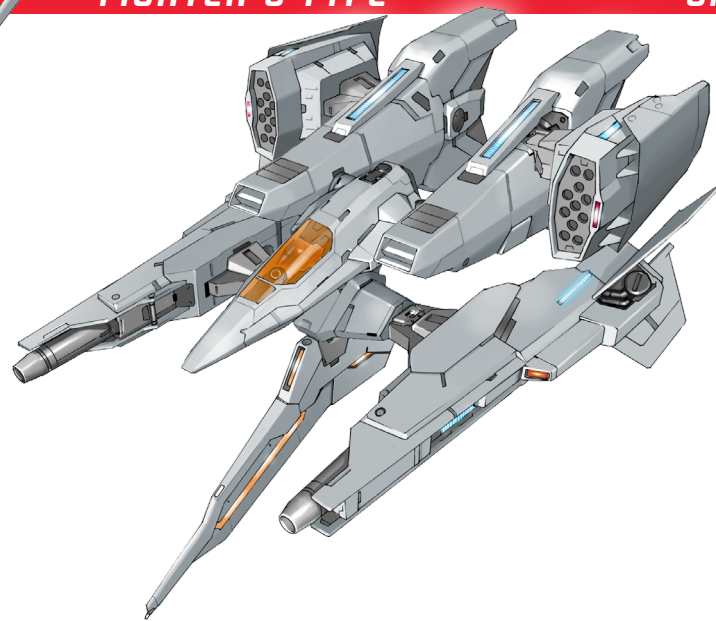
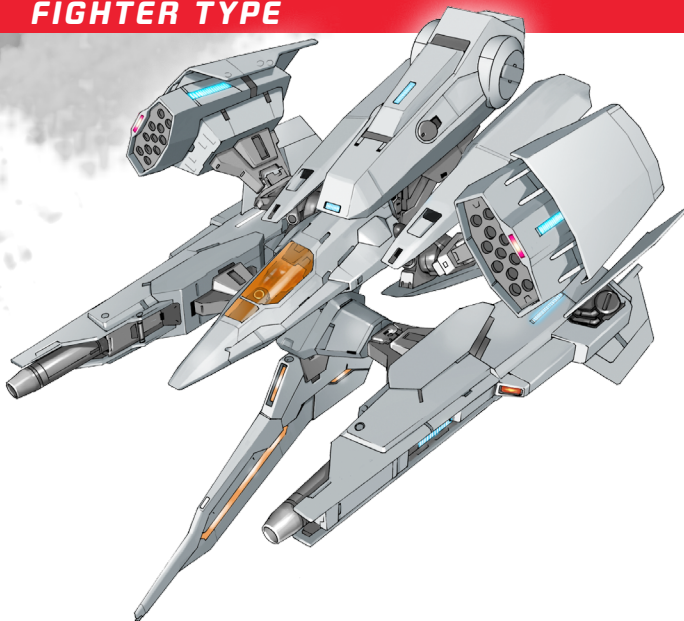
Within the image, the mine layer module can be seen in this image that was dropped from the game.



**FIGHTER TYPE**

**FIGHTER-S TYPE**

**SNIPER TYPE**

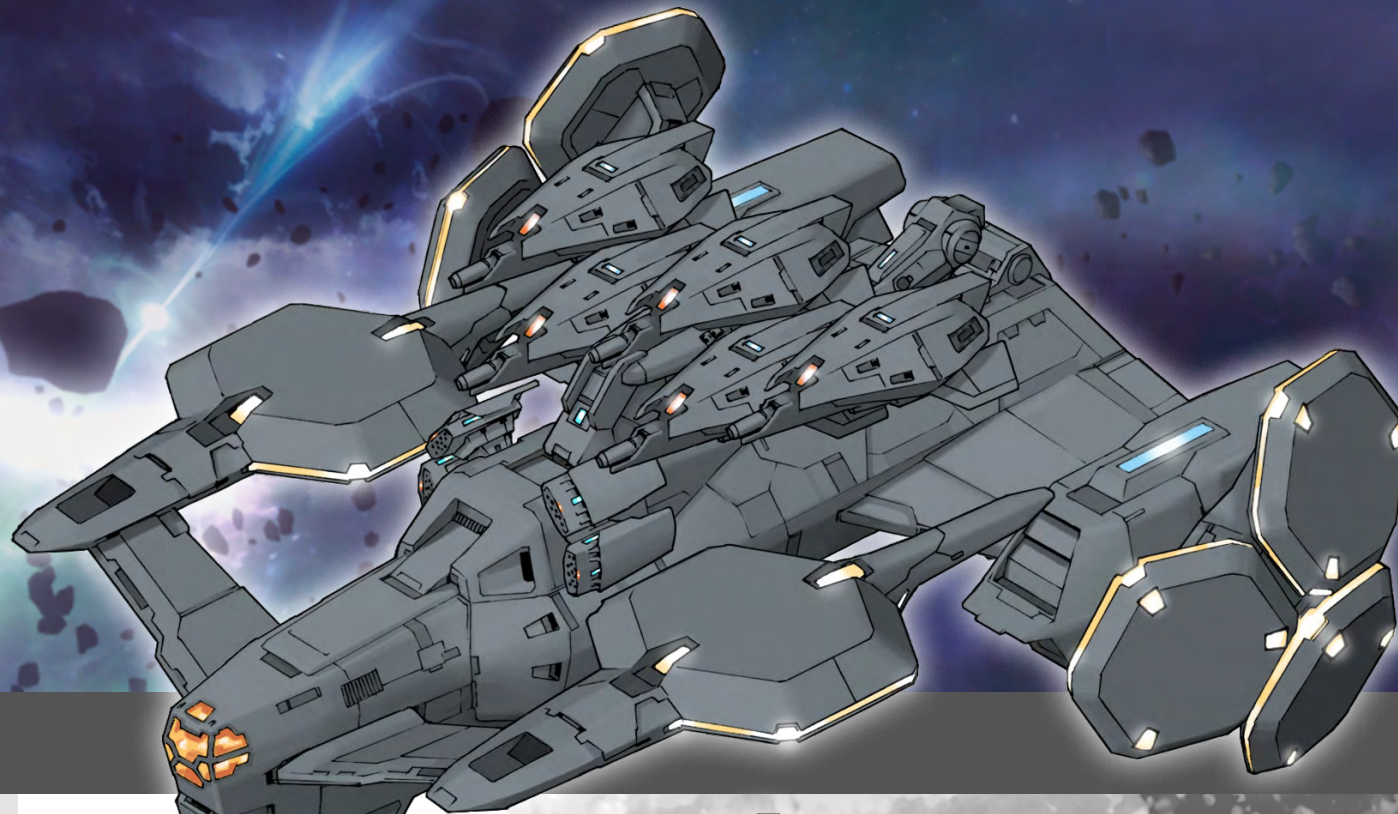


**FILE SSZ0019 //**  
**CORVETTE**

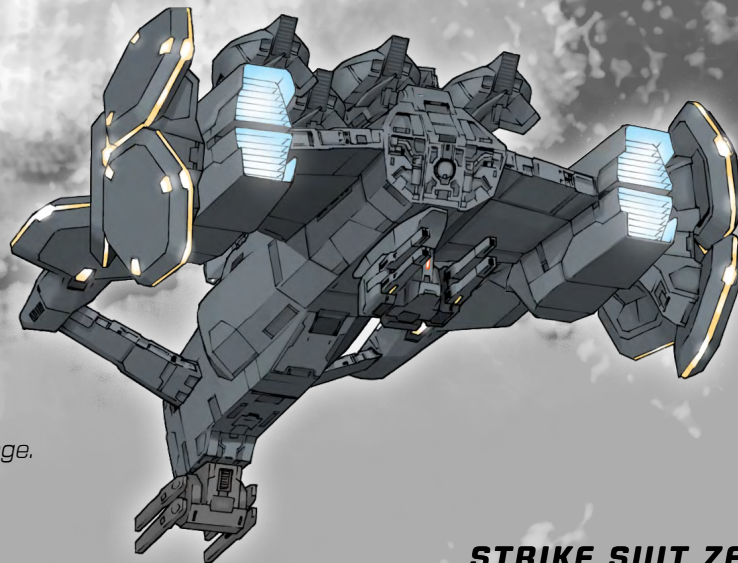
INITIALLY, THE CORVETTE was designed as a multirole craft that could be modified to perform a variety of functions depending upon the load-out it carried.

They could hold a varied set of turrets to take down attacking fighters, launch torpedoes to attack capital ships, could carry jamming devices to prevent missile locks and even launch drone fighters that could act independently.

All of these elements can be seen on the concept image here.



The hexagonal plates seen on the rear wing-tips were jamming countermeasures that could block missile lock-on within a specific range.



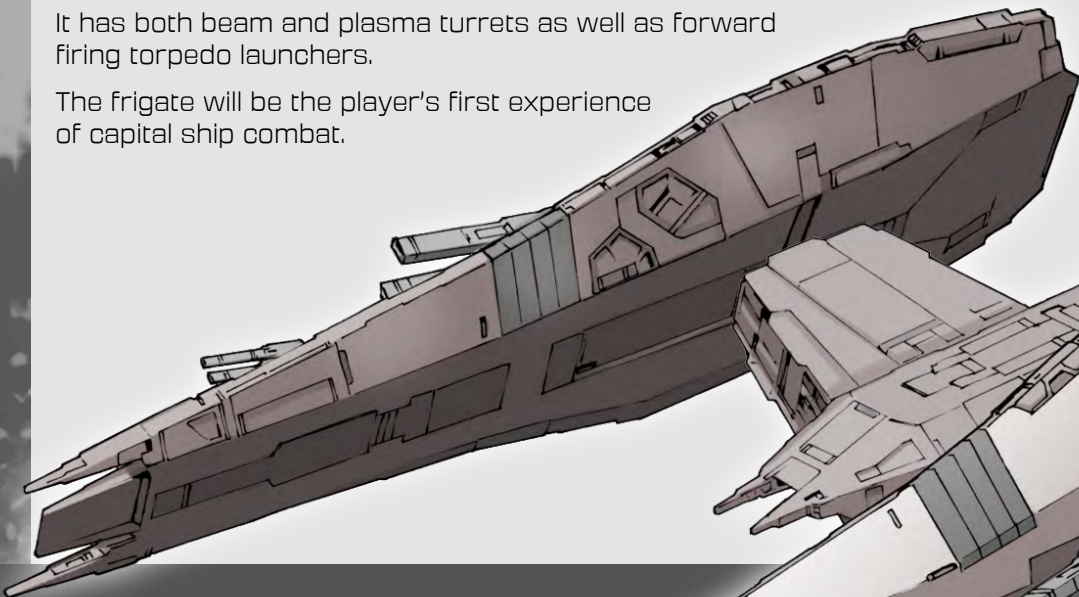


FILE SSZ0020 //  
**FRIGATE**

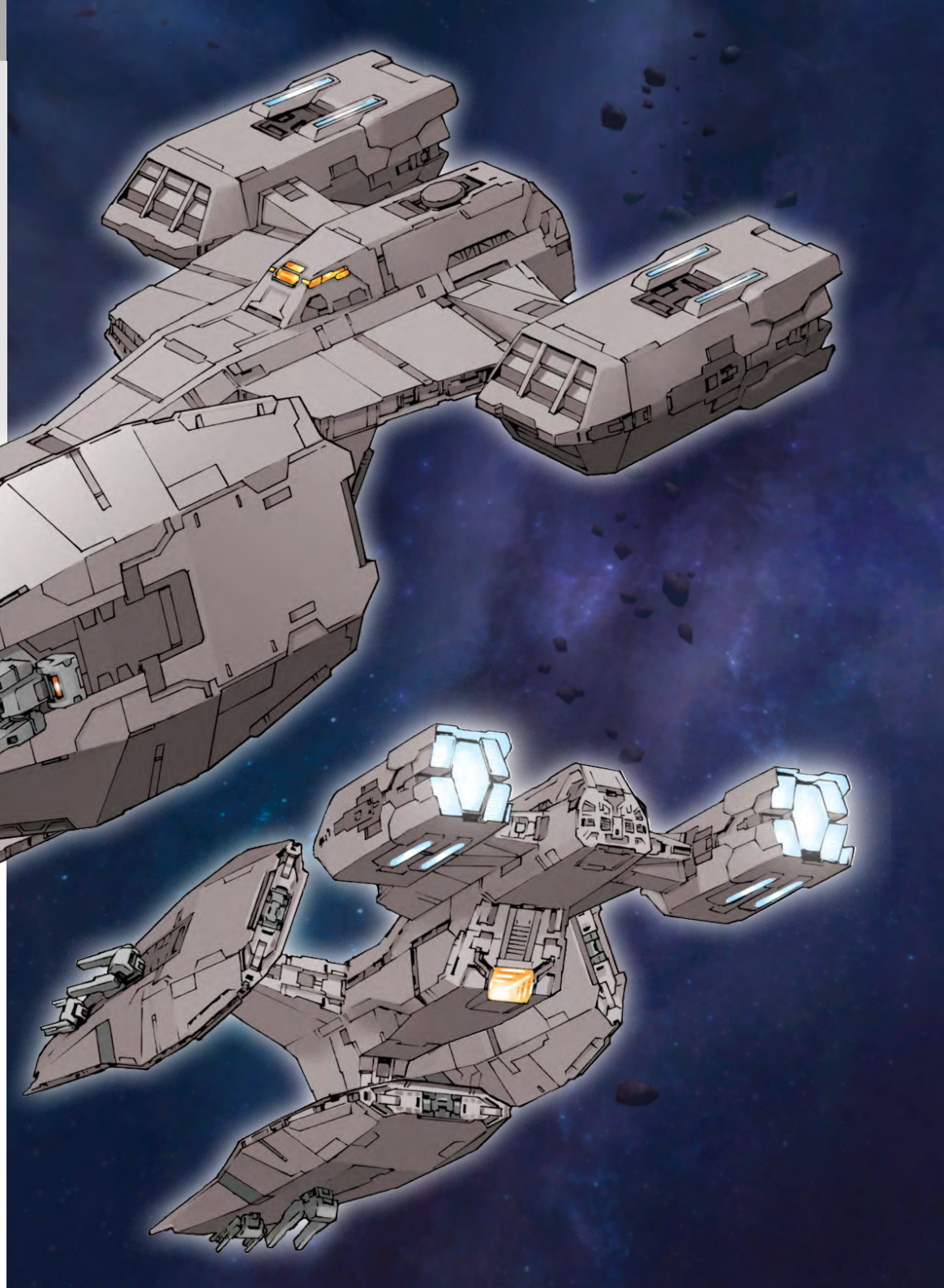
THE ENEMY FRIGATE seen here is a striking early design. However, we had to change the forward design of the ship because of turret blind spots between the forward facing blades – the final design can be seen in game.

It has both beam and plasma turrets as well as forward firing torpedo launchers.

The frigate will be the player's first experience of capital ship combat.



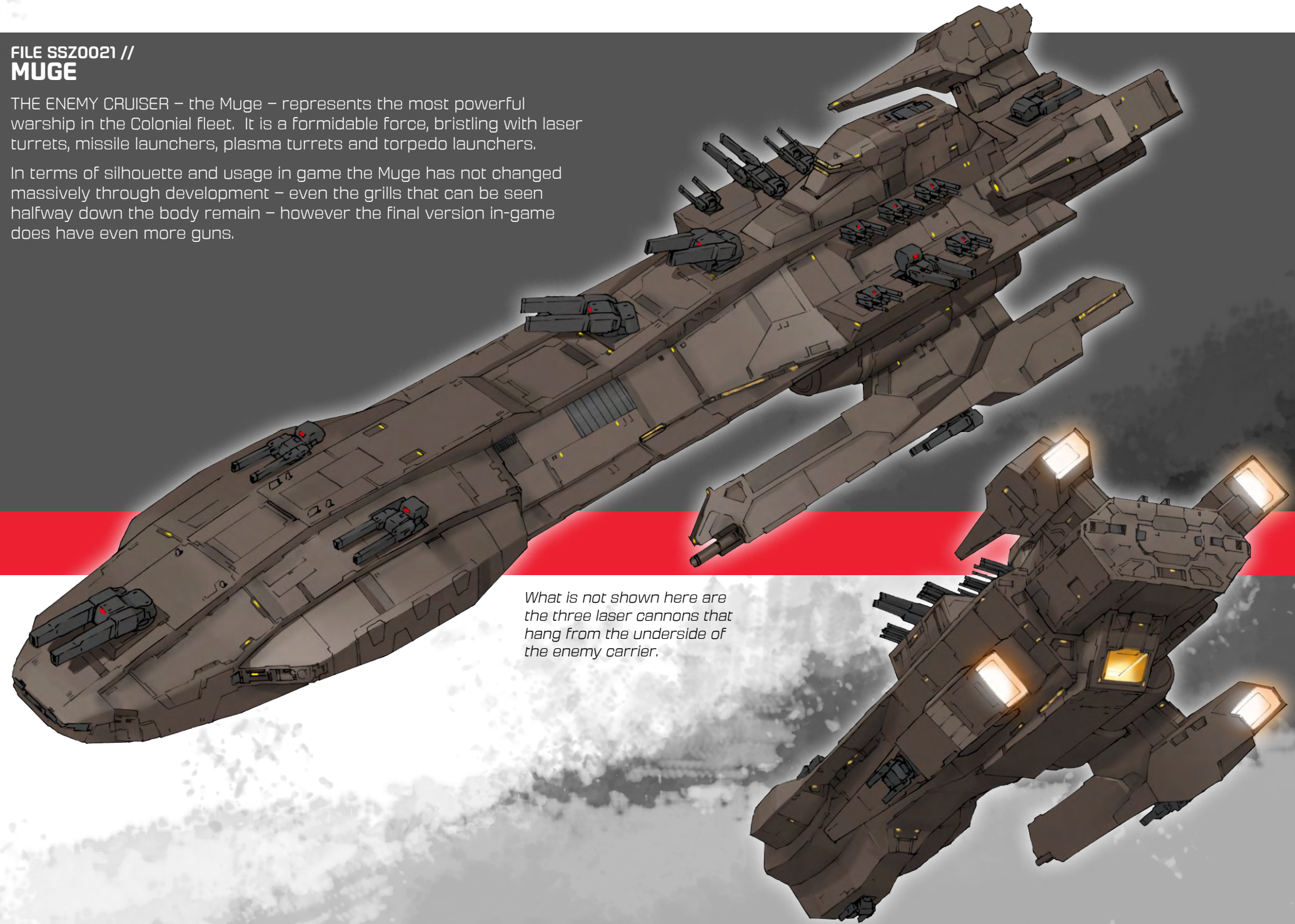
*The frigate was intended to act as an anti-fighter vessel and as support for larger capital ships – however – in-game - we have often used the frigate as a first strike and support vessel.*



FILE SSZ0021 //  
**MUGE**

THE ENEMY CRUISER – the Muge – represents the most powerful warship in the Colonial fleet. It is a formidable force, bristling with laser turrets, missile launchers, plasma turrets and torpedo launchers.

In terms of silhouette and usage in game the Muge has not changed massively through development – even the grills that can be seen halfway down the body remain – however the final version in-game does have even more guns.



*What is not shown here are the three laser cannons that hang from the underside of the enemy carrier.*



**FILE SSZ0022 //**  
**HERACLES**

APPROXIMATELY a kilometre in length, the Colonial carriers – known as Heracles – are the largest ships in the Colonial Fleet. They are intimidating craft bristling with turrets – many more than can be seen in the concept here.

The Colonial Carriers are usually the command ships in larger fleet formations and are often protected by other capital ships.

*In addition to its turret defences, the carrier has 5 launch bays that can disperse large numbers of fighter craft very quickly.*



*The basic design did not change during development. The texturing and engine effects changed to match the game as it evolved but the core shape remains the same.*



# FOLDER 006 // THE RELIC

**IN THE STORY, THE RELIC** is a vast, almost unimaginably powerful entity that changes the player's world and threatens to destroy Earth. Originally, the ship was meant to exist within the game world but the sheer size of the ship made building it an impossible task on our budget and, in addition, we felt that allowing the player to get too close would remove its mystique.



*This concept shows the Relic about to fire and also is the first image to introduce the storm that surrounds it.*



*This image shows the vast Relic in the foreground with the smaller Colonial ships beyond.*



*The scene above shows the Relic looming over Earth as it does at the end of the game.*

FILE SSZ0023 //

**THE RELIC IS A MYSTERY;  
IT IS CLOAKED IN A STORM  
AND LEAVES DESTRUCTION  
IN ITS WAKE. IT CHANGES  
THE BALANCE OF THE WAR  
AT THE START OF THE  
GAME AND BECOMES THE  
FOCUS AT THE END.**





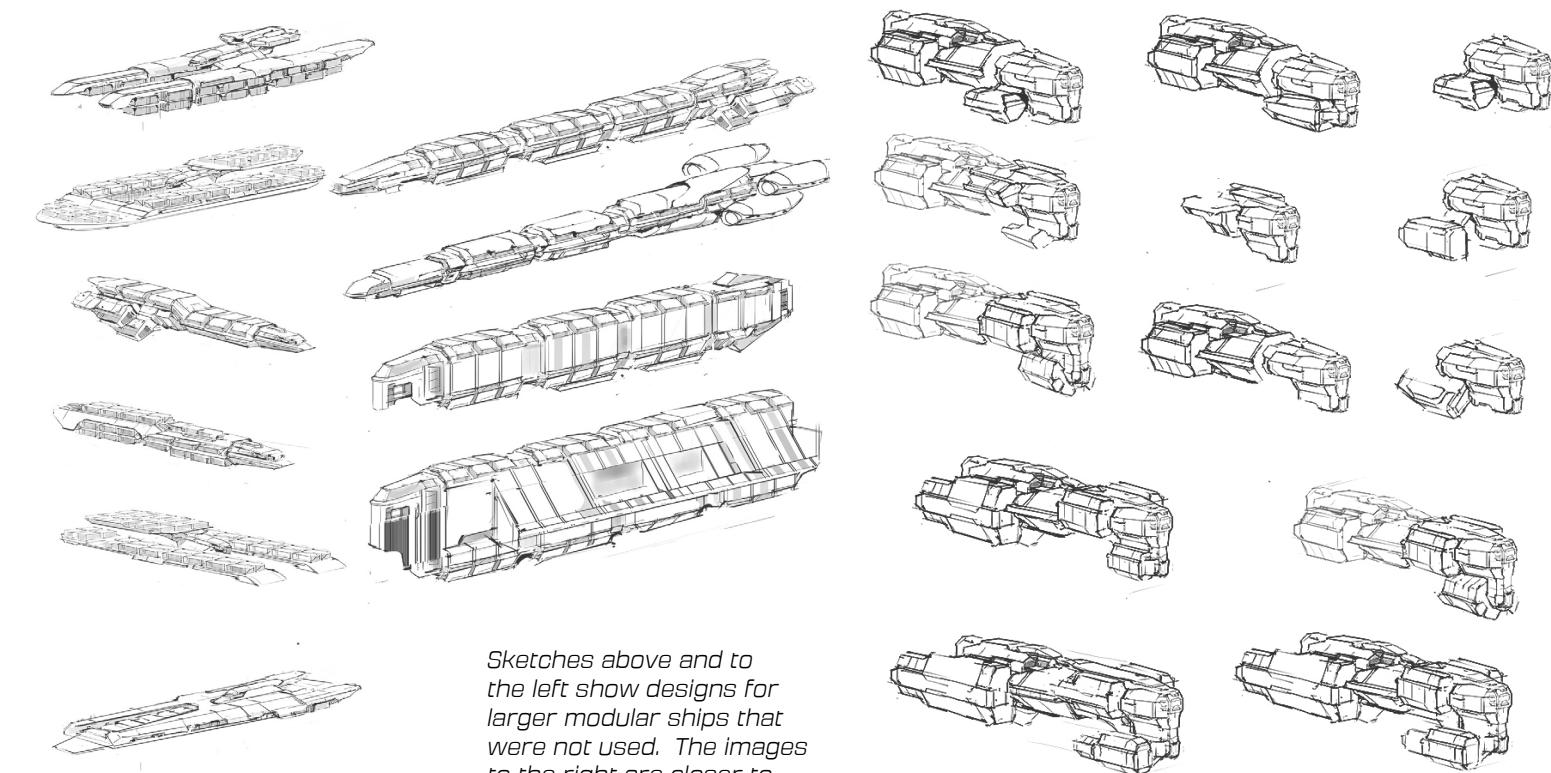
# FOLDER 007 //

## CIVILIAN SHIPS AND STATIONS

### FILE SSZ0026 //

#### FREIGHTERS AND TRANSPORTS

THE CIVILIAN TRANSPORT SHIP designs were inspired by industrial haulage trains and are some examples of the handful of in-house mechanical designs we did for Strike Suit Zero. The transports are used by both the allied and enemy factions and sometimes play an important role in the mission objectives throughout the game.



*Sketches above and to the left show designs for larger modular ships that were not used. The images to the right are closer to those used in-game.*

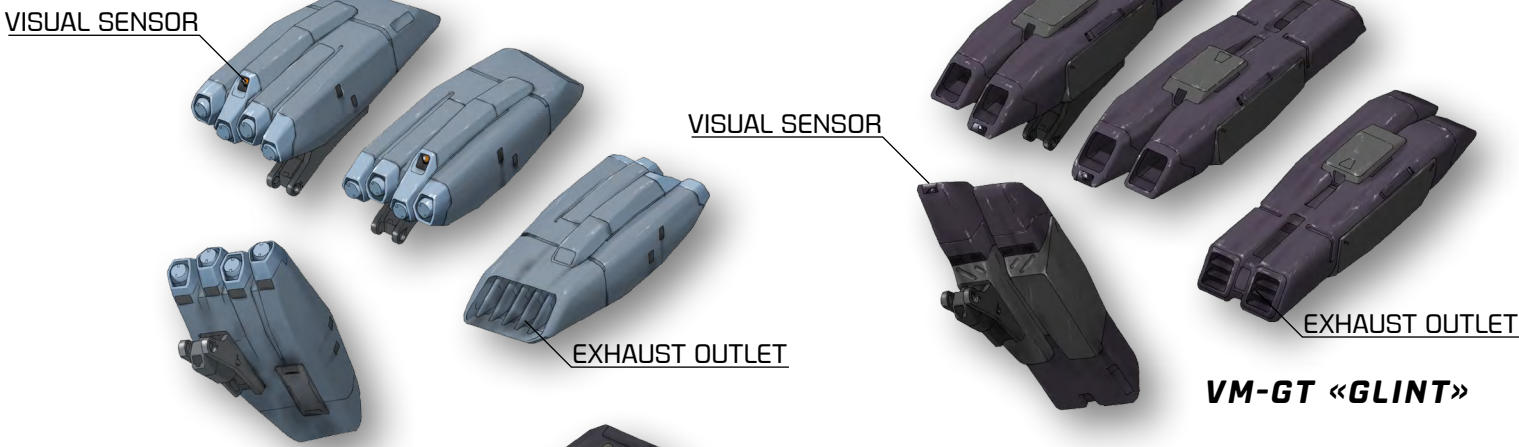


# FOLDER 008 //

## WEAPONS & TECHNOLOGY

**THE CONCEPTS** across these two pages show the various weapon components designed for use on the earlier designs. These would allow the player to adjust their weapon load out in the strike suits. In the end this feature was spread across the multiple different craft added to the player's roster (not just strike suits) and that combined with a push for more varied weaponry meant that some of these modules were not used in-game. Comparing both the missiles below - and the guns to the right - to the earlier strike suits will give you an idea of where these weapons would have fitted.

### VM-EX «EXCALIBUR»



### VM-NB «NINEBALL»



### VM-GT «GLINT»

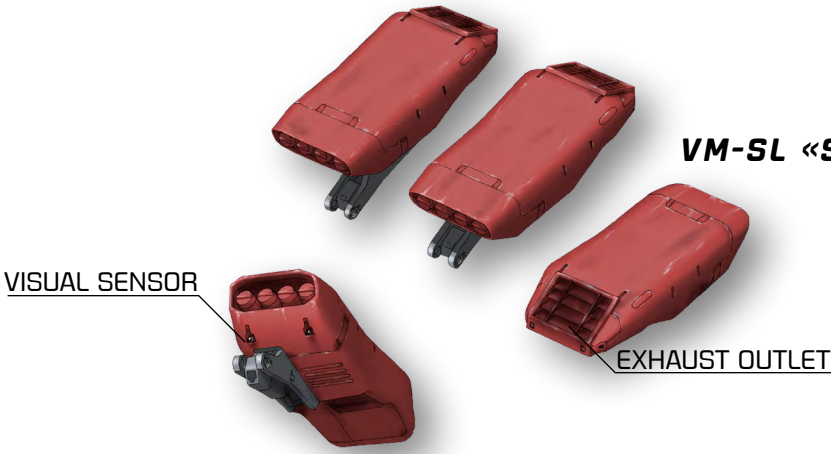


### FILE SSZ0027 //

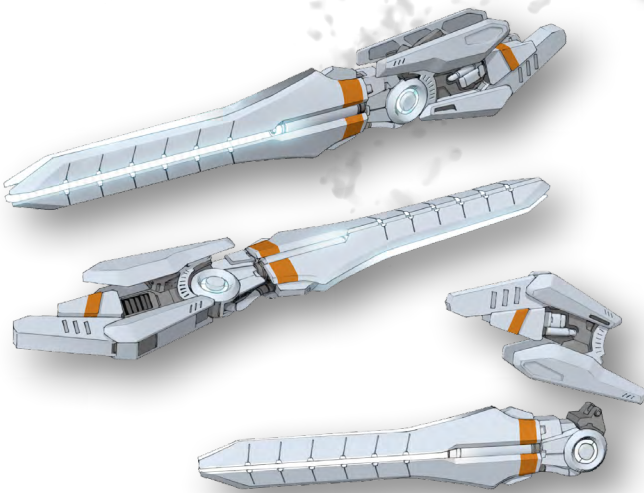
#### MISSILE PODS

THE MISSILE PODS shown here – Excalibur, Nineball, Glint and Saline – were all variants on swarm missiles with different ranges, capacities and lock-on times. The final game armoury includes a range of missiles similar to these as well as a selection of special case missile systems that can be unlocked in the game.

### VM-SL «SALINE»



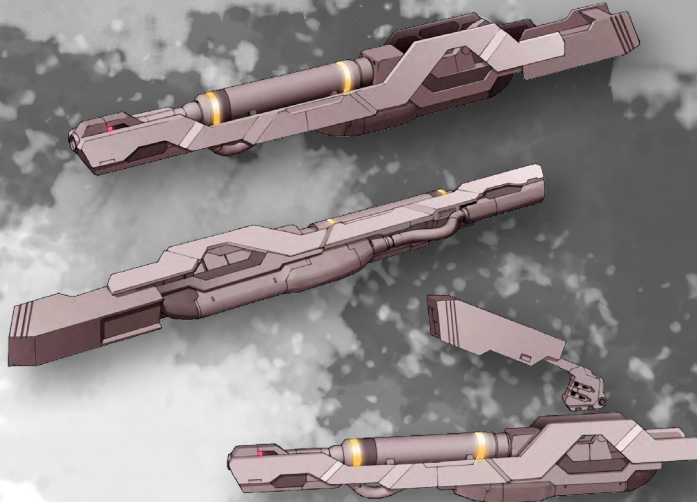
### VP-CM «COMET»



### VP-MQ «MOSQUITO»



### VP-NV «NOVA»



### VP-KS «KARASAWA»



### FILE SSZ0028 //

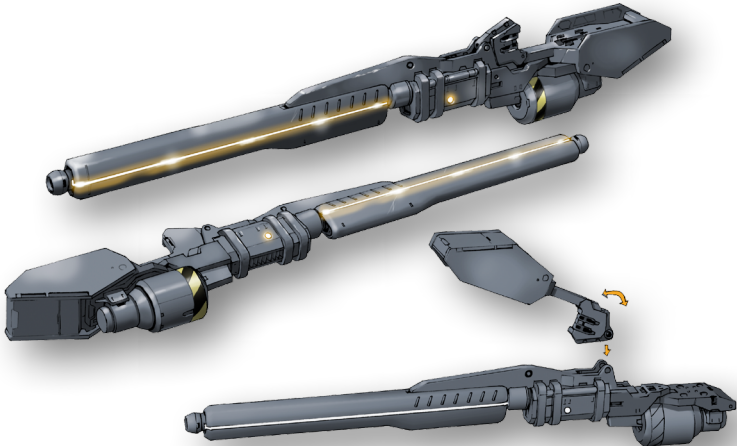
#### GUN MODULES

THE FIVE WEAPON systems shown here connect to the mecha's arms and represent the cannons used in ship or suit mode.

The weapons were intended to vary between plasma rifles, munitions cannons and rail guns. All of these made it into the game in multiple variations.

The images below are the original concepts for the cut scenes that book-end the game.

### VM-MN «MOONLIGHT»







GRACE REYNOLDS

MC CALLUM

# FOLDER 010 //

# CHARACTERS DESIGN

## FOLDER 010.01 // FACES DESIGN

**THE PILOTS AND OFFICERS** of the UNE space force are the driving force behind the game's narrative. For this reason we felt it was important to visualise them in full, despite there being no plan for their bodies to ever feature in the game. Of course you'll see each character's profile as they interact via radio chatter.



EARTH COMMAND



BOWMAN



GENERIC CAPTAIN

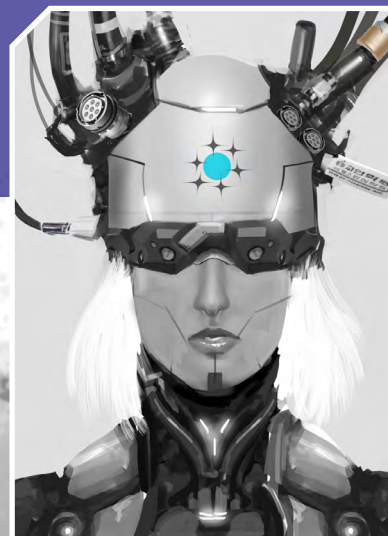
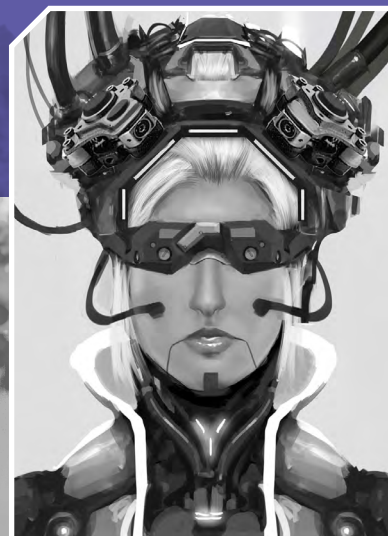
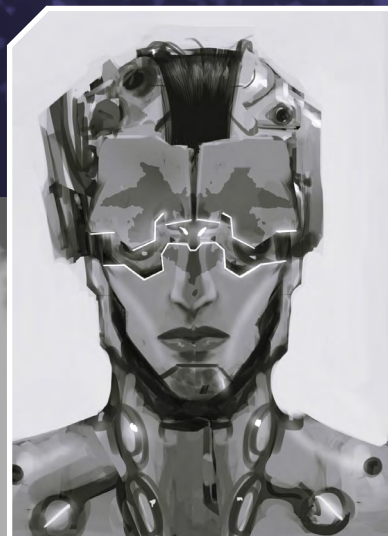
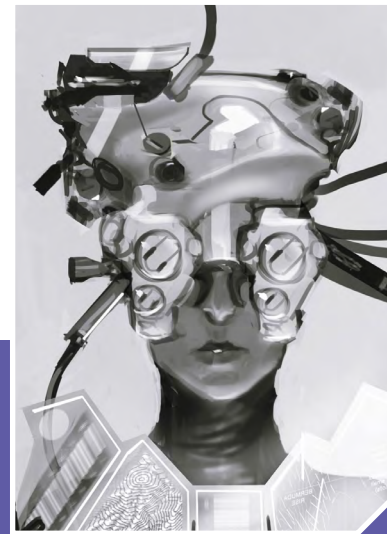
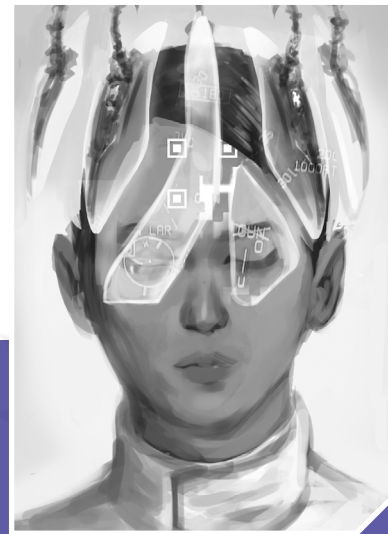
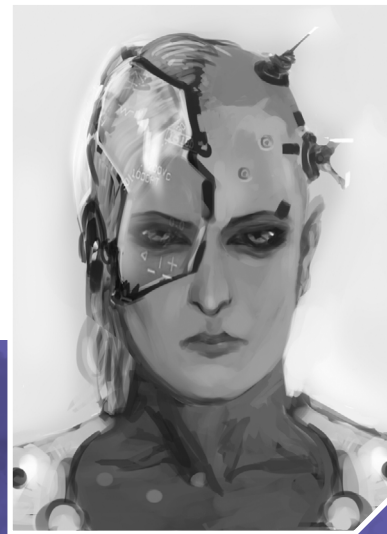
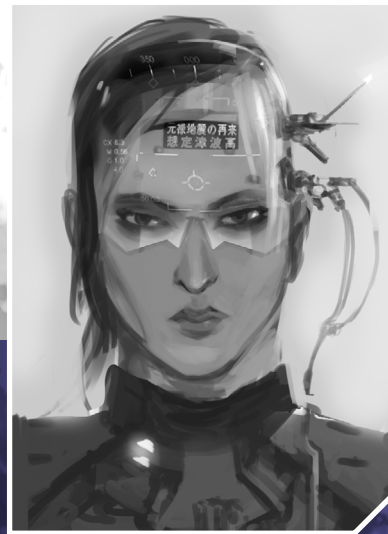


CARO



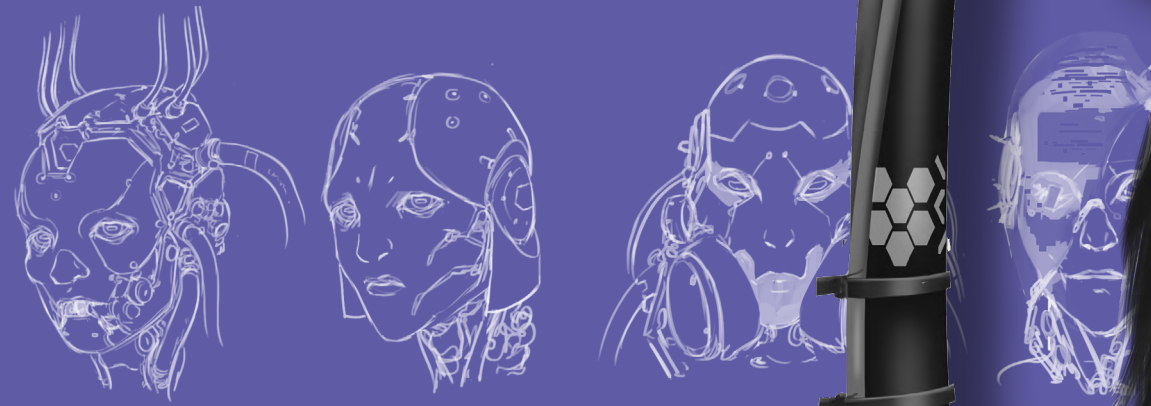
## FOLDER 010.02 // CONTROL DESIGN

**THE INITIAL CONCEPTS FOR CONTROL** felt too gothic and low-tech to fit our established industrial design style. We went on to produce further sets of designs where the human-computer interfaces were less integrated with her human body. At first these were too cosmetic but eventually we arrived with paintings that we feel suggest futuristic, military grade medical technology.



FILE SSZ0029 //

**CONTROL IS INTRODUCED TO THE PLAYER AS AN AI HYBRID - CREATED WHEN ISABELLA ABRAM MERGED WITH THE AI SHE 'CREATED'. HOWEVER, THE TRUTH ABOUT CONTROL IS VERY DIFFERENT AND WHAT SHE REALLY IS SITS AT THE HEART OF THE STORY.**



*Control is central to the narrative of SSZ but she was always in danger of becoming a cliché. We wanted to avoid portraying the character like the usual female AI but without derailing their inherent appeal. To this end, the technology she's attached is used to subvert how attractive she was.*







FILE SSZ0030 //

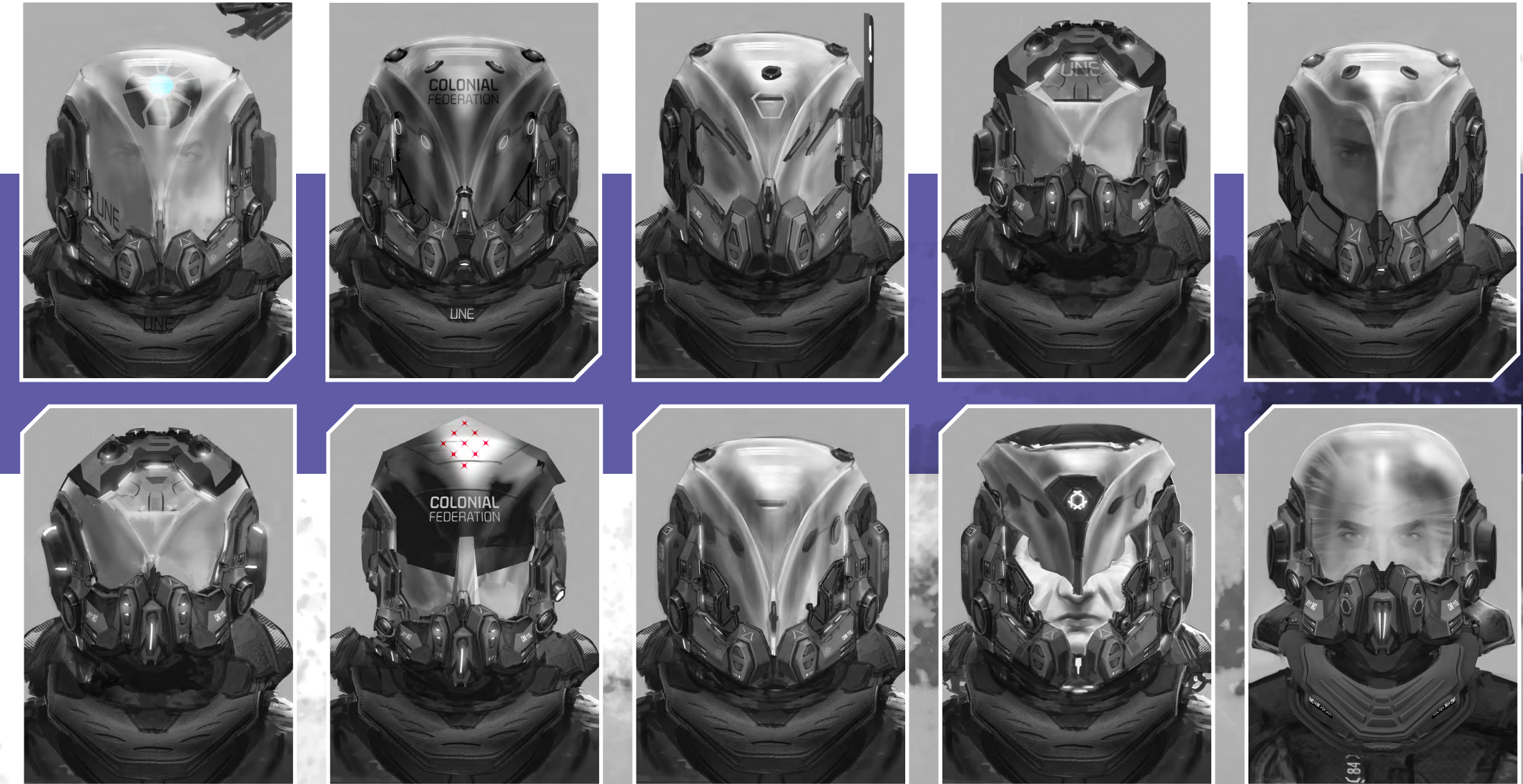
**WE'VE BEEN INSPIRED BY A LOT OF GREAT SPACE HELMET DESIGNS FROM ALIEN TO DEAD SPACE, BUT WE HOPE THAT OUR DESIGN IS UNIQUE ENOUGH TO STAND ALONGSIDE THEM.**



One of the reasons for the full-face design was that we have a number of 'generic' characters in-game required to provide exposition within the missions. For these, we needed an image we could reuse for different people but that was distinctive enough to stand on its own.

## FOLDER 010.03 // HELMET DESIGN

OUR FINAL HELMET DESIGNS are the result of many explorations. At one point we considered depicting every character in the game with a unique helmet. Proxy faces featured in the form of expressions made from lights on a helmet's external surfaces.







## FOLDER 010.04 // UNIFORM DESIGN

**WE DECIDED TO REFERENCE** existing naval uniforms for our own uniform designs and made the decision to keep the officers looking smart. We brought them into the future with a few subtle adjustments such as the epaulettes and light emitting, hi-vis strips for safety and communication of rank.



# STRIKE SUIT ZERO

## FOLDER 011 // ABOUT THE GAME

**STRIKE SUIT ZERO** is a space-action game looking to reignite the flames of a genre that's seen little representation in recent years. The core of the game is found in intense skirmishes that play out on a cosmic scale. Taking control of a transforming craft known as a Strike Suit, the player is able to shift between two states - fighter mode and mech mode - introducing combat strategies not possible with earlier space-combat titles.

*Strike Suit Zero* offers an array of space-craft and Strike Suits, with multiple gun and missile modes, presenting plenty of scope for customisation. In addition to this, with the 'Save Earth' plight at the heart of the narrative, your performance in battle directly correlated with the fate of the Earth.

*Born Ready Games would like to thank everybody who pledged for the game on Kickstarter. We've been able to achieve so much with the extra time your money has allowed us, especially with regards to art. A lot of what you've seen in this book wouldn't have been possible without your pledges -- again, thank you.*

*We'd also like to thank Mike McCain for his incredible illustrative work, Dr Chee Ming Wong and the Opus Artz team for their work with the characters, and Juni Okubo for his game-defining mechanical designs.*



Craft designs by renowned mecha designer Junji Okubo (*Steel Battalion*, *Infinite Space*)



Intense dogfighting action, with increased strategy and depth thanks to the transforming Strike Suit at the heart of the game.



Original score by Paul Ruskay (*Homeworld*) and a main theme with a collaboration with Kokia (*Tales of Innocence*, *Gunslinger Girl: Il Teatrino*.)



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