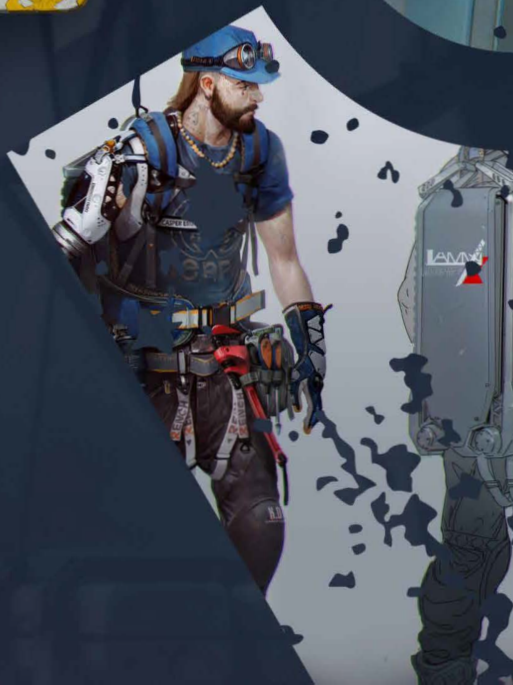


THE ART OF
DIRTYBOMB®

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CDA
Supply
Stack



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INTRODUCTION

In 2018 a series of radiological attacks are triggered across central London. In the panic and chaos that followed, the government cedes control to the international Central Disaster Authority (CDA), allowing them to evacuate, secure and eventually decontaminate the capital. London's population is displaced to the suburbs, while the historic city centre lies abandoned, sealed off and surrounded by the CDA containment wall. Now the Contaminated Zone is an arena for mercenaries from across the world, fighting over the secrets and riches left behind.

With Dirty Bomb we wanted to move the genre forwards while staying true to the classic elements players love about Splash Damage games. We wanted new, diverse, unique, opinionated Merc characters who'd let players express themselves in cool new ways. We wanted to balance the creation of rich evocative locations with the need for our maps to be tactically legible. We wanted a game set in London, our home territory, but changed in ways subtle and... not so subtle.

We wanted to evoke familiar real things about the capital, but add hints and narrative breadcrumbs to what had made our future London increasingly strange. We wanted a perfect playground for our Merc characters, their abilities, and the gameplay objectives. Here's what we made.

Ed Stern

Lead Writer, Splash Damage



MERCENARIES



PROXY

Dirty Bomb is made in London, it's set in London, and we wanted a native Londoner Merc in it. We thought another hoodie-wearing London lad might be tough to make distinct, but fell in love with Proxy at first sight – we got an instant sense of her cheeky, light-hearted mocking Cockney wit, but she's also a fearsome opponent with mines and a shotgun.



Georgi Simeonov



BUSHWHACKER

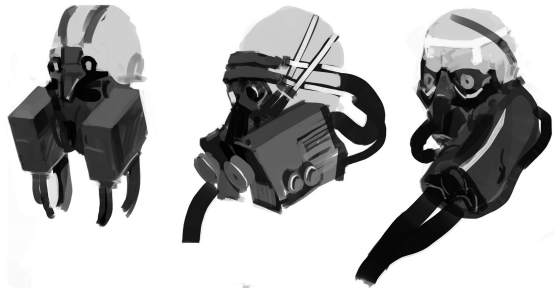
Another highly accomplished professional happy to let people mistake his country accent for a lack of sophistication, Bushwhacker may be slightly red of neck, but he's a gentlemen, scholar and tough customer. Less agile, heavier on the firepower and cigar smoke, we saw Bushwhacker as a tough, grizzled combat mechanic who never loses his cool.



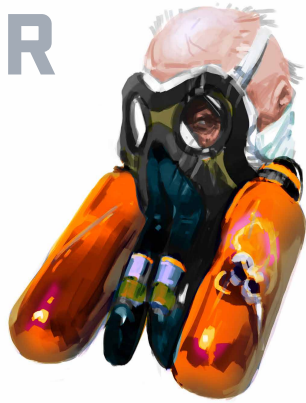
All illustrations: Georgi Simeonov

STOKER

We knew we wanted a fire ability in the game, but weren't sure who'd wield such a weapon. The moment we saw Stoker's silhouette we knew he had what it takes, that something serious had happened to him. Not a giggling psychopath, a much more disturbing calm and cheerful tactical pyrotechnic expert.

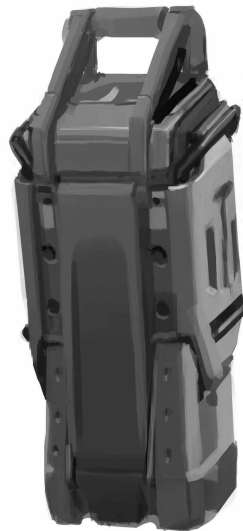


STOKER



compress & secure stand

release pressure
opens ammo compartments



ammo dispenser



FRAGGER

We wanted a big hearty big-gun Alpha male Merc with grenades to spare. Sometimes you just need a big hairy dude with a gun to get stuff done. Fragger is that man. Sometimes you can overcomplicate things.



All illustrations: Georgi Simeonov



AURA

We saw Aura as a smart, sharp, no-nonsense battlefield medic. She talks “country”, perhaps drolly exaggerating her Southern accent to encourage people to underestimate her, but make no mistake, Aura is a highly composed and expert professional. She runs businesses and now she’s a Merc, she runs the show in combat. She’s utterly impossible to impress, has no small talk and is just impatient to get on with things. She’s slim and athletic, depending on agility rather than armour or firepower.



Manuel Dischinger



SAWBONEZ

We wanted a medic Merc who'd be absolutely the first person you'd want to see if you were wounded, and the last person you'd want to annoy. Sawbonez fitted that particular bill nicely. We wanted someone who looked like they'd seen it all and survived to tell the tale, and then wouldn't tell you the tale because he had better things to do.



Adam Baines



Manuel Dischinger



Georgi Simeonov

SAWBONEZ



Manuel Dischinger

ARTY

Anyone who calls in artillery fire support on a professional basis means business. We wanted Arty to be a decisive, determined, highly expert, slightly impatient character. If he's perhaps not the most warmly compassionate or empathetic of men, well, he does spend his entire life with multiple artillery guns pointing very near his location.



All illustrations: Georgi Simeonov

PHOENIX

The “Selfish Medic” is a classic psychological MP FPS player profile; only ever heals themselves, never heals their teammates, a haughty lone wolf in the middle of a team game. So we decided to make a Merc for that precise profile. When we saw the first sketches of this metal-legged medic Merc, we wondered how he’d lost his original meat limb, if it was doing something heroic. But then we decided he was far too self-involved to have done anything so selfless.



Adam Baines

KIRA

Kira's just a genki happy young Japanese research scientist who controls a massive orbital weapon system. It's the old cliché, a woman, a weapon satellite, and an abandoned metropolis. Yes, we know, yet again. Kira's Orbital Strike ability is one of the most fearsome and spectacular in the entire game. So we wanted to make her as friendly and personable as possible. Such a friendly young woman! Such fire from the sky! We're all huge fans of the movie Akira, but wanted to show that control of orbital weapon systems doesn't always turn out bad. So Kira's doing better than alright, even if she makes other Mercs nervous.



Manuel Dischinger

RHINO

We knew we'd have a Merc who was a massive walking tank with colossal armour and firepower. But we also wanted him to be smart. Ever met one of those guys who's so ripped you assume they must be kind of dim? And then it turns out they've read twice as much as you have? Rhino's that guy. Only bigger. And, hopefully, more heavily armed.



Manuel Dischinger



Manuel Dischinger

RHINO



Georgi Simeonov



SPARKS

We wanted some Eastern European representation in the game, and fell for Sparks hard. She's smart, tough and very dry. There are so many other things she could be doing, but Dirty Bomb missions pay best so here she is. Sparks is really actually truly Russian. She refuses to be drawn on whether Thunder can actually speak Russian. As for what turned her hair white... you don't want to know.

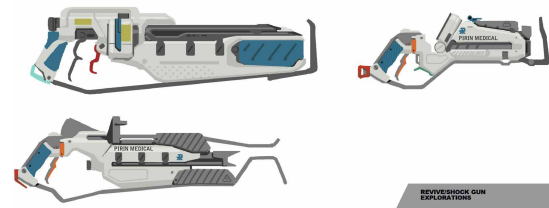
Sparks is a qualified doctor, and has the papers to prove it. But then she also has the papers to prove she's at least five other people, including a pilot, an attorney-at-law, and a California Highway Patrol officer named Jeff. The point is, she has friends in high and low places, which helps her get her hands on cutting-edge medical tech like the REVIVR. Killing and reviving people under gunfire is by no means the worst job she's had. Just ask Jeff.



Manuel Dischinger



Georgi Simeonov

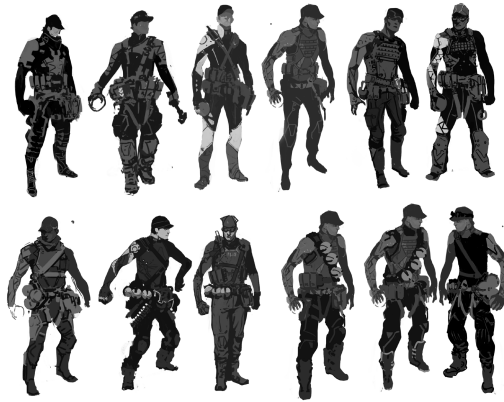


Georgi Simeonov

TURTLE

Been-there-seen-that-laid-back-built-his-own-bionic-arm Turkish combat engineer. Turtle's a fairly relaxed character. Mere firepower doesn't alarm him much. Blowing off your own arm, and using your one remaining meat arm to apply a tourniquet and then construct a replacement bionic arm? That was kind of interesting. But incoming airstrikes? Meh.

Glass half empty: Turtle's unauthorized experiments in bionic prosthetics cost him his arm and his steady job as a lab tech at the department of mechanical engineering at Istanbul University. Glass half full: his new metal arm is even better than the old meat arm, and he's in much greater demand as a battlefield engineer in camo than he ever was in a white coat. He also has a drastically revised sense of what is or is not "an emergency".



All illustrations: Manuel Dischinger

NADER

Women in games often end up stereotyped as the slinky assassin or compassionate medic. We wanted a powerful woman, a no-nonsense straight-up doorkicker whose firepower would match any other Merc in the game. So we made her tough, strong, and gave her the Grenade Launcher. We don't think she'd want it any other way.

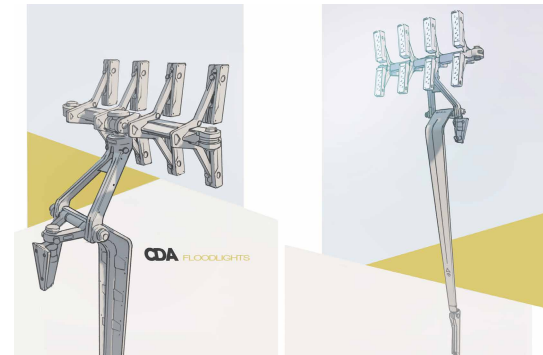
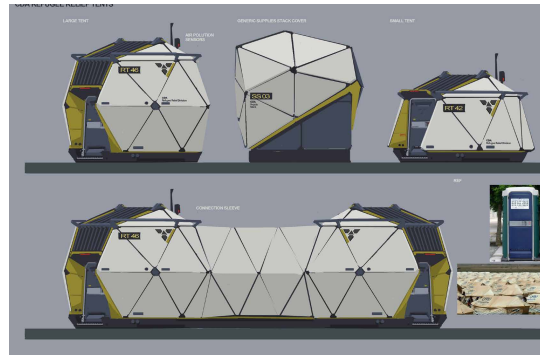
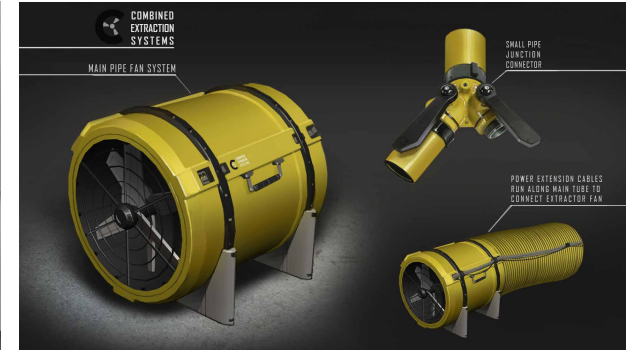
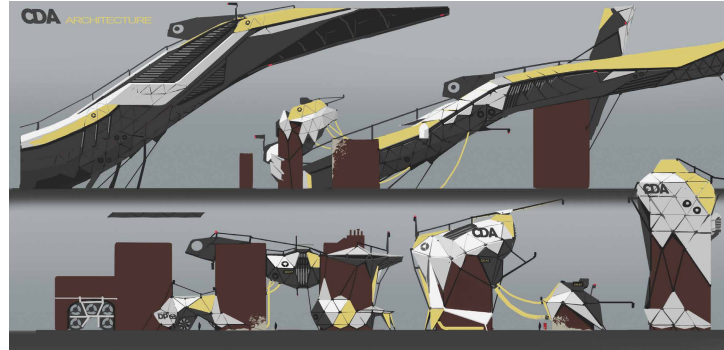


THE COA



THE CDA

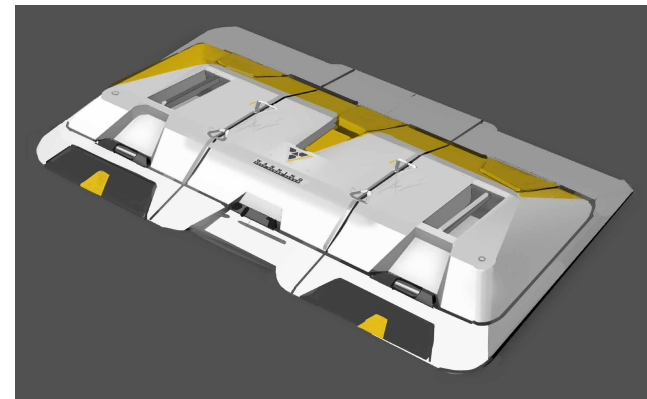
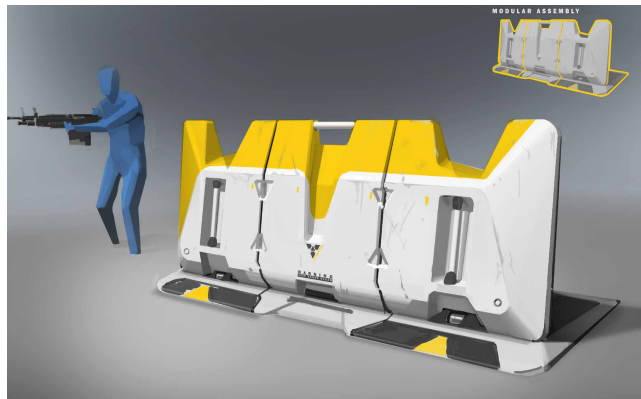
After the Dirty Bomb attacks on London, who steps in to contain the disaster, and seal off the Contaminated Zone? The Central Disaster Authority (CDA), the shadowy organisation which increasingly makes its presence felt through its distinctive futuristic parasitic installations, facilities and infrastructure through the now-abandoned capital. We needed an intuitively distinctive visual language to show what had changed, to gradually take over and subvert the familiar London architecture and skyline. The CDA is clean, clinical, high-tech, and slightly scary. Their personnel and buildings are faceless, almost alien.



Top right: Andrew Porter
All other illustrations: Georgi Simeonov

COA EQUIPMENT

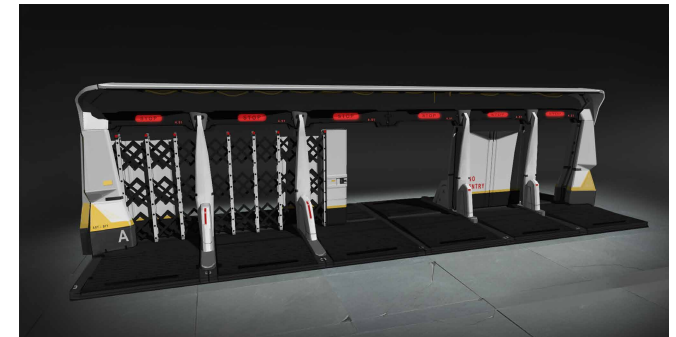
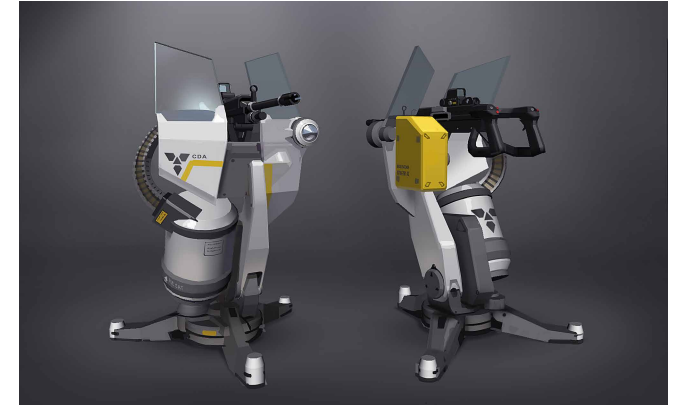
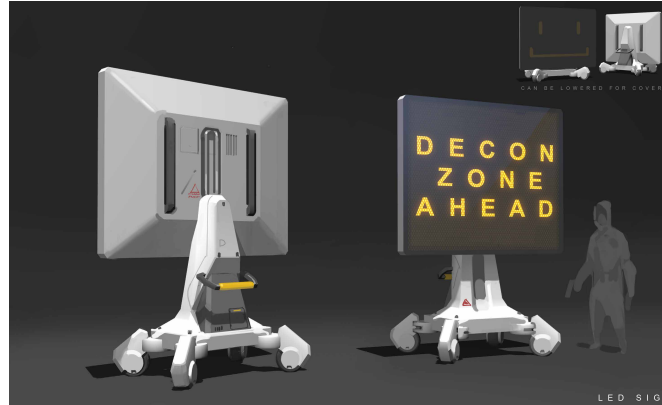
Without slowing down players too much with lots of cinematics, we wanted to use Dirty Bomb's environment to hint at the game's backstory. We wanted to break up the iconic textures and outlines of London's architecture and street layout with something new, interruptive and technological.



Adam Baines

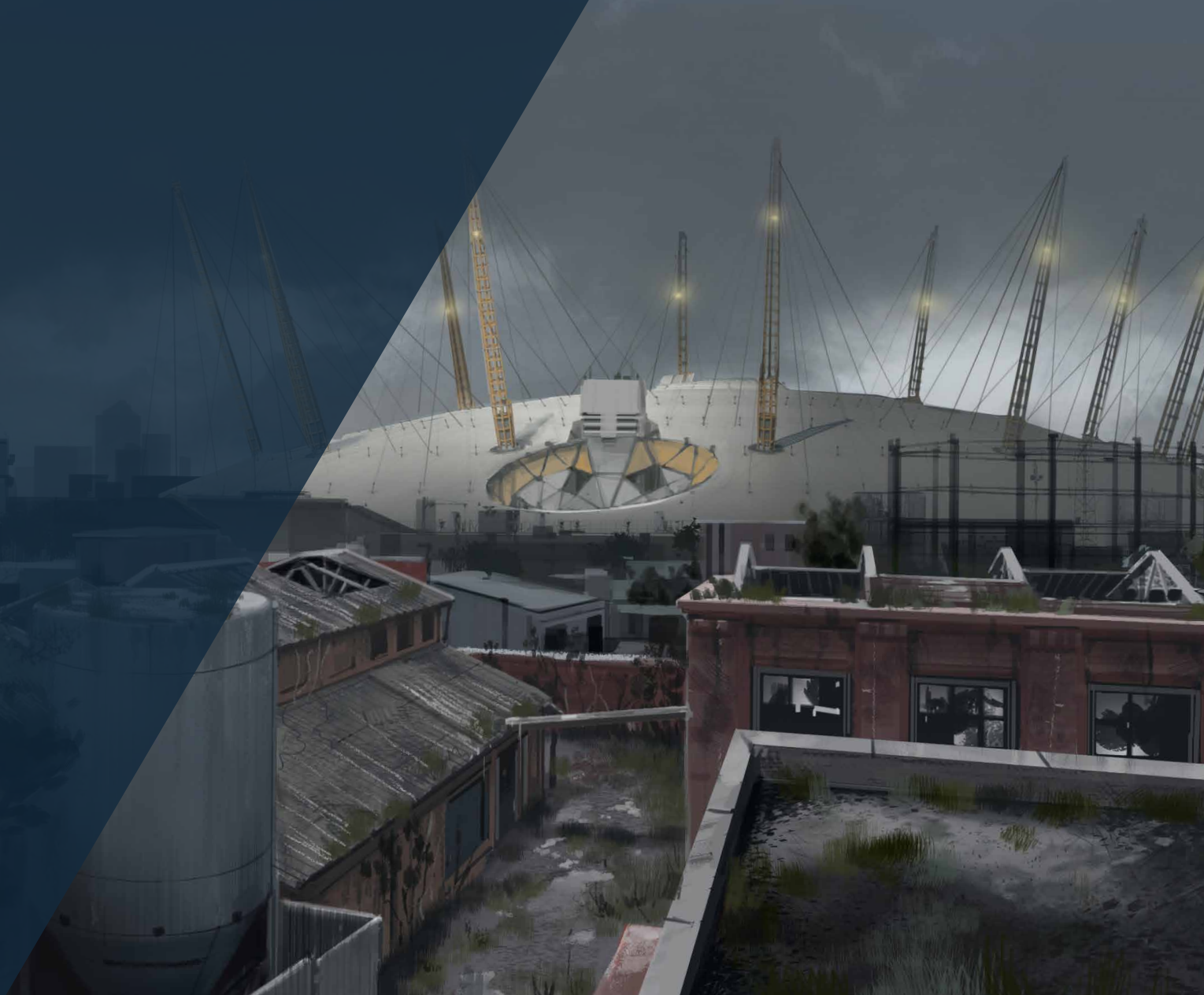
COA EQUIPMENT

Whenever you see something clean, futuristic, white and yellow and polygonal interrupting the environment, you can be sure it's the infrastructure of the Central Disaster Authority. The CDA sealed off the area contaminated by the Dirty Bomb attacks, creating a depopulated quarantine zone, and have made some attempts to monitor radiation levels, restore power, and even begin the massive decontamination process. This gives us lots of distinctive bits of equipment we can use to tell stories, lead players through the map, and use as gameplay objectives.



Top: Adam Baines
Bottom: Andrew Porter

MAPS



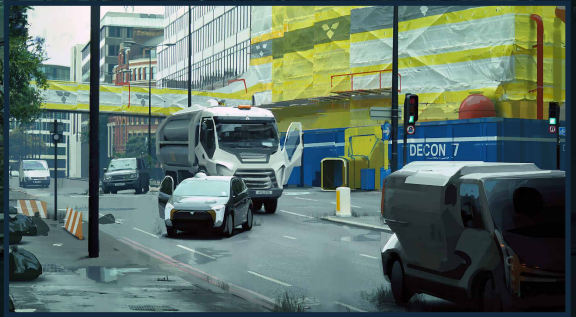
EARLY EXPLORATIONS

These are some of the very early explorations of what abandoned near future London under CDA quarantine could look and feel like. From the start we avoided going for the familiar decayed and decimated post-apocalypse. Instead we explored cold, clean and sterile, rain-drenched versions of our familiar city while trying to keep all signs of abandonment clear, but subtle.



Adam Baines

EARLY EXPLORATIONS



Illustrations by Adam Baines

BRIDGE

This was actually the first Dirty Bomb map we worked on, and the first test of our new combination of gameplay geometry size, scale, density and environmental narrative. The route and objective layout is not a million miles away from an old Wolfenstein: Enemy Territory map named mp_GoldRush, but obviously the look and feel of the environment is entirely new. We staged our own reconnaissance mission – raiding London with our cameras to capture hundreds of reference images of iconic and distinctive London details. We built this map on what we found near the real-life London Bridge station: Borough Market, The Shard, and the approach to Tower Bridge. The location of the final gameplay objective is the GH Medical research centre – the fictional high tech headquarters of one of the influential super corporations in the world of Dirty Bomb.



BRIDGE



Above and main illustration: Georgi Simeonov



Andrew Porter

UNDERGROUND

In Dirty Bomb's fiction, Canary Wharf tube station was used in the early days of the evacuation as a temporary camp for all the displaced refugees, at least before things started to go out of control. The final objective space in the lower levels was designed as being the hub of the refrigeration, decontamination and climate control system at the center of the complex, initially used as a morgue, now abandoned and barely functioning on reserve power.



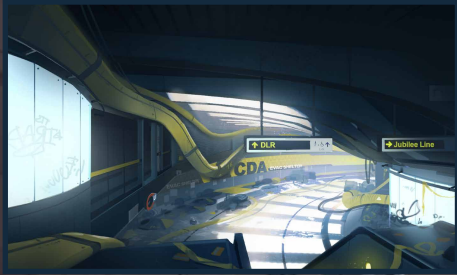
Georgi Simeonov

UNDERGROUND



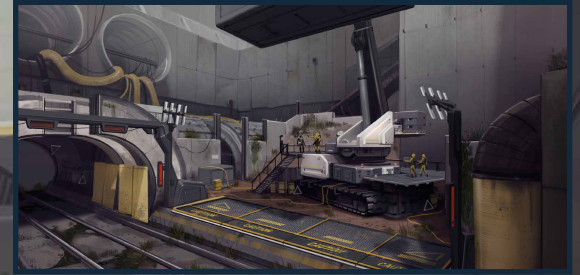
Illustrations by Andrew Porter

UNDERGROUND



Above: Georgi Simeonov

All other illustrations: Andrew Porter



DOOME

When road and rail links are cut off after the Dirty Bomb events, London is served by air and by the river Thames. We spent a lot of time considering the banks of the river, even reconnoitring it in person. We were particularly focused on what we'd do with the Millennium Dome. It's an amazing massive modern circus tent of a building, right by the river, situated on open flat ground without tall buildings nearby. We knew the CDA would definitely use it as a staging post, and Greenwich's unique mix of modern factories and historical buildings would let us easily differentiate the different areas of the map.



Illustrations by Andrew Porter

DOOME



Above left: Georgi Simeonov
All other illustrations: Andrew Porter

TERMINAL

With so many millions of people commuting into and out of London every day (including many of us at Splash Damage), we knew we'd want to use at least one of its massive and distinctive rail stations. Not only did it make sense that the CDA would be using rail facilities to move the heaviest equipment into and out of the contaminated zone, a modern rail terminus offers so much functional and flavourful detail. We created a composite modern station incorporating exterior and interior elements of both the real-life Victoria and Waterloo stations. Our fictional station has been transformed from a civilian commuter transport hub to a loading bay for CDA operations, complete with forklifts and a CDA freight train.



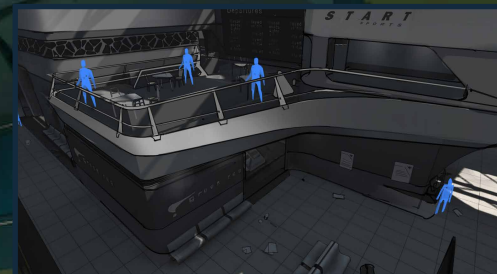
Illustrations by Adam Baines

TERMINAL



Main illustration: Georgi Simeonov
All others: Adam Baines

TERMINAL



Main illustration: Georgi Simeonov
All others: Adam Baines

CHAPEL

London is as recognisably iconic by night as by day. Right from the start of development, we knew we wanted a map mission set at night, and Chapel was the first one we created. The combination of Whitechapel's historic streets (scene of the infamous Jack the Ripper murders in 1888) and dramatic high-contrast artificial lighting gave us great potential for both gameplay and atmosphere. There are lots of games set amid futuristic gleaming skyscrapers or dusty khaki streets. But there's just something special about old stone architecture and lighting splitting the night's darkness, and it's a big part of Dirty Bomb's distinctly London flavour.



Illustrations by Adam Baines

CHAPEL



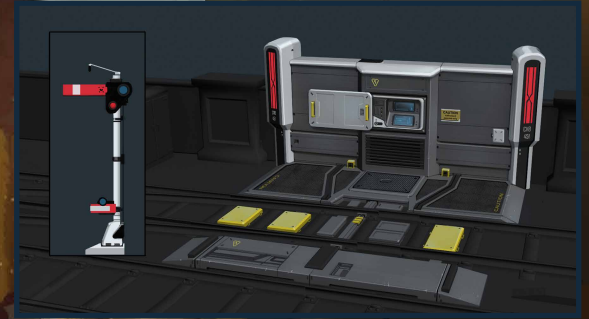
Above and main illustration: Adam Baines



Georgi Simeonov

TRAINYARD

London's canals aren't as famous as those of Amsterdam, but they're actually a big part of its development and history. North of the river, Camden is famous for its market, actually named after Camden Lock, a vital part of London's Victorian-era network of canals used for shifting raw materials and industrial goods into and out of the capital. We loved the combination of railway sidings, bridges and dried-up waterways. They gave us nice clear intuitive routes for gameplay, and a unique setting we hadn't seen in a game before.



Top: Andrew Porter
All others: Adam Baines

TRAINYARD



Andrew Porter



Adam Baines

Georgi Simeonov

TRAINYARD



Georgi Simeonov



VEHICLES

TRAIN & ARMoured CAR

Railways, carriages and locomotives make great gameplay objectives. We needed a CDA locomotive that would look futuristic yet practical, able to pull the heaviest freight loads – and who knows what people are trying to move into or out of the contaminated zone? We collaborated closely with the Level Design team to work out what size and shape the Train could and couldn't be before committing to a particular aesthetic solution. The train is an important gameplay objective, so it can't just look good, its geometry has to work with all the Merc characters and abilities in the game as well.



OBJECTIVE TRAIN CARRIAGE

Adam Baines

EXTRACTION VEHICLE & DECONTAMINATION TRUCK

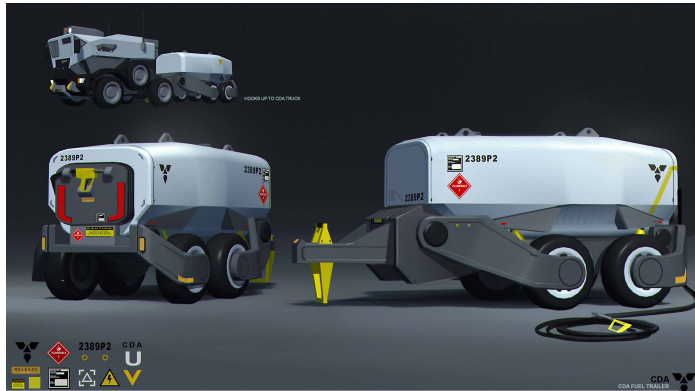
Escort Vehicles are really useful for Dirty Bomb's dynamic objective gameplay – they focus the combat around themselves as they move through the map, and then do something useful when they reach the end of their path, such as blasting open a new route. Ironically, our needs for an escort objective vehicle were the same as those of the CDA: we both needed a compact unmanned vehicle, small enough to navigate the compact London streets, but at the same time strongly armoured enough to withstand intense enemy firepower, carry a mounted machine gun and breaching charge launcher, and contain armoured refrigerated chambers for extracting valuable cargo or personnel. We came up with this versatile unmanned platform that the CDA use for autonomous patrols, the recovery of valuable or dangerous objects from the Contaminated Zone, and – when the need arises – fire support.



Top left: Adam Baines
Others: Georgi Simeonov

OTHER VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT

Some assorted props and vehicles, ranging from our version of the iconic London bus to the UAV drone which you can fleetingly see overhead dropping bombs whenever Skyhammer calls in an airstrike. Note: we do not recommend standing still and staring at the sky during one of Skyhammer's airstrikes, no matter which team you're on.

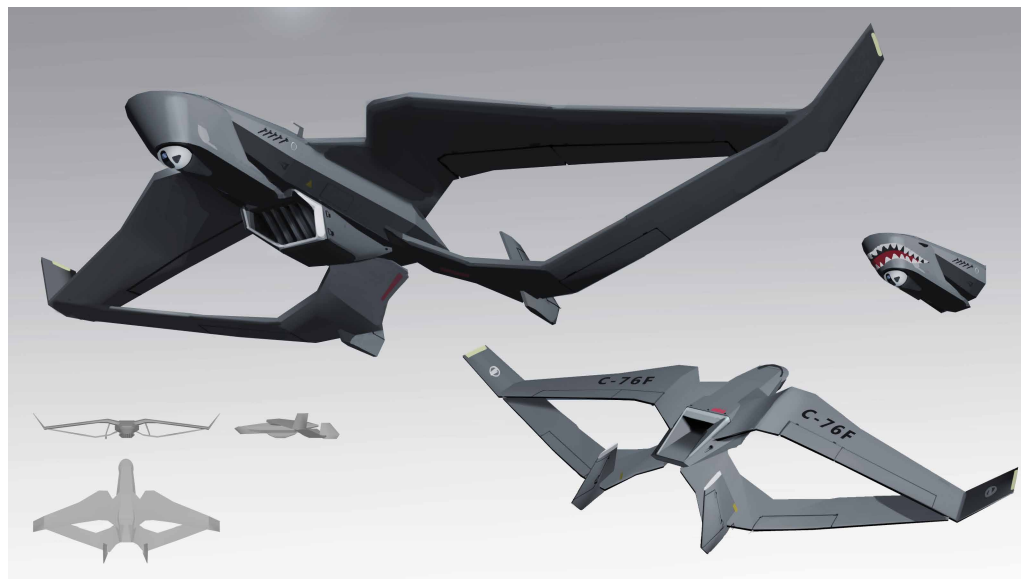


All illustrations: Adam Baines

OTHER VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT



Andrew Porter



Adam Baines

WEAPONS



WEAPONS

Our principle was to extrapolate on real life weapons, but add a DB twist. They also needed to look and feel authentic, but not be simple copies or emulations. They needed to support cool, immersive firing and reloading animations, and be visually distinctive in both first person view and third person silhouette. Also, they needed to communicate their characteristics: can you immediately and intuitively tell what their rate of fire, damage, and accuracy will be?

We wanted a wide range of variations and themes, from poorly-maintained battle-worn weapons, to clean and carefully-maintained pristine armoury inventory, to ornate hand-crafted bespoke examples of the artisanal gunsmith's art.

In an FPS game, by definition you can't see yourself: most of the time your gun IS your character, so you need to have interesting, unique, compelling weapons.

We had the idea of basing some new guns on classic WW2-era weapons, rebuilt and re-imagined, using modern high-tech materials and manufacturing techniques. We looked at the mass-produced carved wood stocks and furniture, light steel sheet stamped receivers and heavy milled forged steel billets, and reimagined them in modern alloys and composites. Slightly futuristic, but rooted in the past.



Illustrations: Adam Baines

WEAPONS



Illustrations: Adam Baines

WEAPONS



Illustrations: Adam Baines

WEAPONS

WEAPON ATTACHMENT EXPLORATION



WEAPON ATTACHMENT EXPLORATION



Illustrations: Adam Baines

WEAPONS



Adam Baines



Andrew Porter

WEAPONS



Andrew Porter

PPSH 84



Georgi Simeonov

WEAPONS



PPSH 84



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Illustrations: Georgi Simeonov

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XX SPLASH DAMAGE



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Here at Splash Damage we are dedicated to crafting team-based multiplayer games that ignite friendships as much they do the competitive spirit. Having risen from the competitive community in 2001, we're driven to putting players first in the worlds they love.

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Our people are our biggest strength, and we're committed to growing and developing our teams professionally and personally.

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It's no coincidence that this year we've become the first games studio to feature in the Sunday Times Best 100 Companies.

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