SKYTRAIN SIX
SINGLE PLAYER ACTION RPG
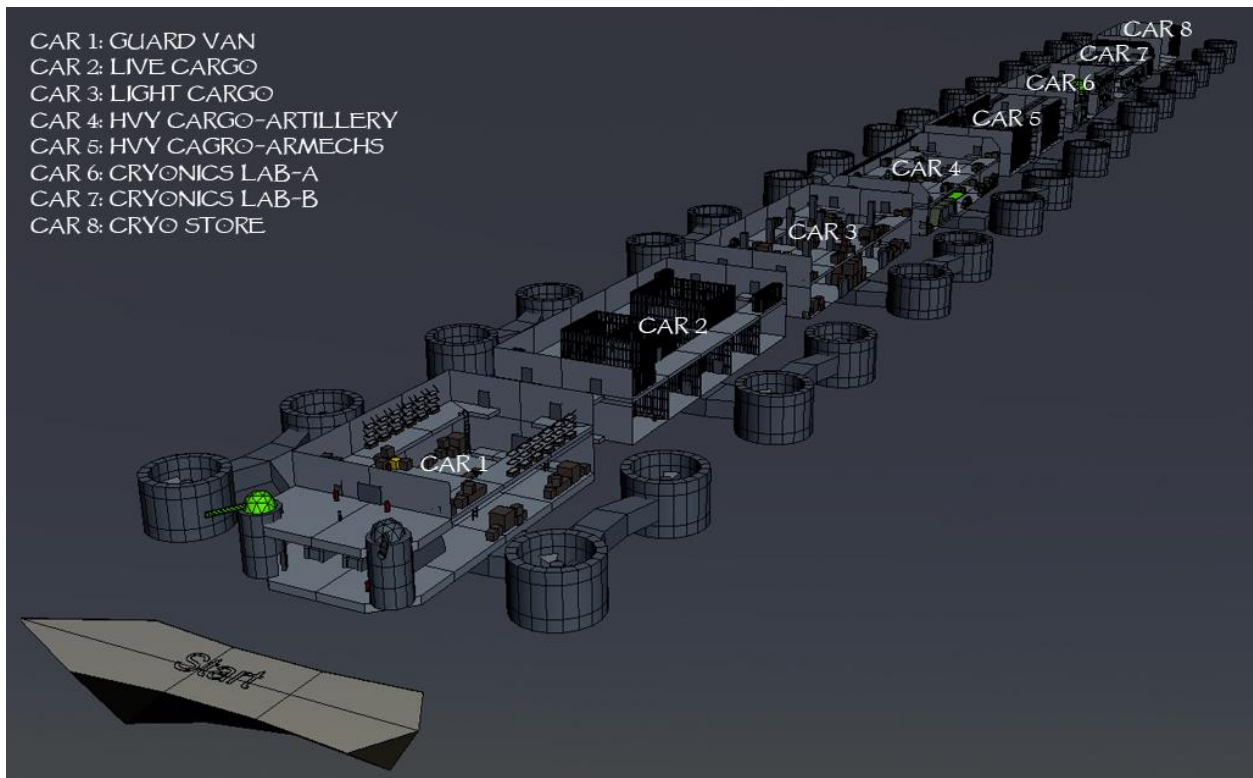
Level Design Document
"Shattered Skies of Aurelia: Sky Train VI"
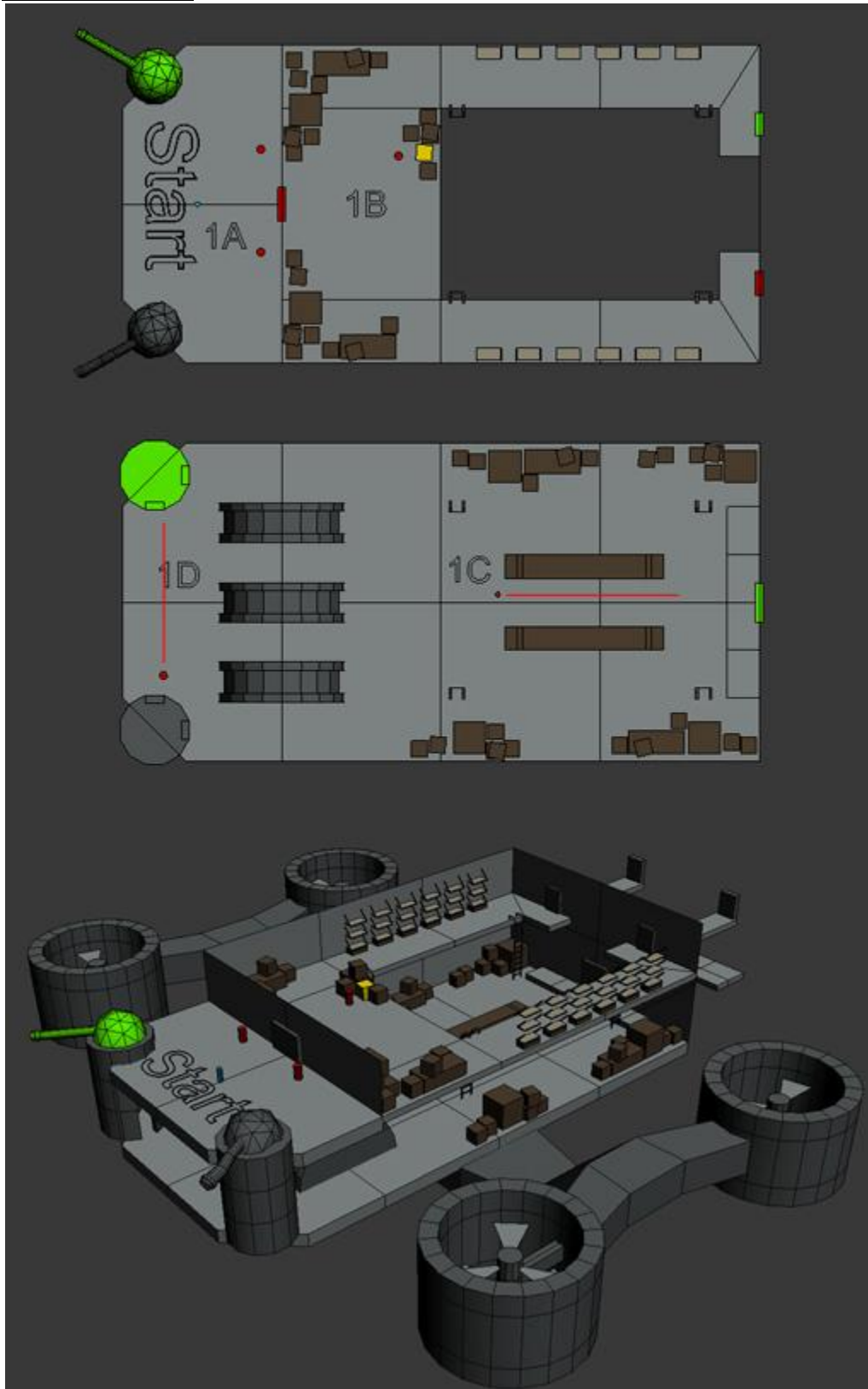**Philip Michael Norris**

Level Genre	High Gothic Fantasy w/ Steampunk elements
Gameplay	Hack & Slash RPG
Players	Single player & multiplayer (1-4) options

Level Overview

In designing Skytrain-VI I hope to circumvent some of the monotony and constriction that traditionally comes with the typical train level. My first priority was to make the cars fairly large and with two floors in which players can explore. Various puzzles & minigames paired with different unique cargo facilities makes for a new environment with each car.

CAR 1: GUARD VAN
CAR 2: LIVE CARGO
CAR 3: LIGHT CARGO
CAR 4: HVY CARGO-ARTILLERY
CAR 5: HVY CAGRO-ARMECHS
CAR 6: CRYONICS LAB-A
CAR 7: CRYONICS LAB-B
CAR 8: CRYO STORE

CAR 8
CAR 7
CAR 6
CAR 5
CAR 4
CAR 3
CAR 2
CAR 1
Start

Car 1: Guard Van

The guard van serves as a rear living quarters for the train's soldiers. The car contains two adjacent sleeping areas with footlockers, a mess hall and two rear-facing Gatling turrets.

1A—Aft Terrace
The rear deck contains two Gatling turrets, one damaged from return fire. Two Pistoleers guard the locked door leading to the main cabin. Once the player lands on deck he is immediately intercepted by the Pistoleers, one dropping the key to the cabin door.
- Pistoleer (2)
- Item—Key 1B

1B—Quarters
The quarters begin with a mezzanine containing stacked boxes of ammunition and miscellaneous surplus. Triple tier bunk beds line the walls along the gangway that overlooks the mess hall. A single pistoleer is encountered in the mezzanine rummaging through an open crate. The crate can be accessed to receive an AKV armored vest.
- Pistoleer (1)
- Item—AKV

1C—Mess Hall
The mess hall is accessed by one of four ladders from the barracks. The area primarily contains ration crates and is dominated by two dining tables at its center. A single Custodian patrols here, tending its duties unless fired upon.
- Custodian (1)

1D—Aft Engineering
Not mandatory, but if the player chooses he may explore this area beyond the mess hall. Three large turbines and other machinery are housed here. A rifleman patrols this area and will shoot on sight. There are two access hatches for the Gatling turrets in 1A, though only one is in working condition. Inside the hatch is a ladder leading upward. If selected, the player will ascend the ladder and a minigame will begin.
- Rifleman (1)

Minigame—Rear Gatling Shoot 'em up (The player has a 180 degree playing field of rear sky)

Car 2: Live Cargo Hold
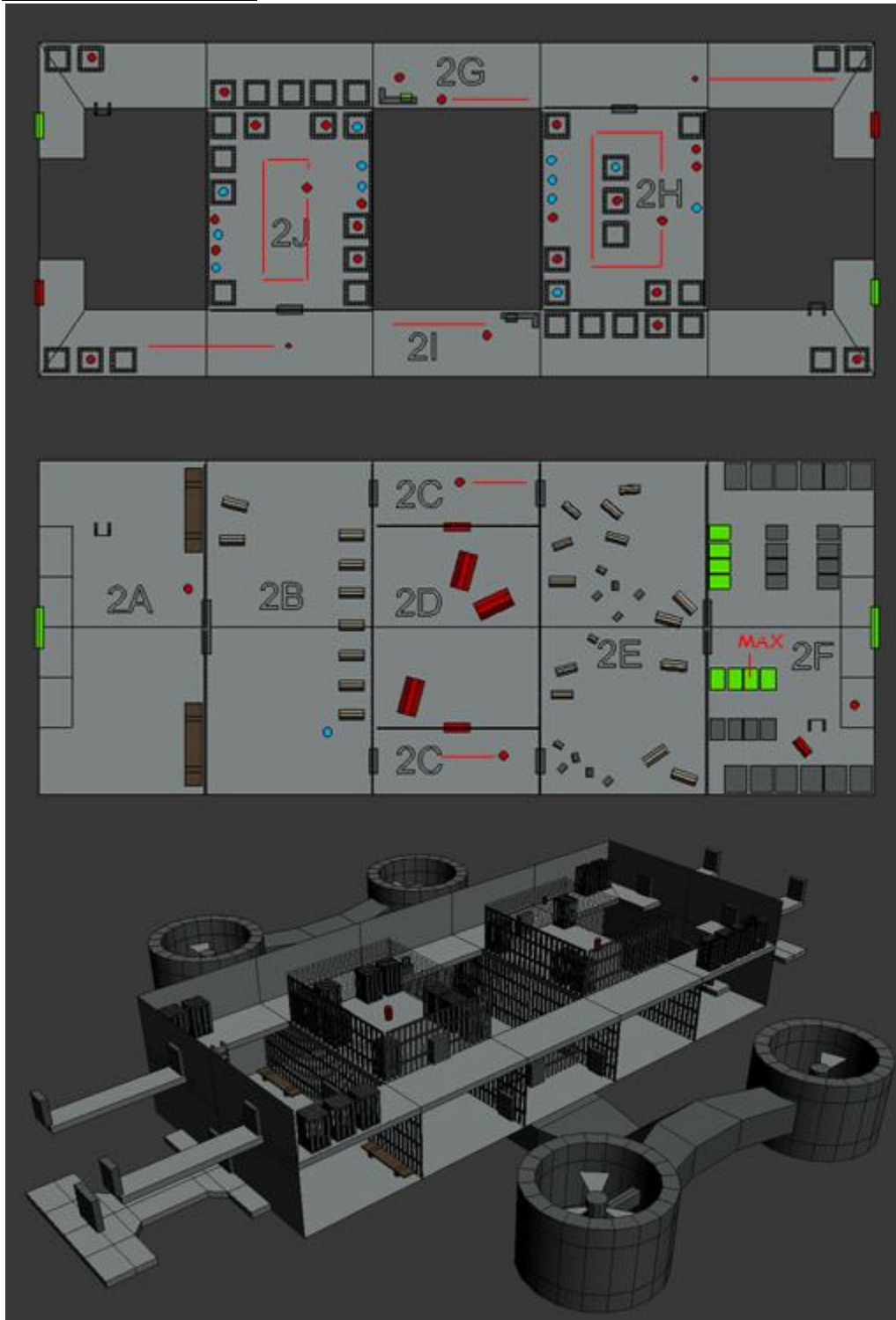
Various livestock and prisoner transfers are stored here in equally squalid conditions. The upper level houses prisoners and livestock are kept below.

2A—Storage
This area is used to store the necessities for the train's live cargo. Water, feed, and hay are stacked along its walls. There are two desks for record keeping adjacent to the stable door and a single pistoleer.
- Pistoleer (1)

2B—Stables
A young stable hand "Nolan" tends to nine Aurelian mares in this cell. He won't fight the player under any circumstance, and will cower and flee if provoked. He may be engaged for conversation at which point a dialogue opens up (pending). At the dialogue's end the player will be given an optional side quest (see 2F).
- Nolan
- Aurelian Mare (9)

2C—Cattle Chute
There are two identical cattle chutes that connect the stables with the livestock pen, circumnavigating the drake pen. Each entrance to the drake pen is guarded by an Iron Warder equipped with a cattle prod and bullwhip. The door to the drake pen is locked and cannot be accessed.
- Warder (2)

2D—Drake Pen
This open-roof pen houses three live Firedrakes. While the player cannot access this area himself, he can still have a little fun with the drakes from up on the catwalk (see 2G).
- Firedrake (3)

2E—Livestock pen
Entering this area could pose as a challenge for the player as the livestock have an annoying tendency to gather in the corners where the doors are located. The chickens automatically scurry out of the player's path and can also be kicked if the player chooses to do so. Goats have a fifty percent chance of moving out of the way of the player. If they refuse to budge the player can kick or push them aside. The difficulty to do this increases for every additional goat as their weight stacks. Thus, if three goats are gathered together the player will push them at only 1/3 speed. Cattle are the biggest nuisance because they stay put and won't budge even if shot at. The only way to get them to move aside is to equip a cattle prod from one of the Iron Warders from 2C. The door to 2F is opened remotely from the terminal in 2G.
- Cattle (6)
- Goat (7)
- Chicken (11)

2F—Kennels
The kennels house hunting & attack dogs, as well as trained wolves for the empire. Several smaller kennels are occupied by either puppies or wolf cubs. A Rifleman is stationed here alongside a hunting dog that attack on sight. The Rifleman drops a key ring granting access to

the kennels. All dogs & wolves attack the player if released. If a puppy or cub kennel is opened the animals will approach the opening and wait to be picked up. The player can pick them up and carry them, but only one at a time. The pups can also be set down on the floor at which point they will attempt to follow the player throughout the lower level and cannot be carried out of Car 2. There is an optional side quest to bring one pup in particular (Max) to Nolan the stable boy for experience.

- Rifleman (1)
- Attack Dog (2)
- Item—Key ring
- Puppies (8)
- Cubs (4)
- Max

2G—Catwalk A
The catwalk contains several cages designed to hold single prisoners, though most are empty. The terminal here is used to open the door connecting 2C to 2E and is guarded by two pistoleers. If the player positions his attacks just right he can knock one or both enemies into the drake pen. If successful the soldier(s) helplessly try to fend off the beasts before succumbing to their firebreath. One if the pistoleers has in his inventory the key to 2H. If the pistoleer falls into the drake pen the key will be lost (in the drake's stomach) and 2H will be inaccessible as a result. Any non-violent prisoners released will grant experience points to the player.

- Pistoleer (2)
- Prisoners
- Item—Key 2H
- Access terminal: 2E-2F

2H—Cellblock A
This area is lined with locked cages containing enemies of the empire. A single Warden is stationed here and drops a key ring granting access to all cages in 2H & 2G. Most prisoners in the cages are violent criminals (red) and attack the player upon their release. Those who are non-violent (blue) will thank the player and escape out the nearest entrance. The rest of the prisoners are chained to the surrounding walls. Any non-violent prisoners released will grant experience points to the player.

- Warden (1)
- Prisoners
- Item—Key ring

2I—Catwalk B
Similar to 2G, only the terminal seals off the door between 2A and 2B. The pistoleer has the key to 2J, and can also be knocked into the drake pen. Any non-violent prisoners released will grant experience points to the player.

- Pistoleer (1)
- Prisoners

- Custodian (1)
- Item—Key 2J
- Access terminal: 2A-2B

2J—Cellblock B
This area is lined with locked cages containing enemies of the empire. A single Warden is stationed here and drops a key ring granting access to all cages in 2I & 2J. Any non-violent prisoners released will grant experience points to the player.
- Warden
- Prisoners
- Item—Key ring

Car 3: Light Cargo

The light cargo area is an automated warehouse alive with motorized conveyers, lift systems, and a mechanized storage & retrieval system. Items stored here are mostly non-perishable dry

goods tightly packed into locked wooden crates. Some crates (green cubes) can be pushed, pulled, or kicked off of ledges.

3A—Front Storage
From here the player can precede either straight where a Custodian is sorting boxes, or up the left or right ladders toward 3D. Crates must be pushed to get to 3B from 3A.
- Custodian (1)

3B—Main Warehouse
The main warehouse is cluttered with large crates forming narrow pathways to 3C. The high stacks blot out much of the light in this area making it easier to sneak around, though the player must push crates to get through. A large freight elevator dominates the center of the warehouse and can be controlled from kiosks 3B or 3E. The elevator carries with it several crates, one being a container. A Custodian patrols the narrow walkway parallel to the elevator, at times passing through the freight elevator's path. If the elevator is activated while the custodian is underneath it will be crushed.
- Custodian (1)
- Elevator Item—Herbs/healing plants (1)

3C—Rear Storage
This area resembles 3A, save for a rifleman, custodian, and a container to the upper right. The rifleman remains stationary unless the alarm sounds (see 3E).
- Rifleman
- Custodian
- Item—(pending)

3D—Front Mezzanine
Two custodians work sorting boxes in this high open area. A static conveyer system winds its way from the closed bay door to the freight elevator platform. A few small crates (green) can be kicked over the ledge for fun. If a custodian is engaged in combat, it too can be knocked into the crates and topple over the balcony. A single container is also available to the player.
- Custodian (2)
- Item—(pending)

3E—Control Platform
This small area is the control hub for Car 3 containing a kiosk commanded by the Overseer. Once the player crosses into 3E the Overseer will spot him and sound the alarm. This summons any remaining upper level custodians his aid. The Rifleman in 3C remains at his post during this scenario, but can no longer be surprise attacked. After the battle the kiosk can be accessed to turn off the alarm, thought the remaining custodians will continue to attack if not dealt with. The Overseer drops the key to Car 4.
- Overseer
- Custodians*
- Item—Key (Car 4)

3F—Rear Mezzanine

This area is similar to 3D in that it contains two custodians, a conveyer walkway and several small interactive crates. The Rifleman in 3C will position himself in the pathway of the falling crates following the alarm. If the player chooses he may kick the crates over and crush the rifleman below.

- Custodian (2)

Car 4: Heavy Cargo-Artillery
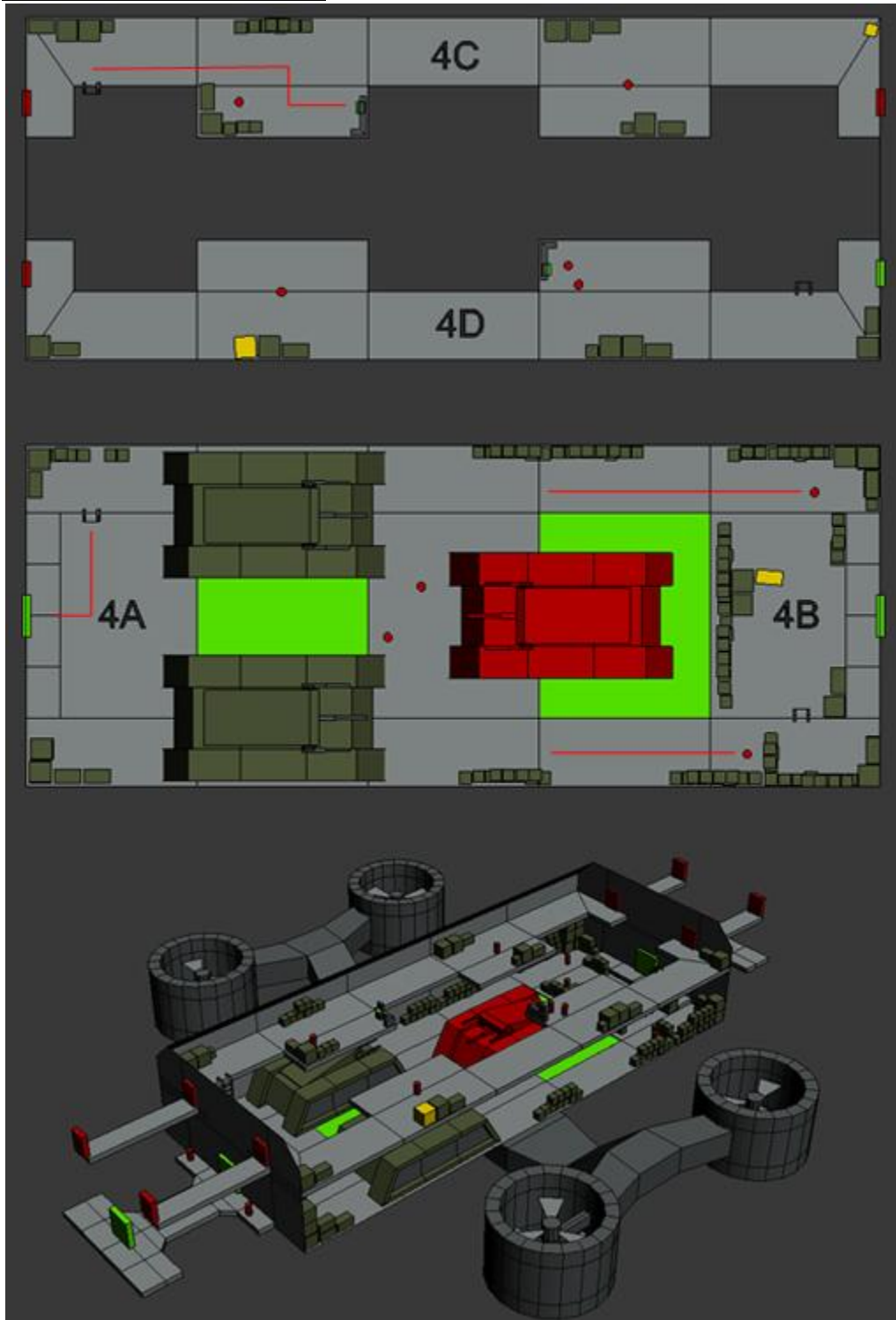
Items stored here are for military use, and range from small weapons & armor (UL) to tanks and armored vehicle parts (LL).

4A—Tank Storage

Various metal crates line the walls of this large open area and twin drop platforms (green) take up a fifth of the traversable area. Three Gatling laser tanks occupy much of the area, positioned to create a narrow pathway toward 4B. One of the tanks (red) faces the main entrance accompanied by two pistoleers, and will begin firing if/when the player crosses onto the first drop platform. The damage dealt by the tank makes continuing this way impossible, but exploring 4C will reveal that the tank may not be in the most optimal position after all.

- Pistoleer (2)
- Gatling Laser Tank (1)

4B—Ammunition Storage

This area is technically the same as 4A save for the items stored. Medium-sized metal crates are stacked here, one of which is a container. Two riflemen patrol up and down the walkways connecting 4A to 4B.

- Rifleman (2)
- Item—Ammunition (?)

4C—Catwalk-A

Catwalk-A overlooks the rear drop platform where the manned tank is stored. The nearby kiosk can be activated with the keycard dropped by the pistoleer in the same area. Once activated the platform will lower and open releasing the tank. The vacuum created from the open hatch will suck out the two accompanying pistoleers as well as the patrolling riflemen from 4B if they fall within ten meters of the drop platform. The hatch automatically closes when the player leaves the kiosk. A laser turret guards the rear catwalk.

- Pistoleer (1)
- Laser Turret (1)
- Item—Keycard

4D—Catwalk-B

The pistoleer drops the keycard to the kiosk activating the forward drop platform in 4A. The static tanks in 4A are stored safely and do not fall into the hatch if opened. A laser turret guards an ammunitions container in the rear of 4D.

- Pistoleer (1)
- Rifleman (1)
- Laser Turret (1)
- Item—Ammunition (?)

Car 5: Heavy Cargo-Armech Facility
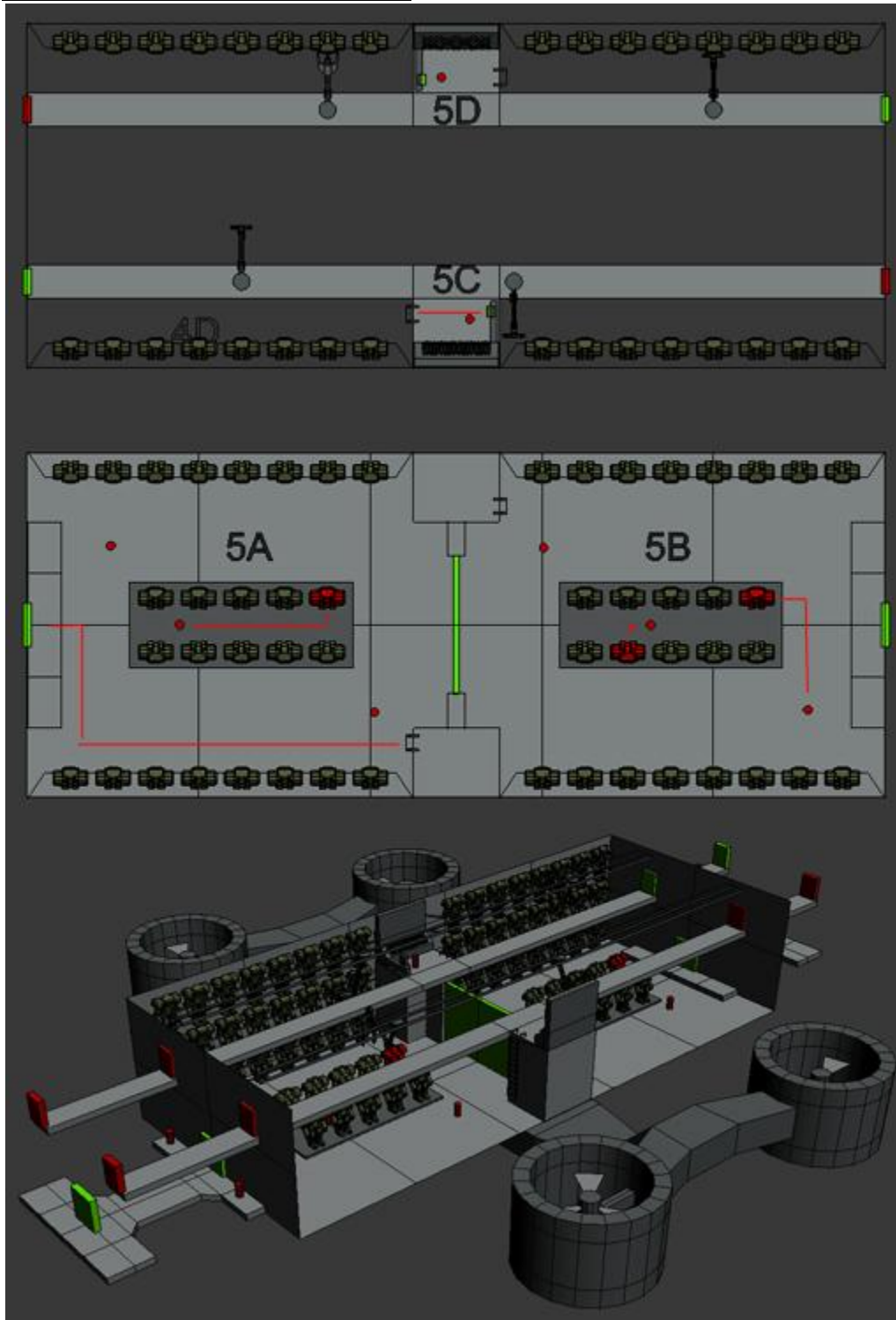
This large open facility houses factory-fresh armechs, or Armored Mechanical Suits. Armechs stand at roughly four meters and are equipped with tactical arcana-based weaponry. The hangar is divided into two separate rooms by a large steel door. Along the walls the armechs

are stacked vertically by four mechanical arms that move along the narrow catwalk. The arms and division door are operated from the kiosks in 5C & 5D. These platforms also house the magem cells, which power the armechs.

5A—Armech Store A
The player will be immediately spotted upon entering 5A resulting in gunfire from the far left and right riflemen. The pistoleer patrolling the central armech platform will run toward and enter the (red) armech, activating it. If the player acts quickly the pistoleer can be neutralized before he reaches his armech. The (red) armech is usable by the player, but requires a unique key dropped by the pistoleer to do so. Once inside a number of options become available. A large set of steel blast doors separate this area from 5B and can only be opened from the kiosk in 5D. The armech cannot ascend the ladder and must be exited before the player can reach 5D.
- Rifleman (2)
- Pistoleer (1)
- Armech* (1)

5B—Armech Store B
This room is visually identical to 5A, save for there are two armechs opposed to just the one. Again, the pistoleer on the central platform will make for the closest (red) armech, while the rifleman at the rear will attempt to enter the other. The rear exit door is locked and can be opened from the kiosk in 5C. armechs here are also available to the player, and can be worn outside of car 5.
- Rifleman (2)
- Pistoleer (1)
- Armech* (2)

5D—Control Hub A
A single overseer operates the terminal on this small platform. The overseer will fire at the player as the player ascends the ladder, and will attempt to flee once the player reached the top. The catwalks to the left and right are traversable but end at locked doors. From the terminal the player can open the blast doors, shut down 5D assembly arms, and unlock the magem cell store to the right. Cells stored here are Pyrotek cells and can be inserted into the armech's tactical cellport.
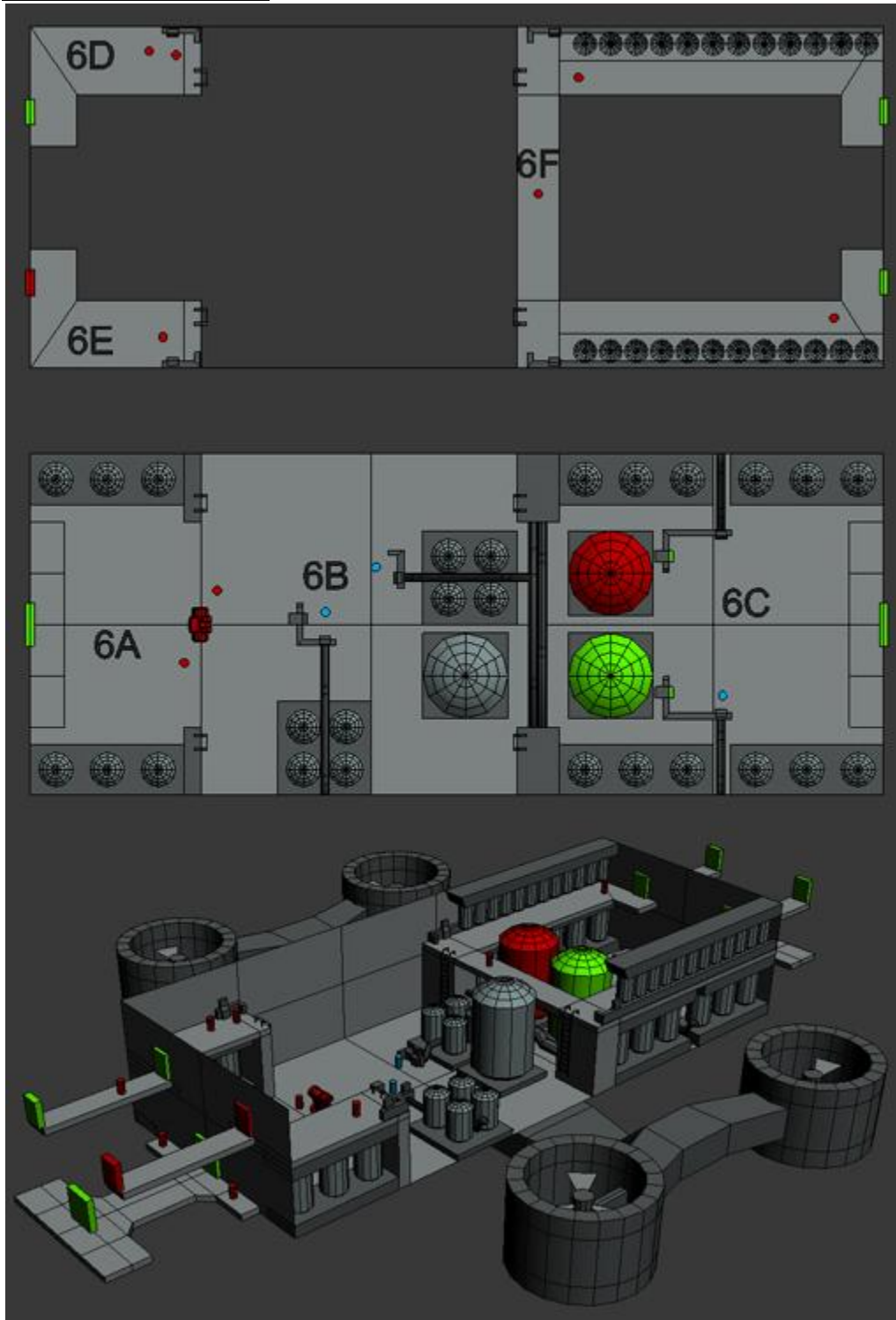- Overseer (1)
- Item—Pyrotek Cell

5D—Control Hub B
This hub is visually identical to 5C. From this kiosk however, the player can unlock the rear door in 5B, closes the blast doors, and unlock/access the magem cell store. Cells stored here are Cryotek cells and can be inserted into the armech's tactical cellport.
- Overseer (1)
- Item—Cryotek Cell

Car 6: Cryonics Store-A

The cryonics store is a cold sterile chamber where the empire's biological weapons (Magelings) are grown. Man-sized glass pods line the walls, connected by a network of black tubes. A cold white vapor pours from overhead ducts & blankets the floor.

6A—Vestibule
An armech accompanied by two pistoleers wait to greet the player in this open area. It is highly recommended that the player continue to wear his armech from car 5 if he plans to enter car 6 from the lower level.
- Armech (1)
- Pistoleer (2)

6B—Lab 1
This area is centered on a pair of kiosks which control the temperature and life support systems of the new magelings. Two cryologists operate the kiosks.
- Cryologist (2)

6C—Lab 2
This secured area is only accessible from car 7, requiring the player to first exit car 6 via the doors in 6F and reenter from the lower level. A pair of giant pods sit at the rear of this chamber each accompanied by its own kiosk. There is nothing discerning about either pod, although their contents greatly differ. The pod to the left can be opened from its kiosk releasing a Mageling Halfborn (dialogue pending). The halfborn will offer to help the player reach the end of the train in gratitude for its release. The pod to right can be opened from its kiosk as well, this time prompting the cyrologist to run over and attempt to override the command. Opening the right pod will release a Greater Corrupted Halfborn that quickly takes out the cryologist before engaging the player.
- Cryologist (1)
- Greater Corrupted Halfborn (1)
- Mageling Halfborn (1)

6D—Security Hub 1
This is a less-challenging path if the player chooses not to continue wearing an armech, although he will still have to fight the enemy armech in 6A to continue on. 6D's high platform grants the player cover from the armech's attacks, giving the player some advantage.
- Overseer (1)
- Rifleman (1)

6E—Security Hub 2
Similar to 6D, save for a rifleman.
- Overseer (1)

6F—Rear Catwalk
Numerous pods line the walls along the catwalks overlooking 6C. A laser turret guards the central walkway connecting the catwalks where two pistoleers patrol. Each pistoleer drops a key to the exit they are guarding.
- Laser Turret (1)
- Pistoleer (2)
- Item—Key (exit)

Car 7: Cryonics Store-B

Like car 6 this storeroom is cold and sterile, with low visibility due to cryonic vapors. Three large cryo-pods dominate the central corridor.

7A—Vestibule

From here the player may continue straight into 7B, or proceed up the ladders on either side. A container (yellow) is available in this area and contains a pack of empty plasma vials. The vials may be filled with the plasma of corrupted halborns (see 7B).

- Item—Plasma Vial Pack (3)

7B—Lower Corridor

This foggy corridor connects 7A to 7C and is patrolled by a rifleman on each side. Greater corrupted halfborns occupy the three central pods in this area and can be opened from the kiosks in 7E. Opening the pods will release the halborns who will then attempt to take out all creatures on the lower level (including each other). Halfborns are unable to ascend ladders. Note: if the player has adopted the Mageling Halfborn from car 6 to his employ, it too will be stuck on the lower level and will be attacked by the released corrupted halborns. Slain corrupted halfborns drop up to three vials worth of mageling plasma that, when selected will ask the player if he would like to collect any. If the player picked up the empty vials from the container in 7A he can gather up to three vials for each corrupted halfborn.

- Rifleman (2)
- Greater Corrupted Halfborn (3)
- Mageling Plasma (3-9)

7C—Security Station

- This area contains an elevated control desk manned by two overseers. One of the overseers drops the keycard to the central terminal which activates the rear door leading out of car 7. Overseer (2)
- Item—Keycard (1)

7D—Security Walkway

This walkway is accessible from any corner of car 7. Each side is patrolled by a pistoleer and a rifleman.

- Pistoleer (2)
- Rifleman (2)

7E—Monitoring Systems

Three kiosks control the life support systems within the cryo-pods in 7B, each monitored by its own cryologist. The cryologist must each be killed in order to obtain the keycard granting access to their terminals. Should the player choose to access the kiosk(s) himself he will have the option of a) shutting down life support system, killing the creature inside; or b) opening the pod, releasing the creature (see 7A).

- Cryologist (3)
- Item—Keycard (3)

Car 8: Digamma Security Grid—Boss
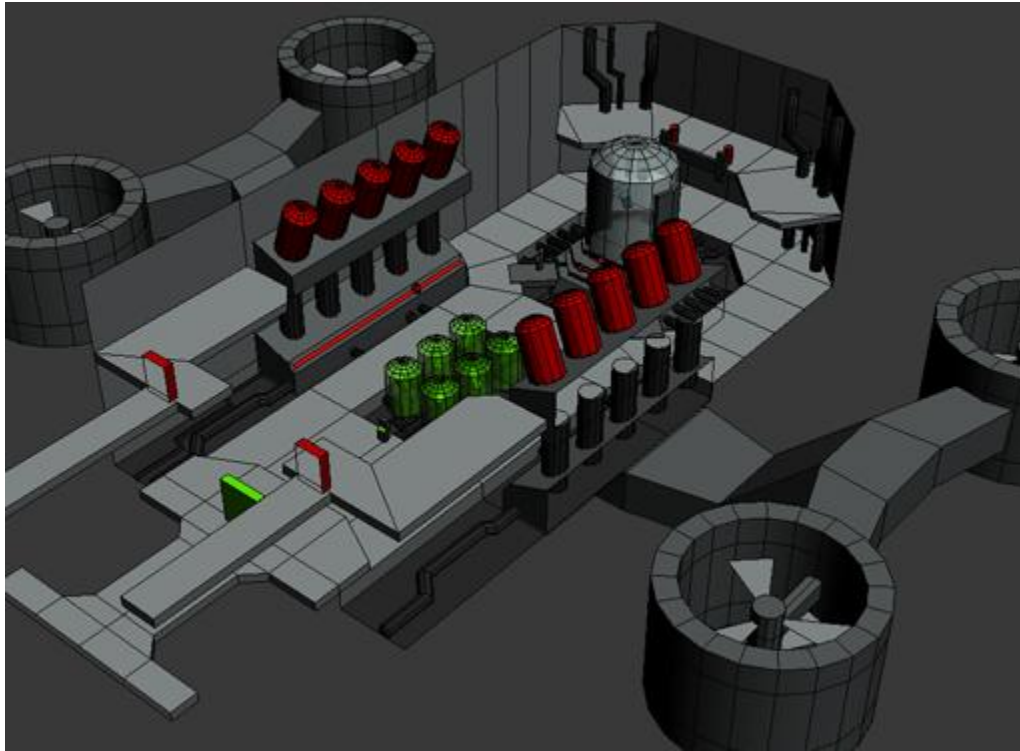
Car 8: Digamma Security Grid—Boss

This final playable car houses the skytrain's primary payload—a female Similarian & soon-to-be ally named Xersa. She is contained within the large central pod in suspended animation protected by an arcana-powered security system known as "Digamma-SG". Digamma is integrated into the car's hull and powered by the energy of lesser corrupted halfborns (red). Reserve halborns (green) have not yet been tapped and therefore remain uncorrupted. Three separate terminals can be used to override Digammas primary functions. After so many rounds circuitry damage by the player-released halfborns (see override A-1) Digamma will cease to function and terminal override B-3 & C-3 will be accessible.

Terminal Overrides A

From terminal A the player will be prompted to:

1. "Open Reserve Pod 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6?"
   This prompt releases a single lesser mageling halborn at a time. Upon its release the halfborn will dive into the surrounding wire pits and begin tearing through Digamma's circuitry, damaging her. This prompts the release of two lesser corrupted halfborns (red), which attack the single lesser halfborn. The player may opt to defend the lesser halborn against the corrupted halborns, or tend to terminals B & C. Since time is a factor when going between terminals it is suggested that the player keep his mageling companion from 6C to deal with the lesser corrupted halfborns.

2. "Regenerate Mageling 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6?"
   Empty reserve pods can be restocked with new lesser halfborns from this prompt. It is

recommended that the player do this immediately following prompt A, since it takes 60 seconds for regeneration to complete.

Terminal Overrides B & C
From terminals B &C the player will be prompted to:
1. "Shut down laser-systems?" (on corresponding side)
   This will temporarily disable the laser rails that border the left and right walkways.
2. "Dump amniotic solution pod 1, 2, 3, 4, 5?" (on corresponding side)
   Dumping a pod's solution will permanently shut it down. If this is not done quickly Digamma will replace the empty pod with a halfborn from a reserve pod (green). After the halfborn is transferred out it will become corrupted, thus adding to her arsenal.
3. "Discharge Payload "Xersa"?"
   This override is inaccessible until Digamma has been defeated. This command drains the central pod of fluid and lifts the glass dome. Xersa regains consciousness and joins the party of playable side characters.