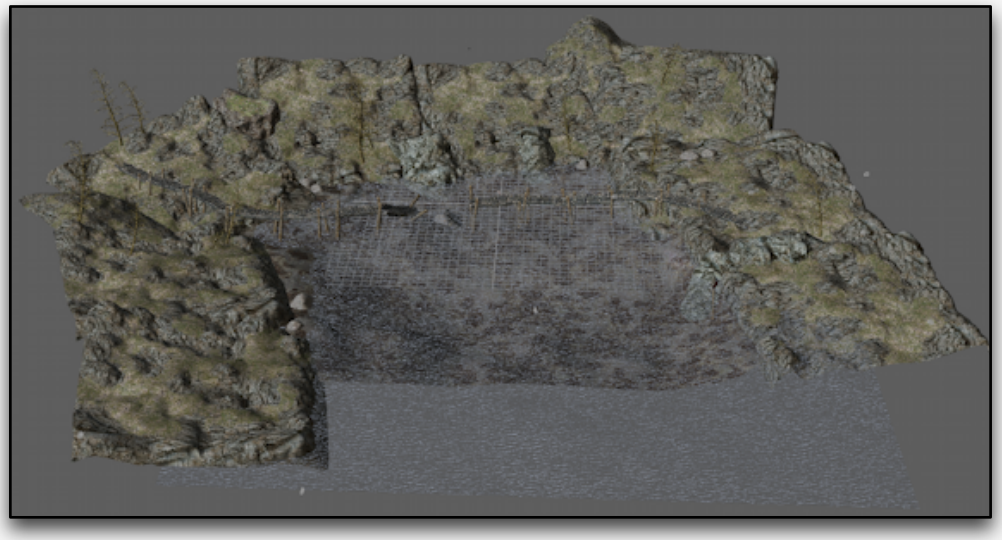
BAPTISM OF FIRE

The complete how-to guide

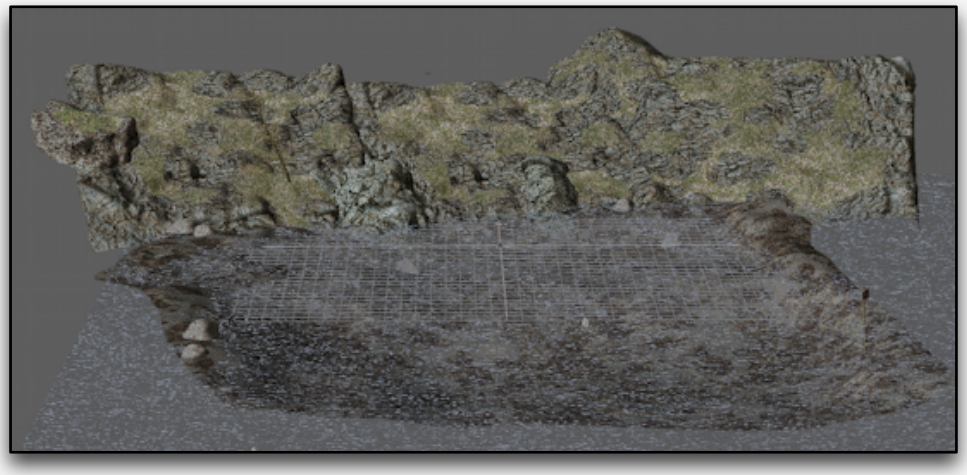
The uncensored version

This how-to is will go through every step from idea to finished render, including most of the mistakes and ideas that popped up during the journey. Fasten your seat belts, strap your life west, here we go!

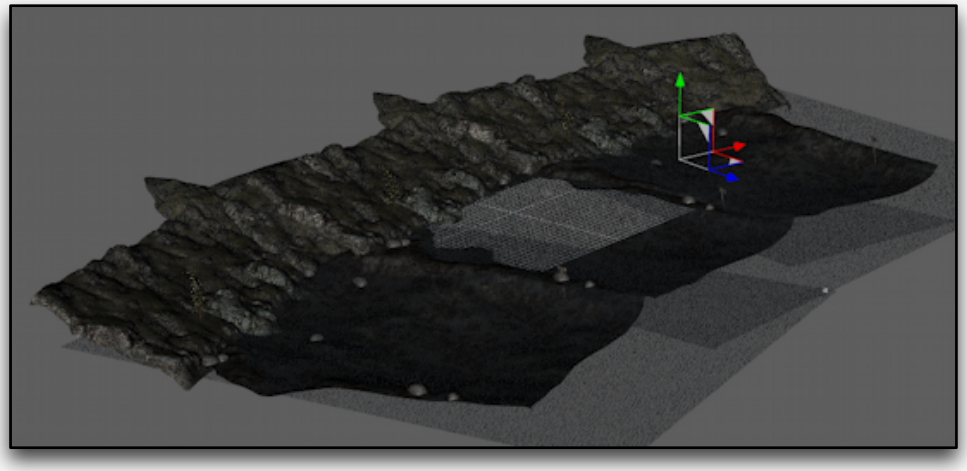
I decided to use **Walk Across Water** and use it as an invasion beach, as I haven't done any good invasion scenes yet.



I started by loading the full scene into DS 4.5, then I tore away trees, bridges and other loose stuff. These are just separate props which makes it easy to just toss them.

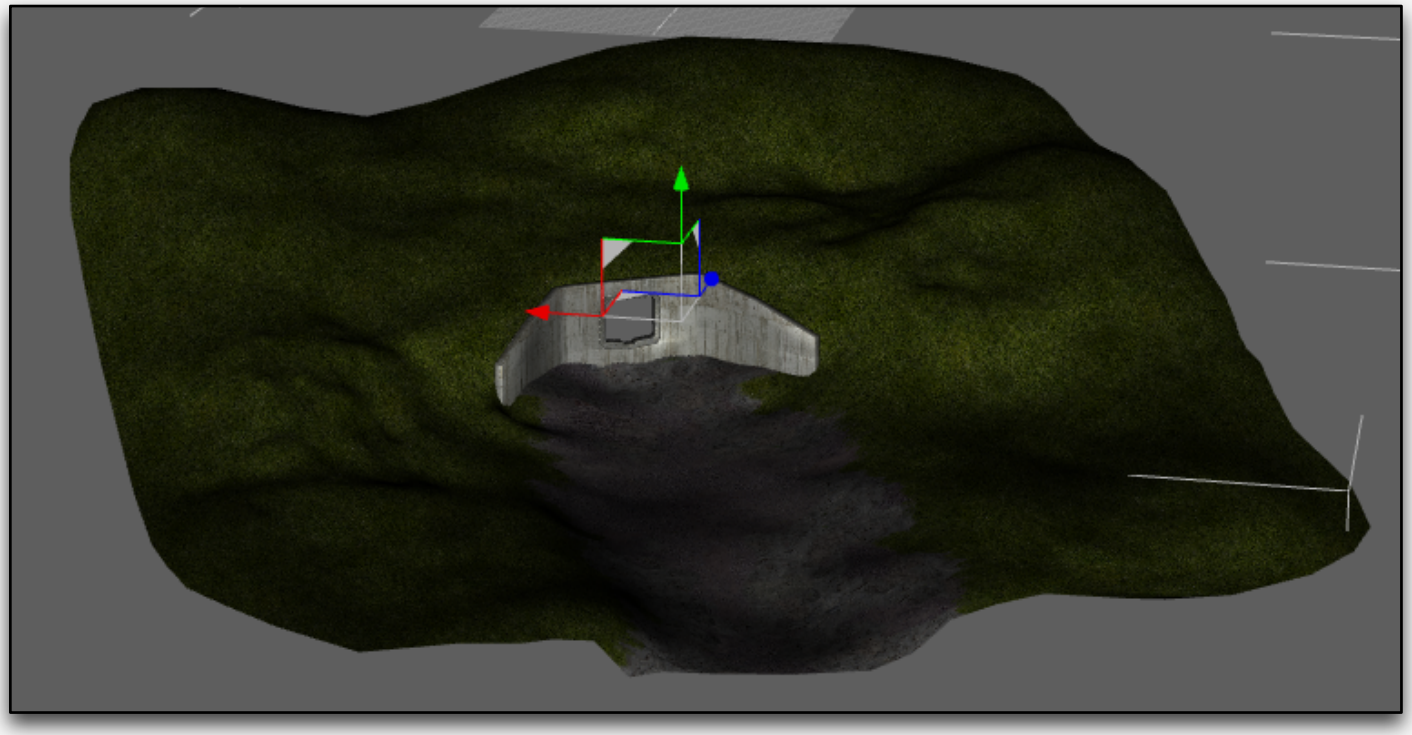


Then I tore away the sides, which also are separate prop parts, leaving a beach, the invasion beach.

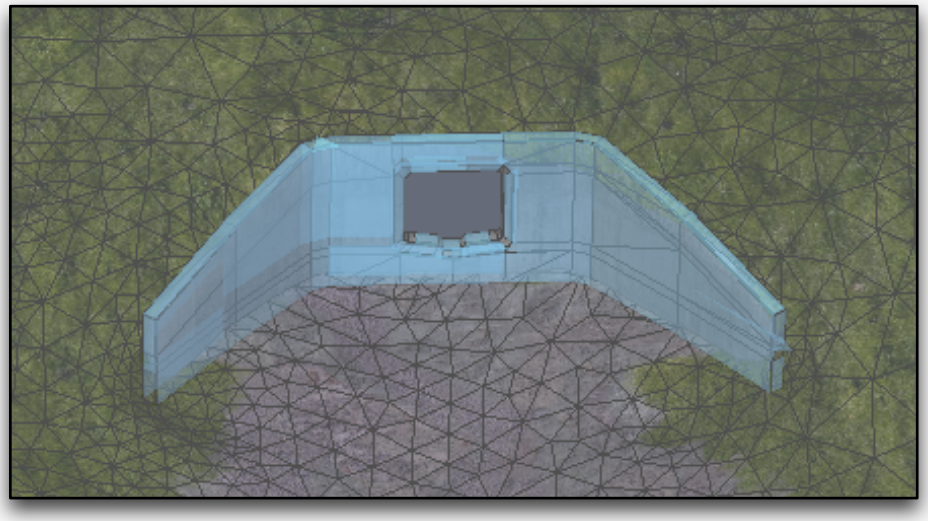


Now I put everything ina Group objects and then I used Object instances t create two more instances to make a wider beach.

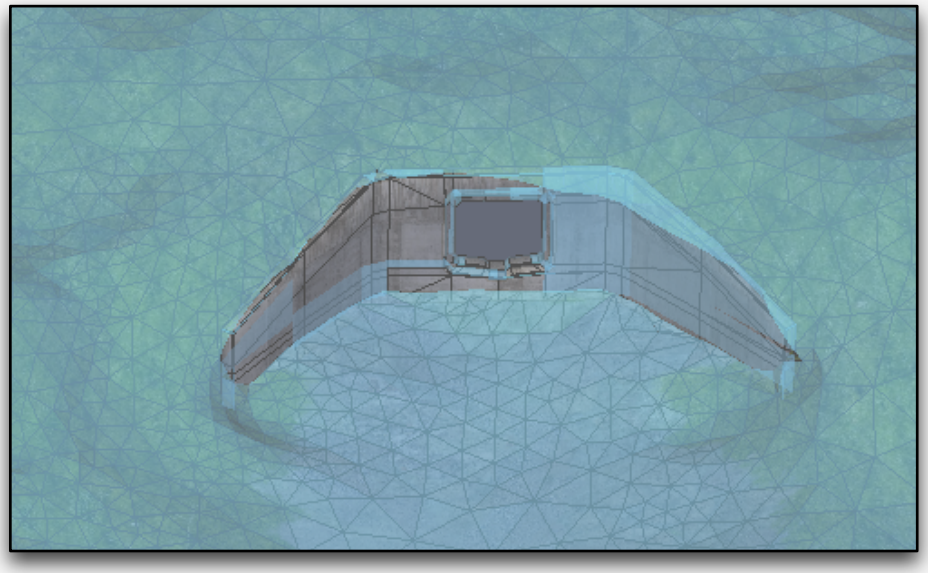
Step 2, making a bunker using Stormsewer.



I created a new scene and loaded Stormsewer and tore away everything except the ground structure. I then sent that to Hexagon.

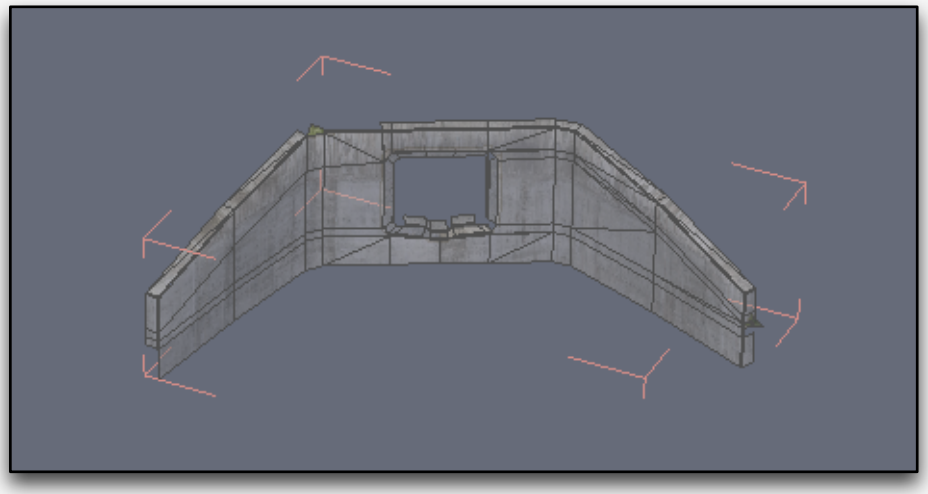


I selected the polygons belonging to the concrete opening that I wanted to use as a bunker.

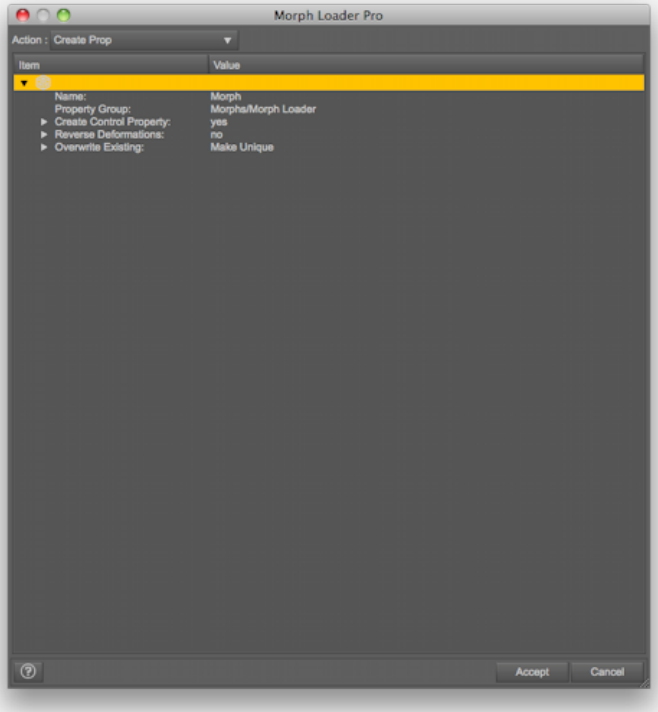


I then inverted the selection.

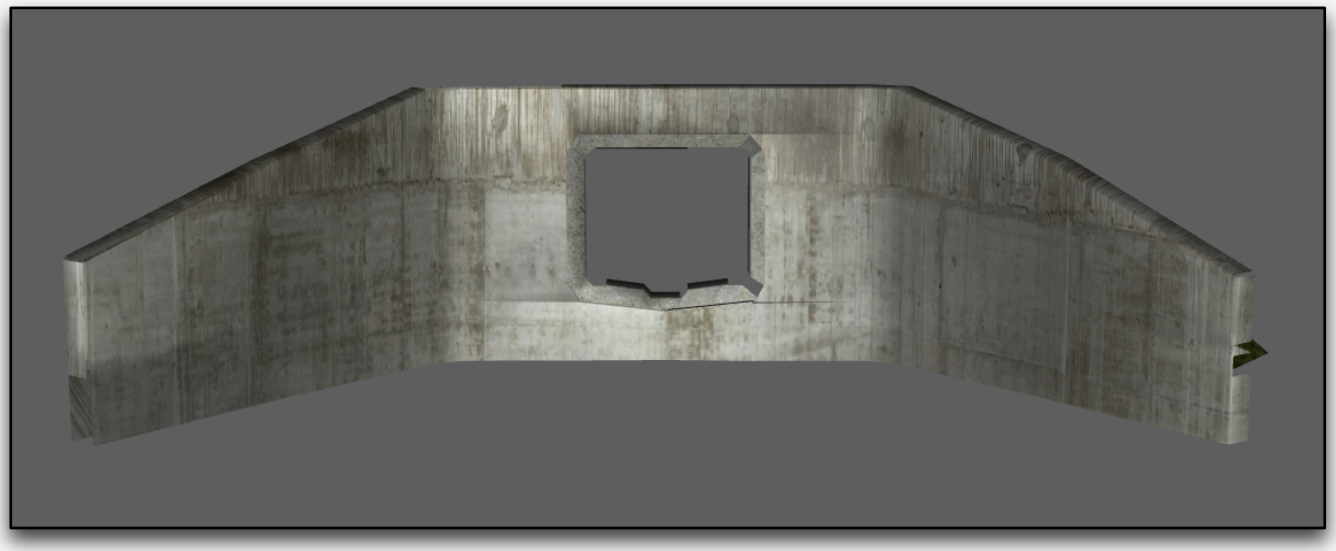
Now the keen eye can see why I call this the un-censored version, as you can see that my polygon selection was not really well done, but I didn't notice that until later.



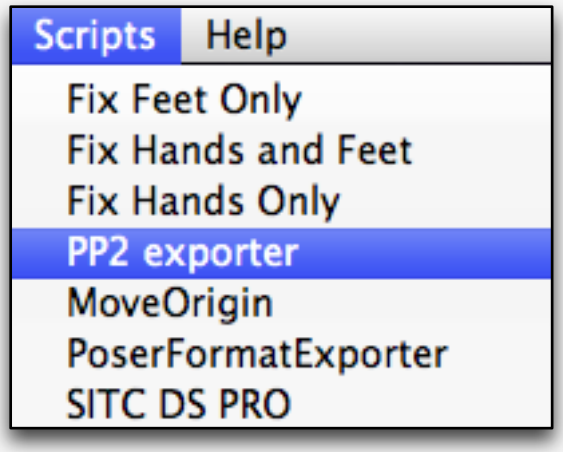
I removed the selected polygons and now I had my bunker. I sent the bunker back to DAZ Studio.



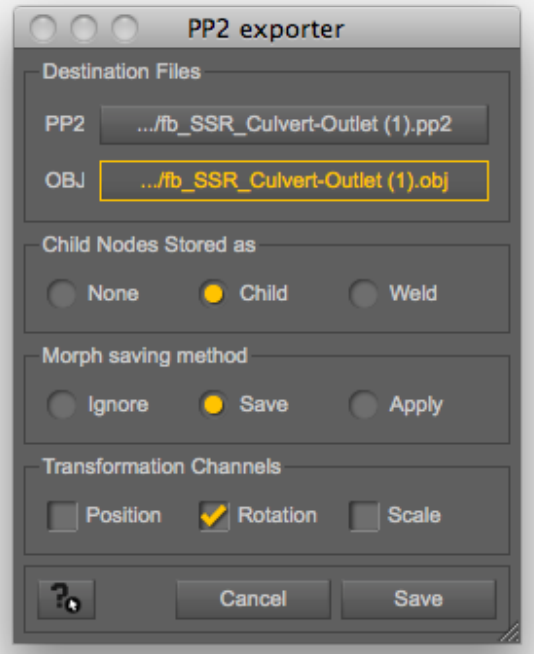
In DS i selected the action **Create Prop** to have it as a prop.



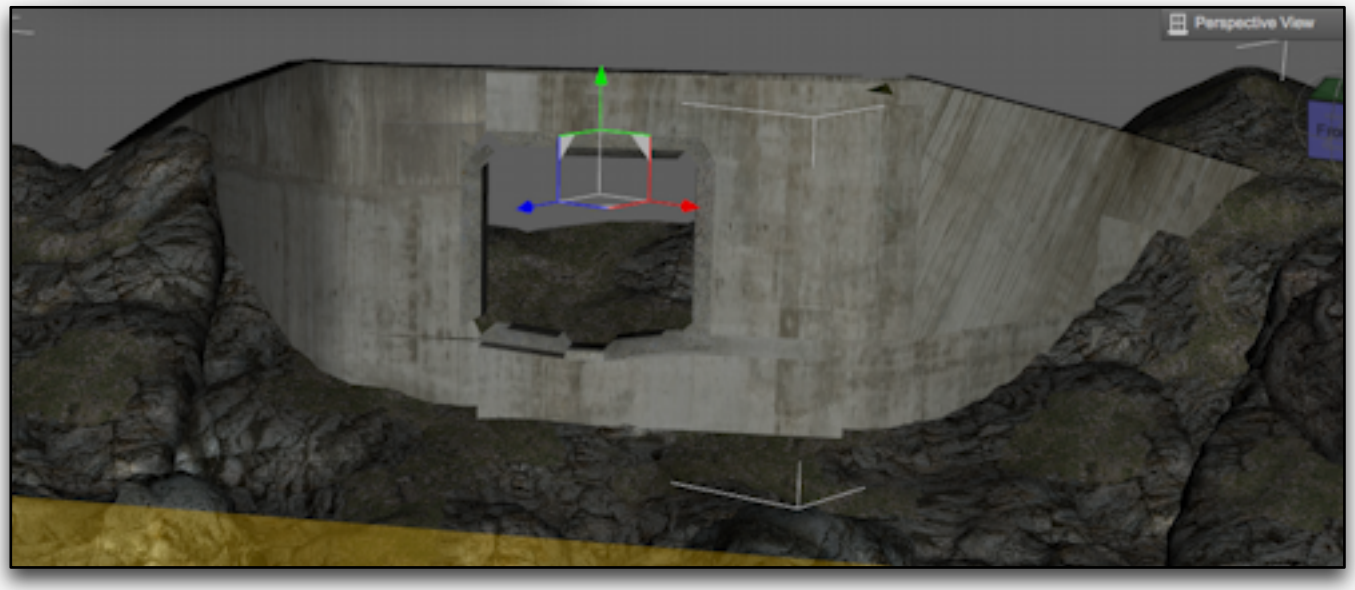
I inspected the bunker prop, looked ok in my eyes, I was so happy my idea worked I didn't look very close.



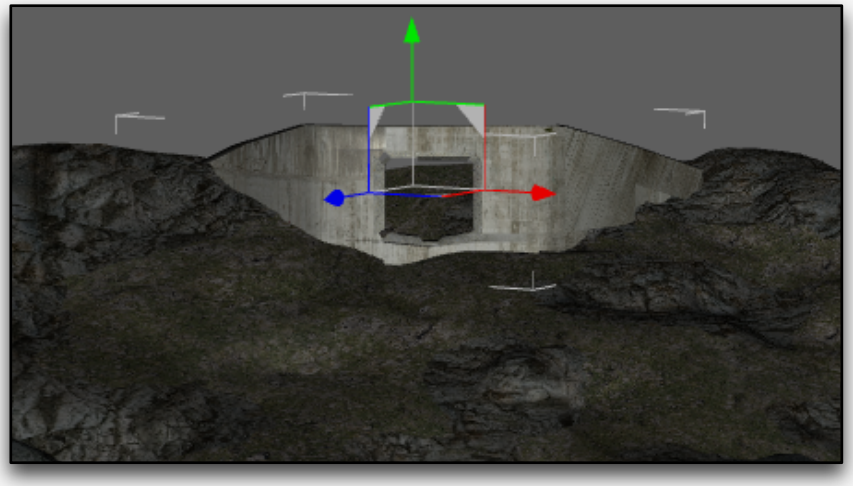
I used the free script PP2 exporter, which is terrific and created a prop.



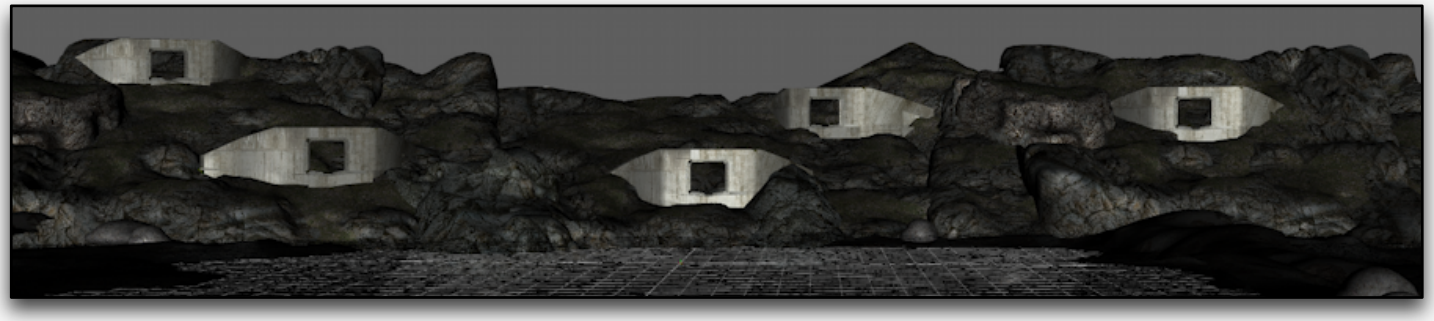
I saved the prop to my test Runtime where I do funny things without jeopardizing my real Runtimes.



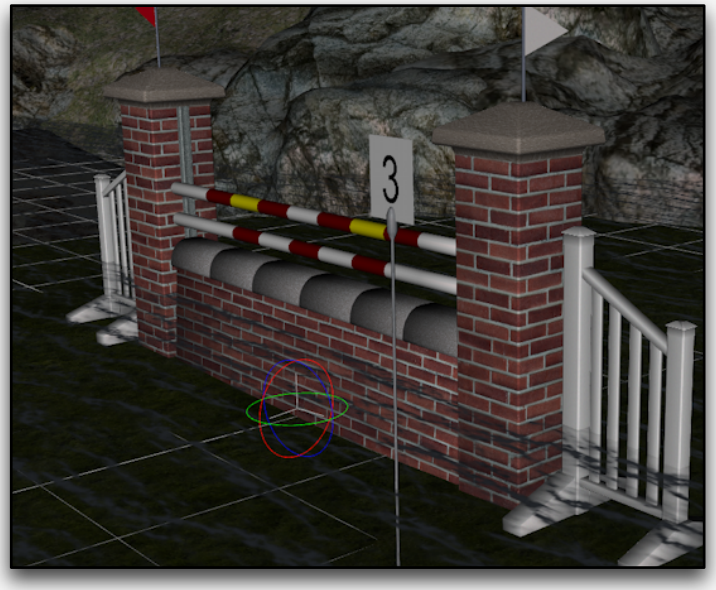
Then I opened the beach scene and loaded the bunker prop, looking good.



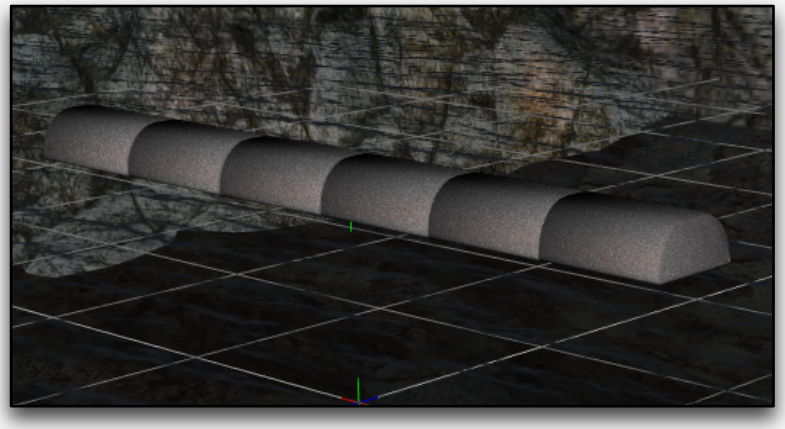
I created a handful of Object instances and placed them on the beach.



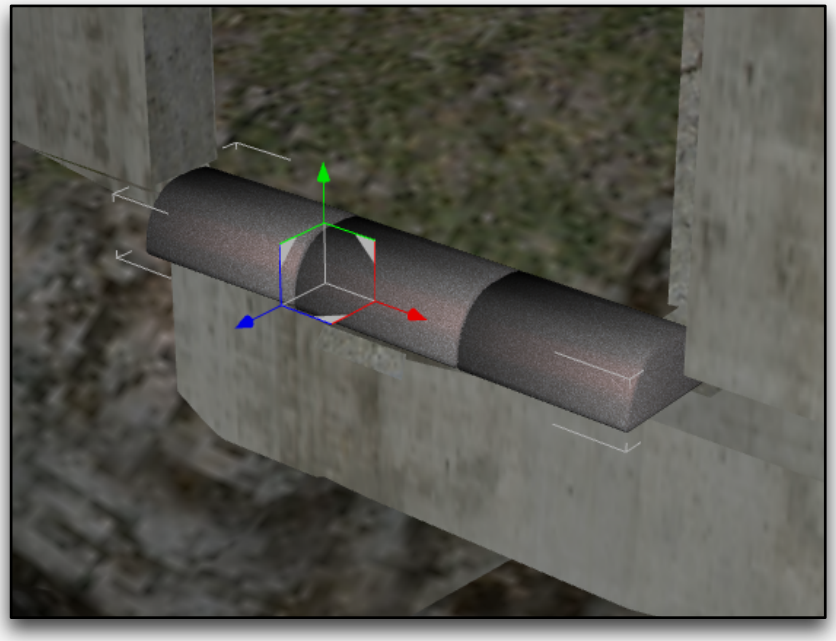
Looking pretty intimidating in my eyes.



Now I loaded one of the obstacles from **Horse Show**, number 3.

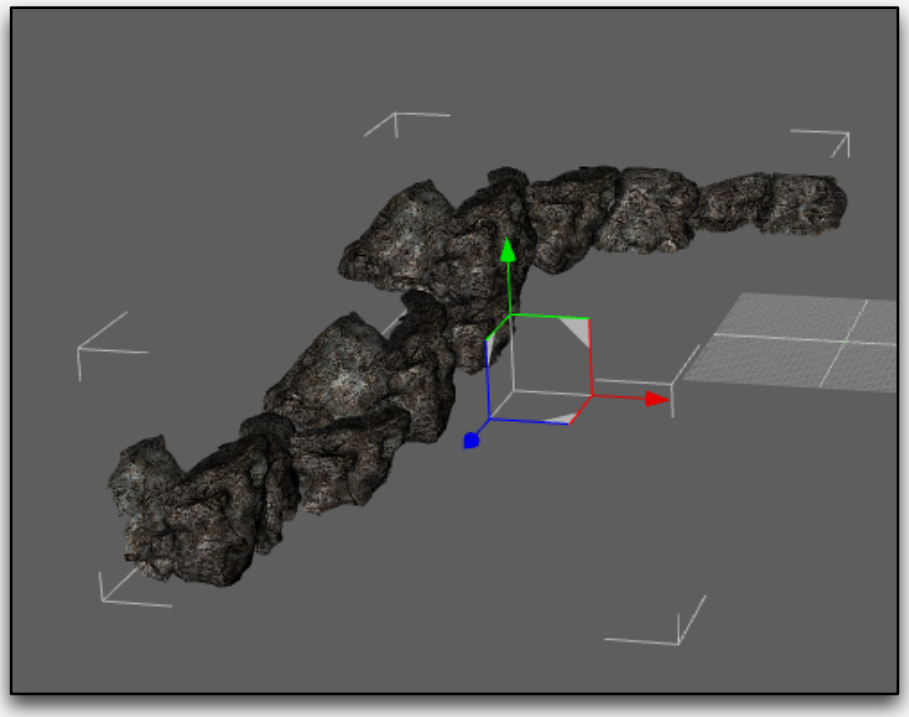


I removed everything except these top things, which looks like sandbags.

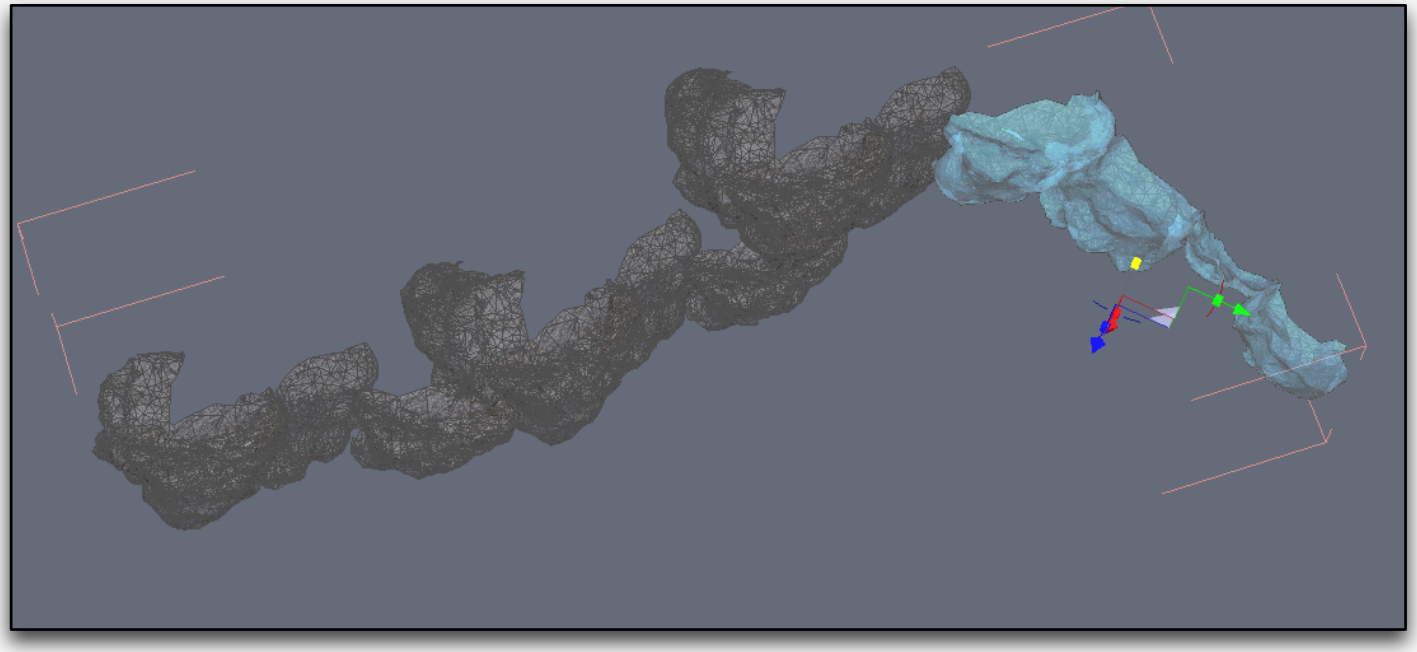


I used three of them and placed them on the bottom of the bunker opening.

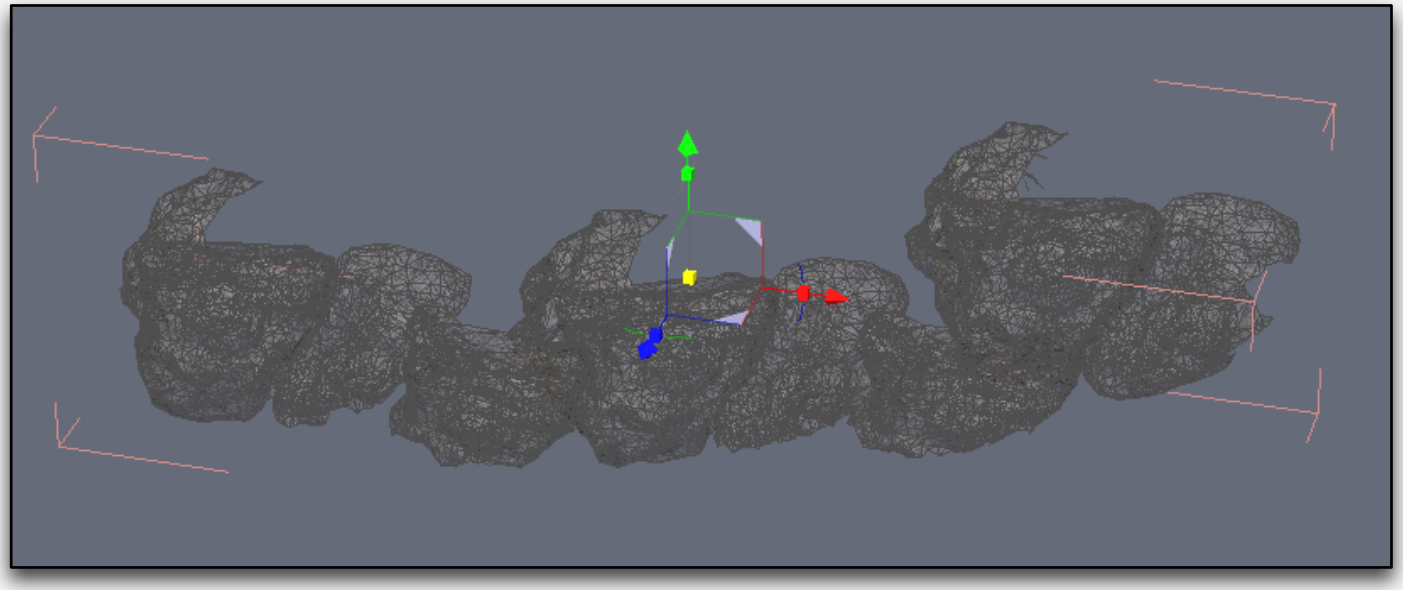
Now I decided to tear **High Cliff Crossing** apart, using the nice cliff sides. I removed everything except two of the cliff sides.



This one is great, except that is has a turned tail that was getting in the way, so I decided to send that one to Hexagon and rip it apart even more.



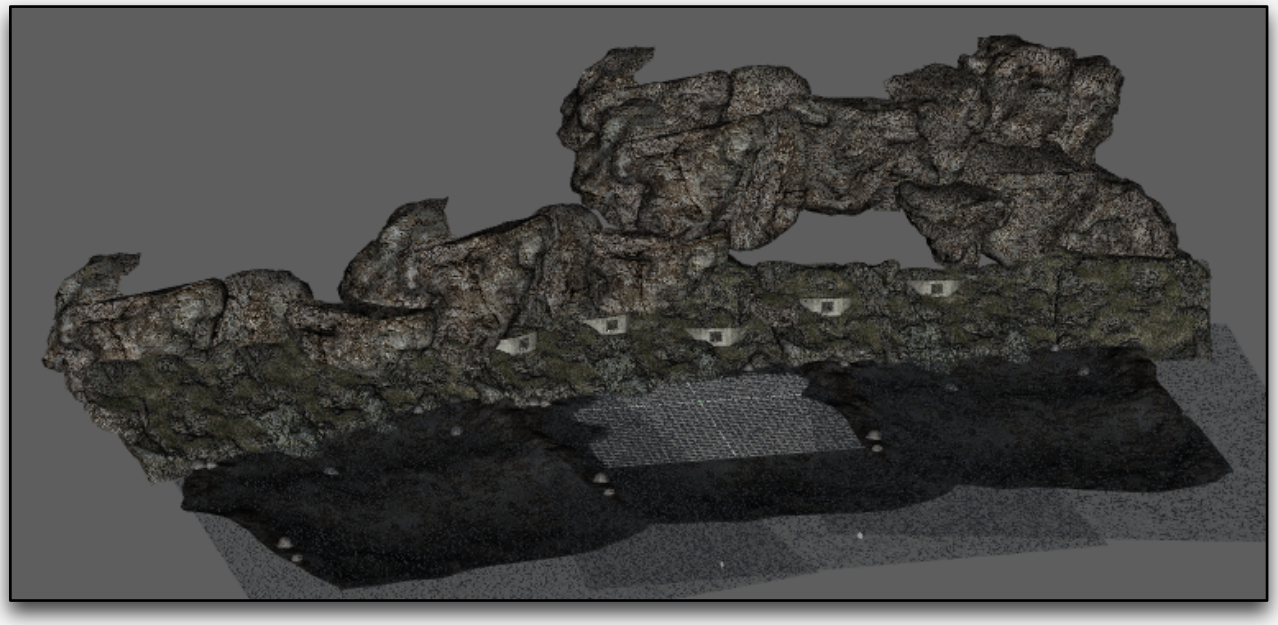
I selected the polygon groups on the side, the turned tail by selecting one poly in each group the just expand selection (Shift <numkey +>)



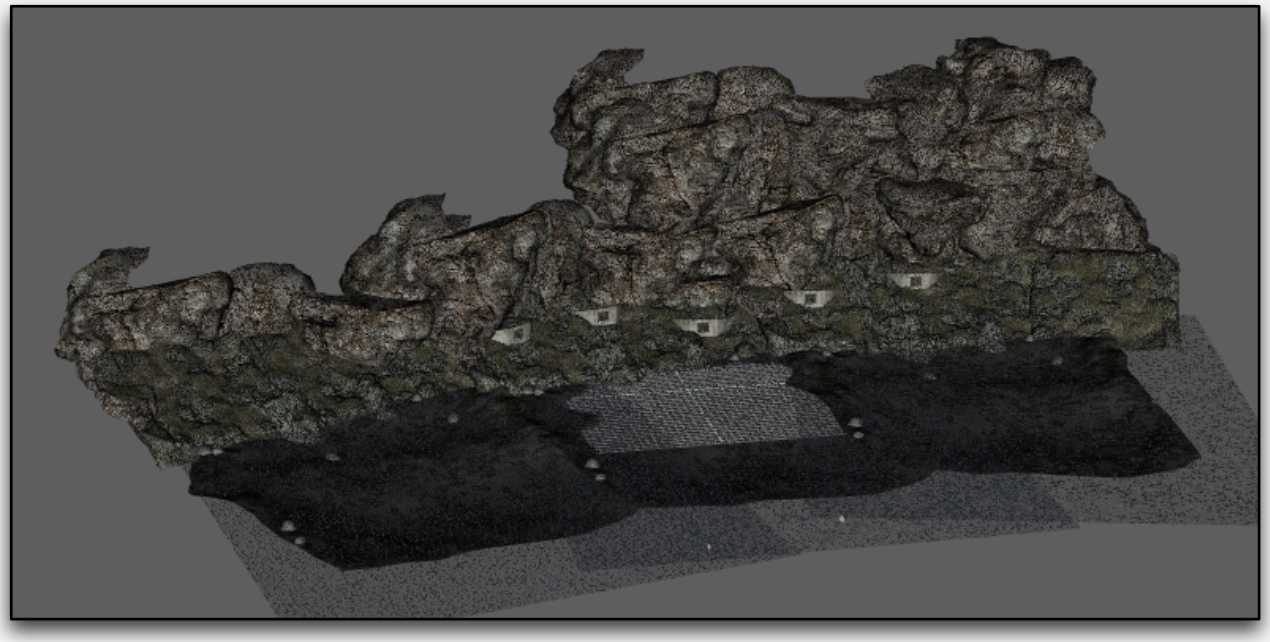
The cleaned up version was then sent back to DS again.

Here I stumbled on the next problem, the cliff side that I didn't send to Hexagon was locked to not be moved, but I wanted to move it, so I put it into a group, then the group could be freely moved.

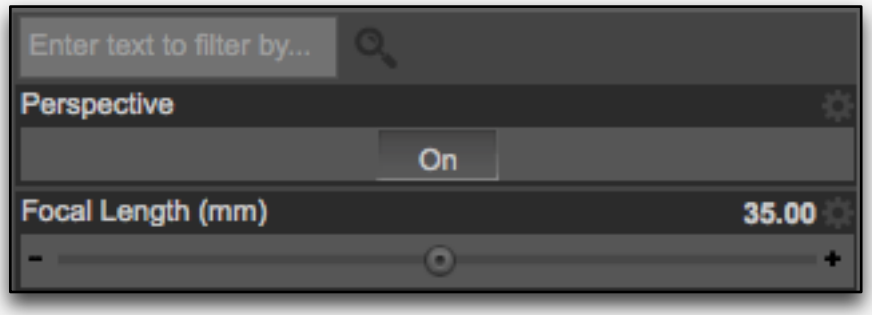
TIP: You can put things into groups to move them around if they are locked.



I started to build the cliffside behind the beach, but found that I had a hole to fill.

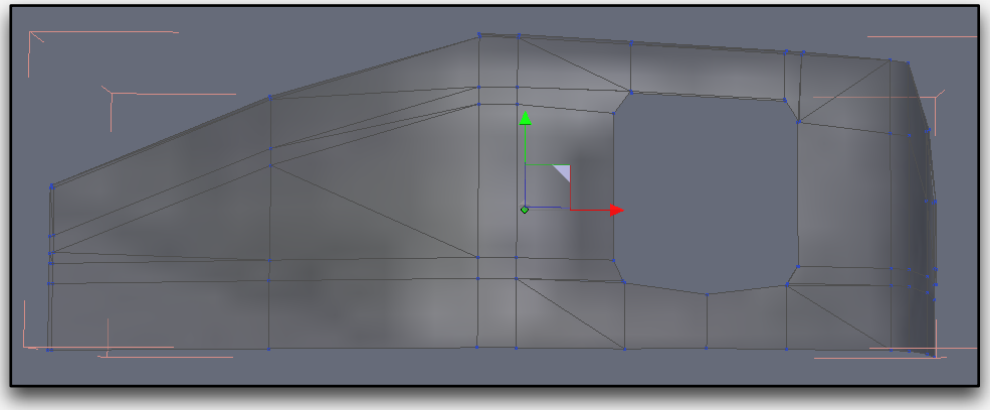


So I made an instance of one of the cliffs and turned it upside down, fit like a glove.

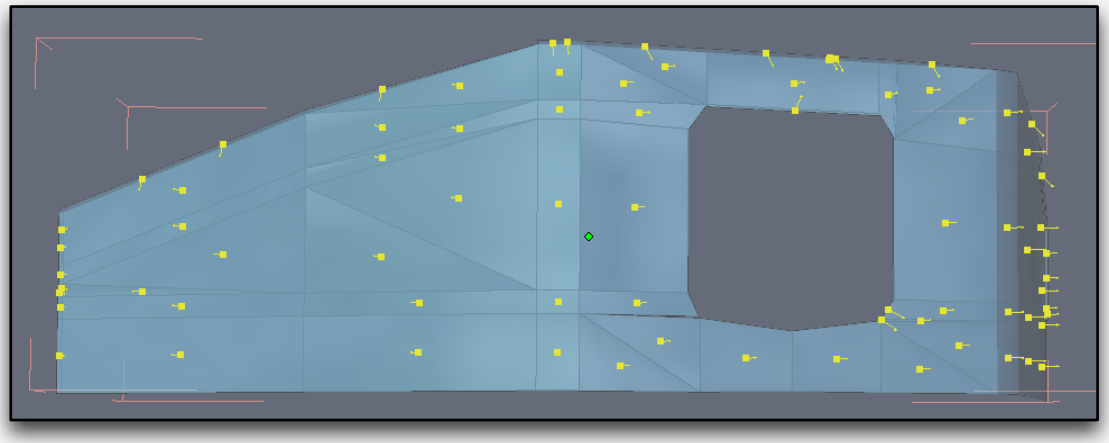


Time for a test render, I set the camera to 35mm as I wanted a wide view of the beach.

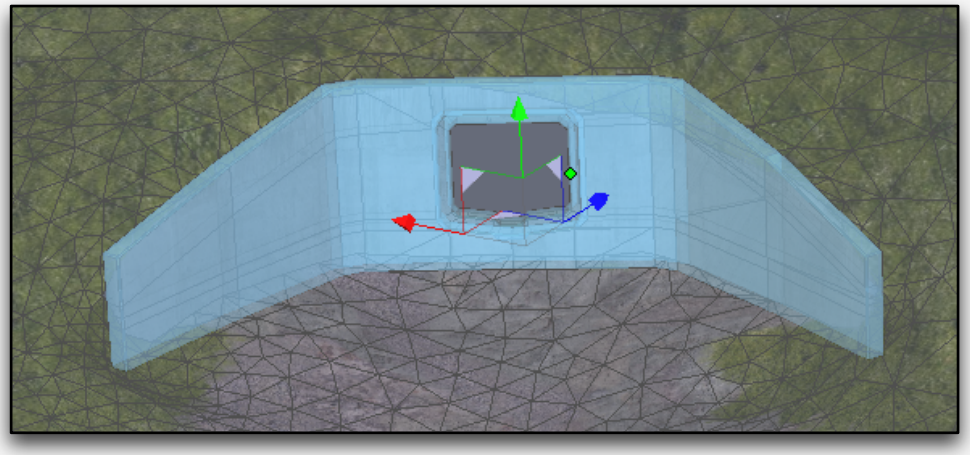
This is the first test render, and where I saw I've botched really bad with the bunkers. So, back to fixing the bunkers and do it right this time. I know my Hexagon fu is terrible rusty but I learned some tricks while doing the cliff sides that I tended to use when redoing the bunkers, are you still with me?



First I send the old bunker back to Hexagon to see if it was some problems with the normals.

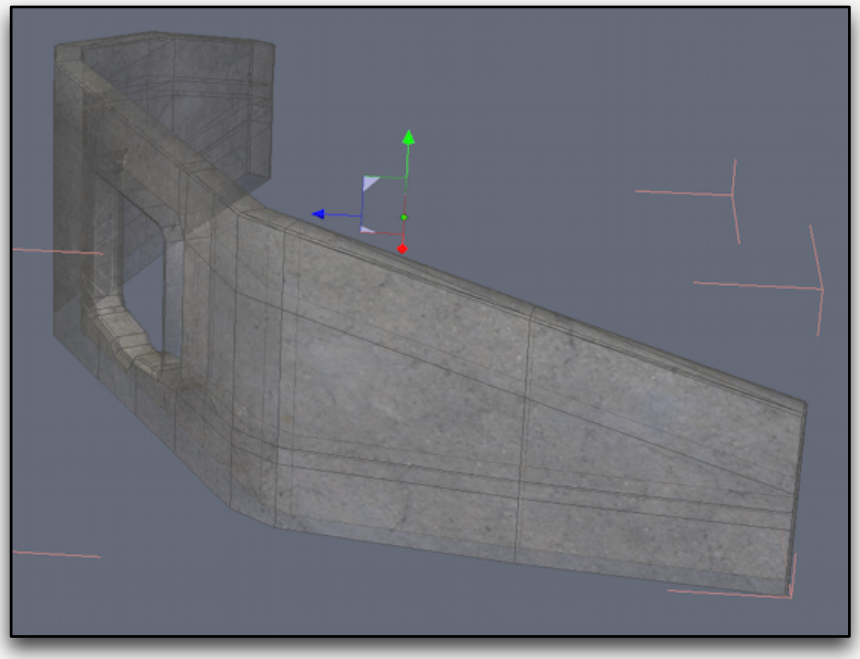


But the Normals were ok, it was my sloppy cutting that had removed to much polygons, do it again, go it right.

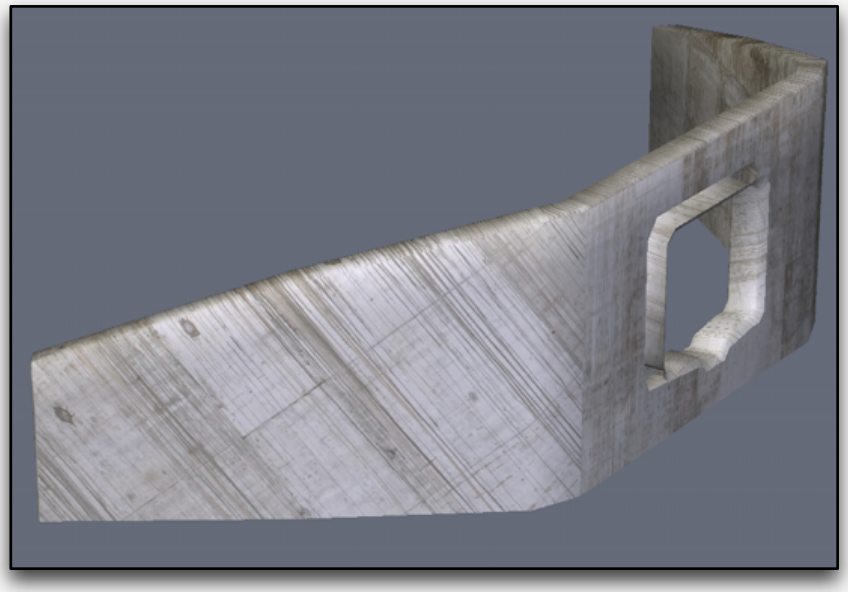


This time I selected all the polygons by expanding the selection until the whole material group was selected.

I know, there is a selected by material group somewhere but I didn't find it this time either.

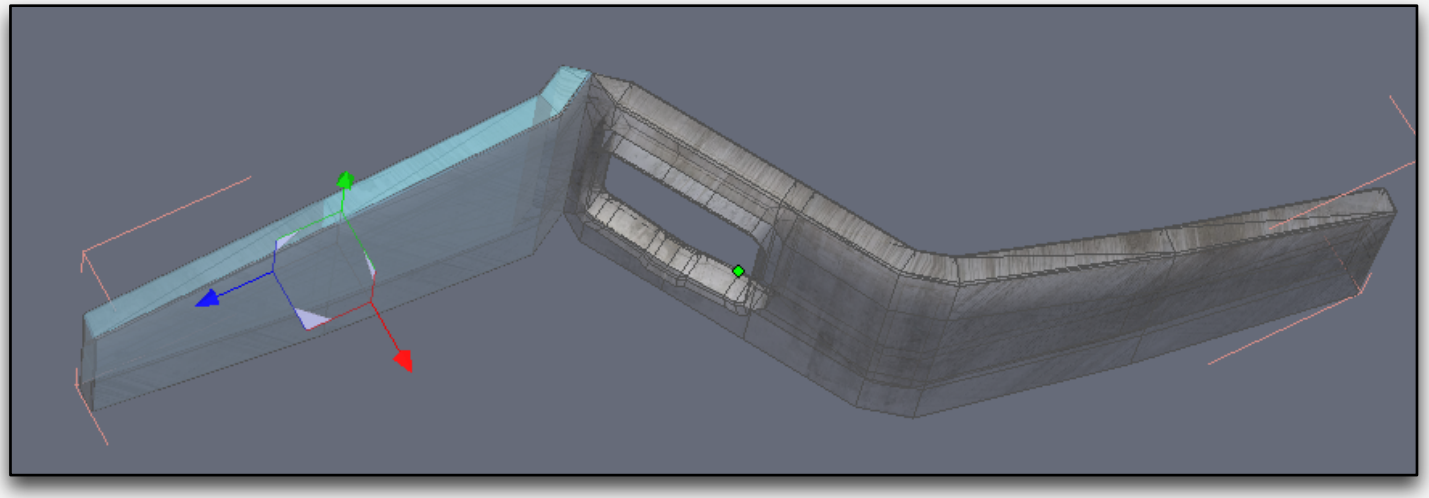


This time I got a nice clean cut bunker, looking great....

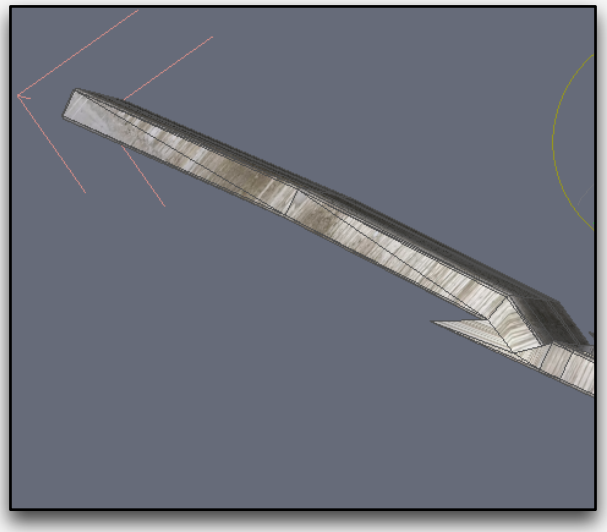


...until I saw that it's not UV mapped on the back side and the opening doesn't have closing polygons either.

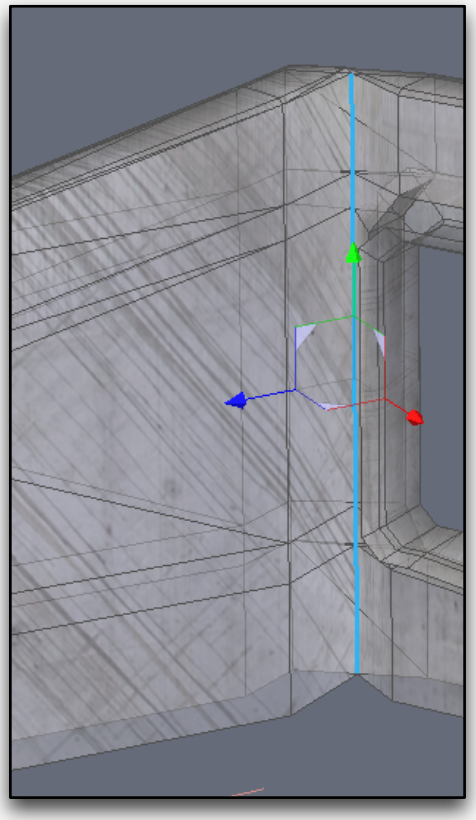
No need for that they way it is intended to be used, but this is all about using thing in way they are not intended for.



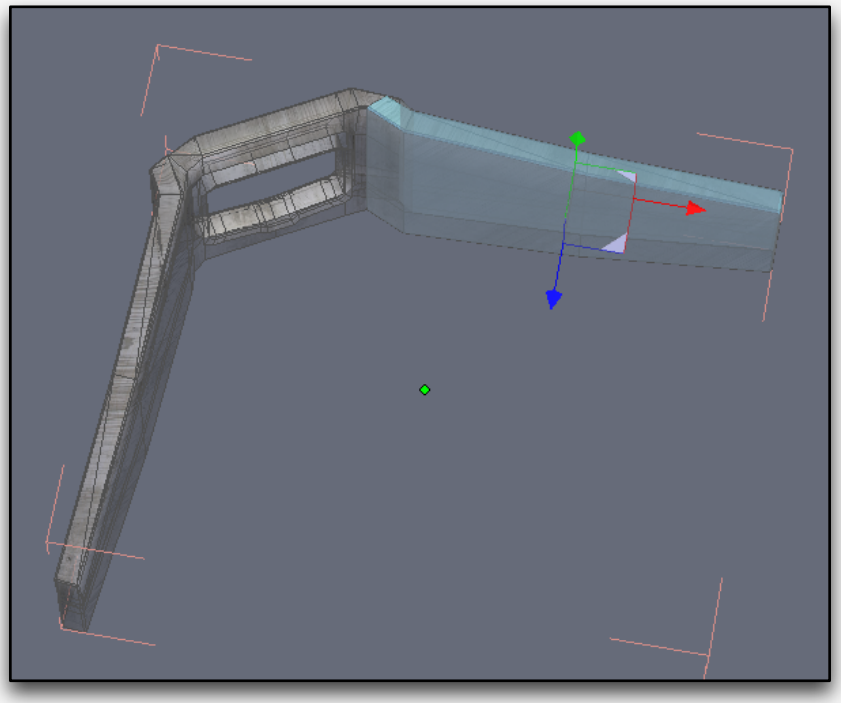
So I grabbed the polygons on the side and turned and moved them to swing the front wall back, not front.



By doing so I got some weird shaped polygons...

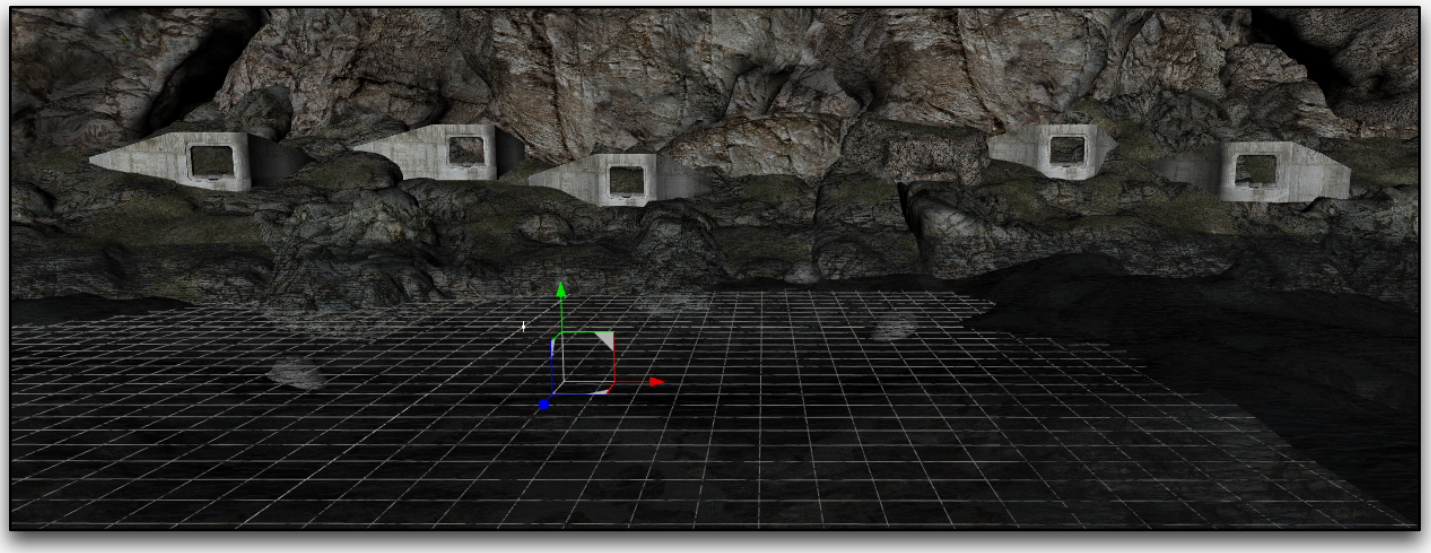


...which I corrected by selecting the edges and move them a little.



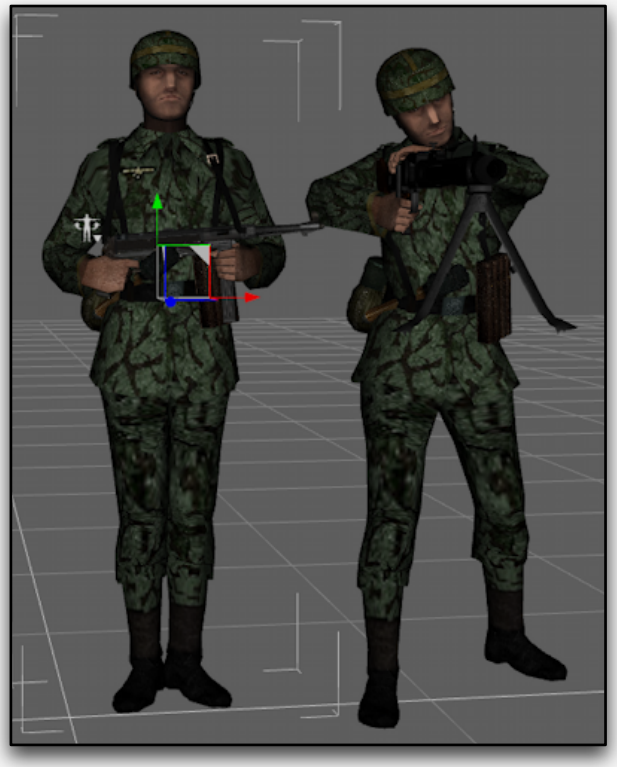
I did the same thing on the other wing, and now I had a really good looking bunker, at last.

I sent my new bunker to DS and then saved it as a prop.



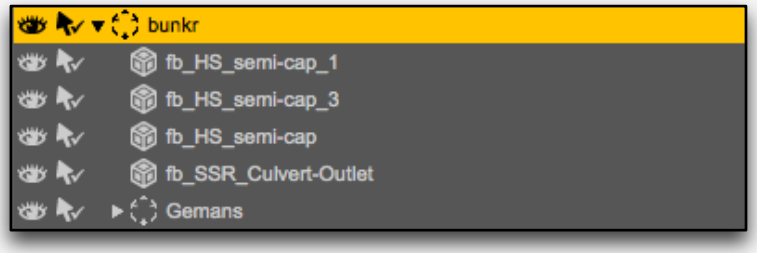
I removed the old bunkers and replaced them with the new ones. I also changed the placements a little as I removed the old ones first, all by making Object instances of the first bunker group.

Then I did a render again, and this time I was happy with the result, but who thought I would stop there?



You cannot have a bunker without some evil Germans with machineguns, so I used Vogel Einz, which are low poly soldiers, perfect for this type of scene. Set up a machinegunner and a loader.

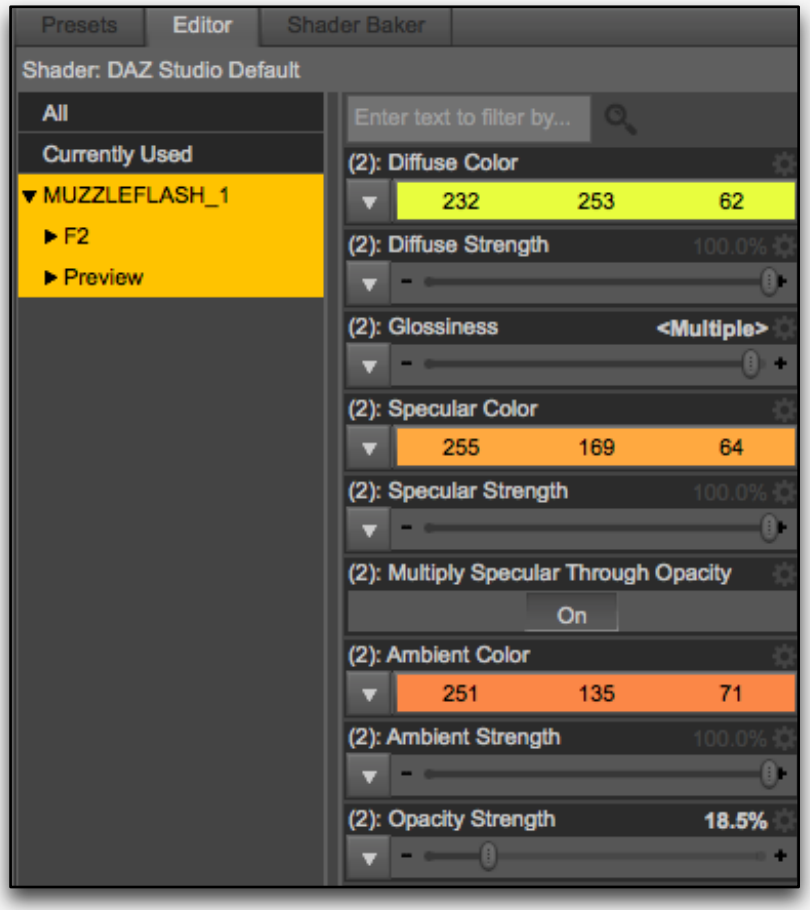
I merged the Germans into the scene and placed the in a bunker. It doesn't matter that they are stuck in the dirt, as it will not be visible from the out side.



Now I added the group with Germans to the master Bunker group...

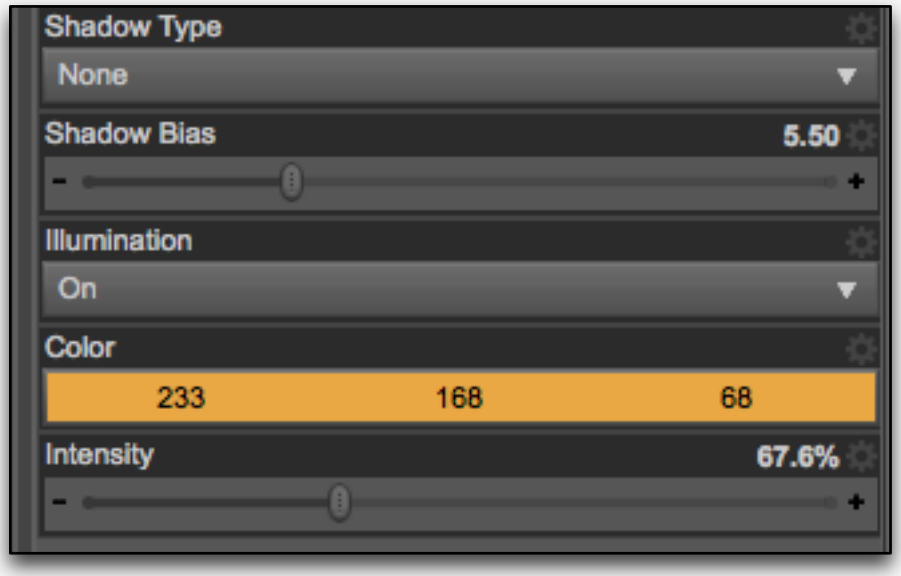
... and voila, they now showed up in every bunker.

Time for a new render, and I was a little disappointed that the muzzle flash wasn't visible, but then I remembered that Vogel Einz is for Poser, so I needed to tweak the materials i DS.

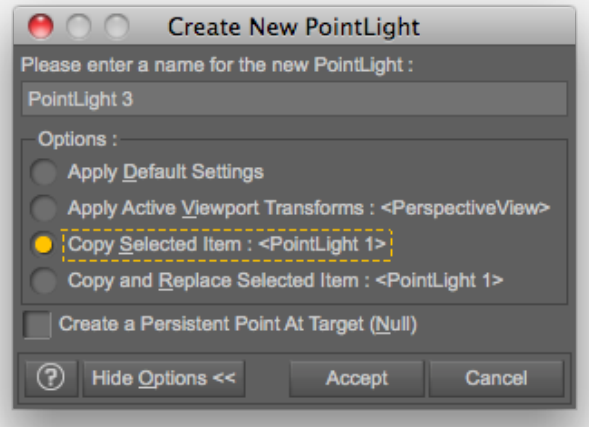


These are the settings I used to get the muzzle flashes visible.

I made another render, and now they are visible, but it's lacking the light.



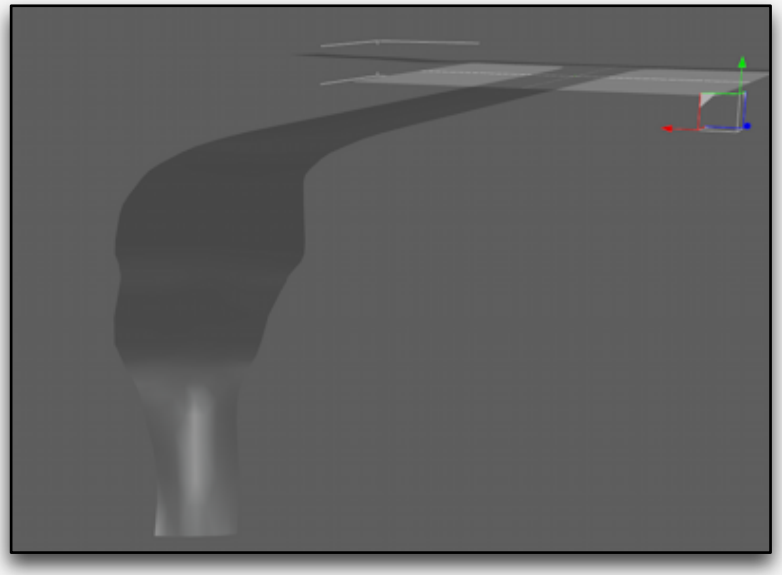
I created a Point light and set it up like this. I had to manually place one at each of the five muzzle flashes.



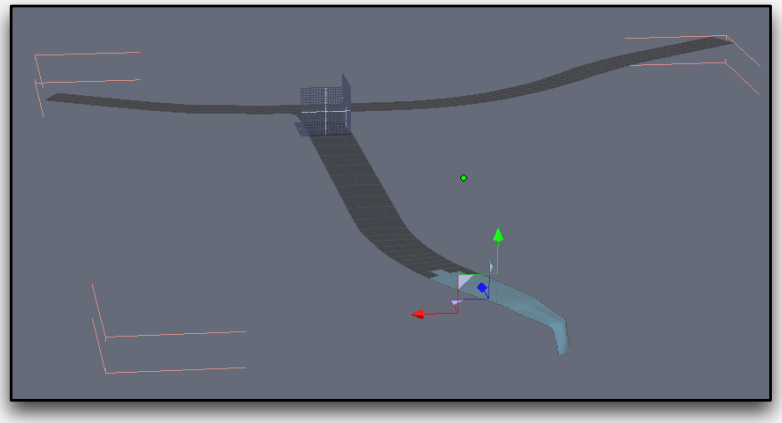
I created the new ones based on the first which is very handy.

I now made a render from the water and it now looks like someone is firing a machinegun.So, what's up next?

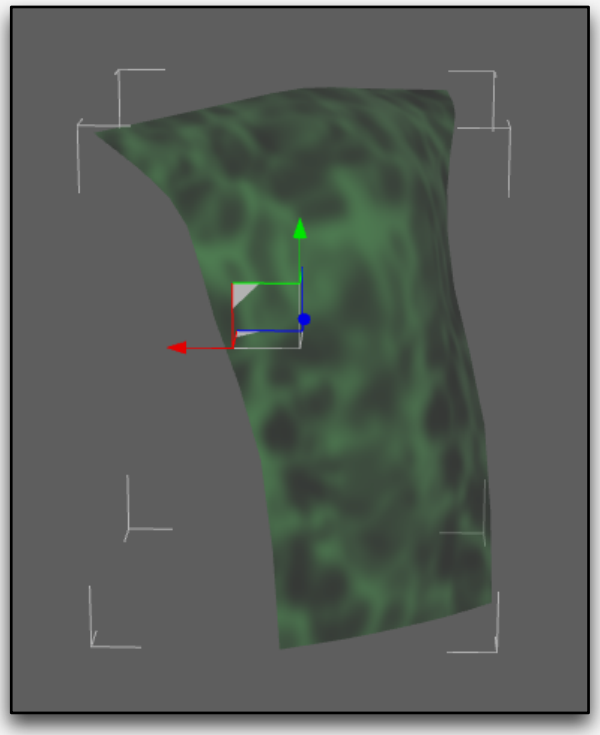
I created the new scene with an M4 dressed in US GI BDUs and added some assorted weapons to it. I saved it and then used it to created a handful different GIs.

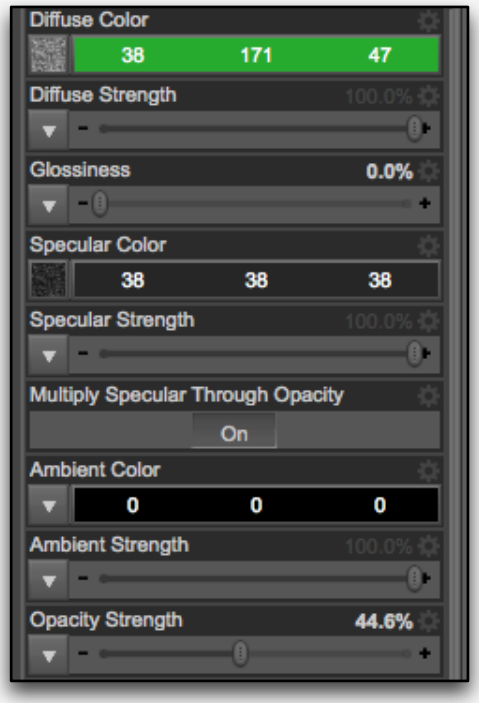


With one of them I wanted something extra, so I loaded the StormSewer again and removed everything except the water, which I sent to Hexagon.



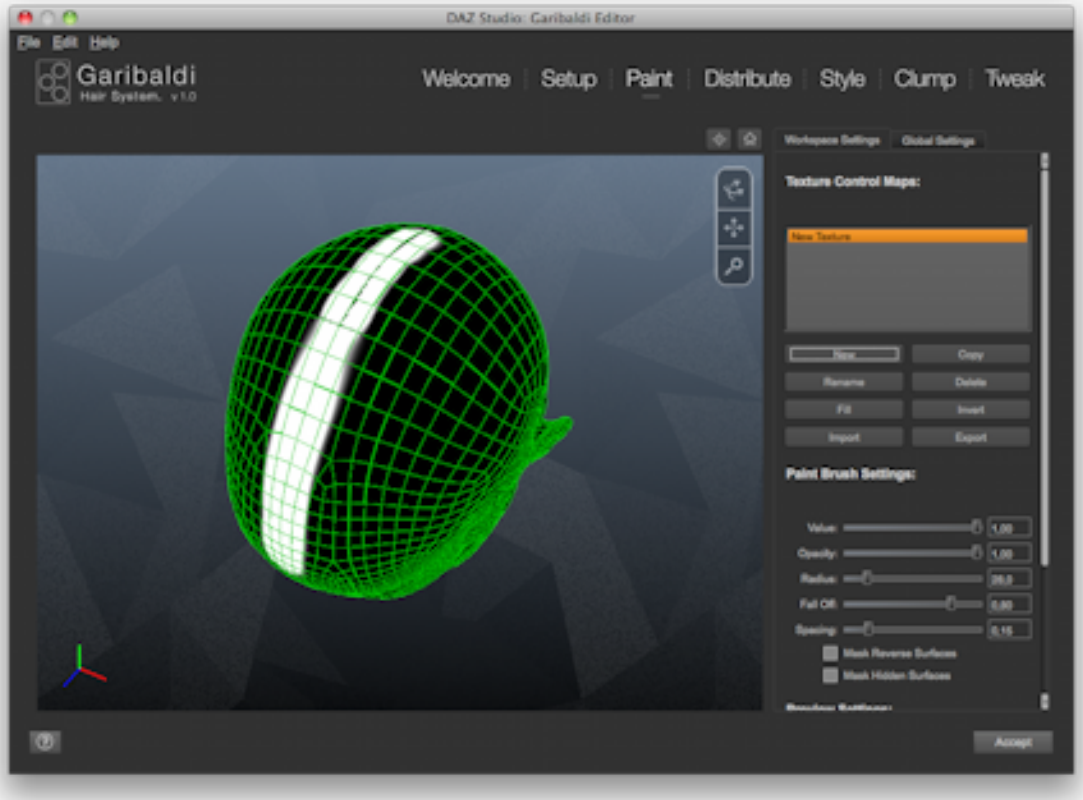
In Hexagon I selected the frontmost part, the small waterfall, and inverted the selection and removed all the other polygons. I then sent it back to DS again.





In DS I resized it and changed the material settings to make it fit my purpose.

Now you got the idea, a seasick poor GI, but I wanted him to look really hard, so I started Garibaldi Hair to make him a special hairstyle.

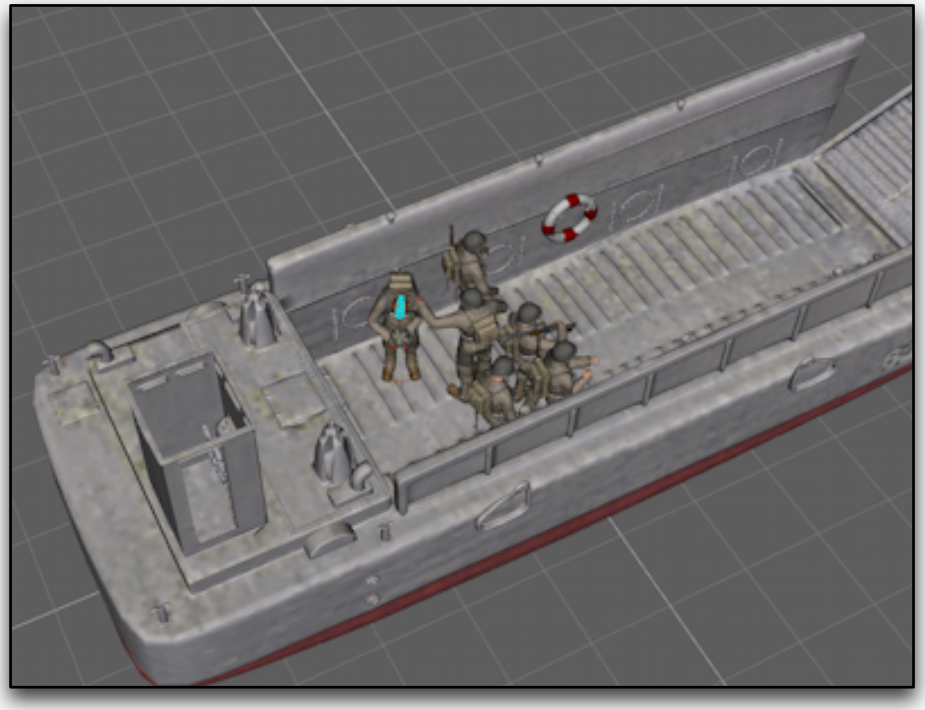


I selected Face and Head and then painted a line for a mohawk on it.

I grew the hair nor very long and set dark colors to it. I combed it a little but made it pretty messy on purpose.

Anyone who have worn a helmet of any kind or a hat knows what it does to your hair.

I made a test render and I was very happy with the result, looks pretty realistic.



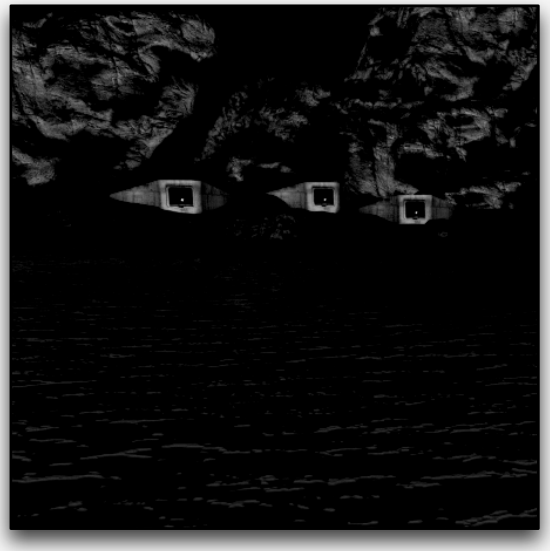
I now started to populate an LCV model with my soldiders.

A quick testrender to see how it looks, looking like DDay to me. I used Object instances to fill the LCV with soldiers.

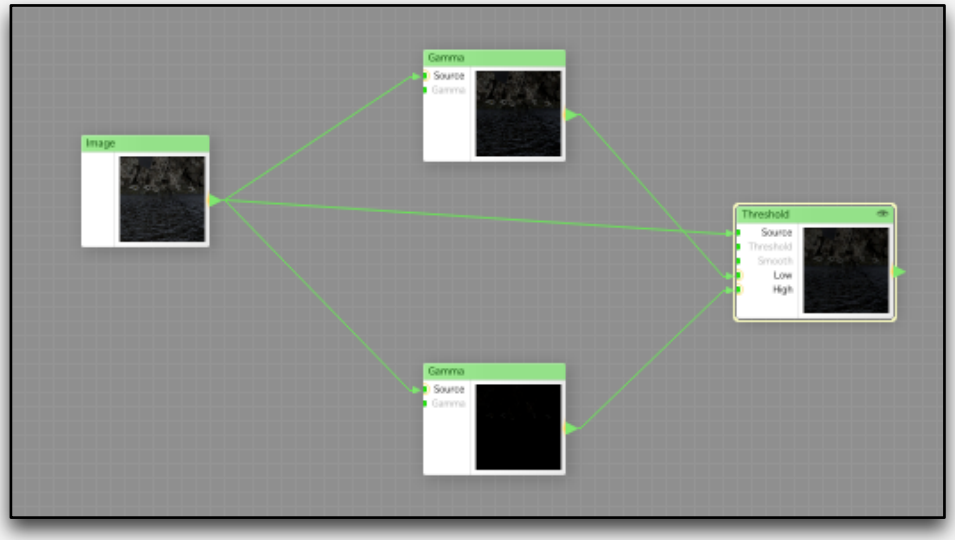
I grouped everything in one group and saved, and merged it into the beach scene, only to discover that the water plane now made to LCV look like Titanic.

So I decided to make a two pass render, first hide the LCV group and just render the beach.

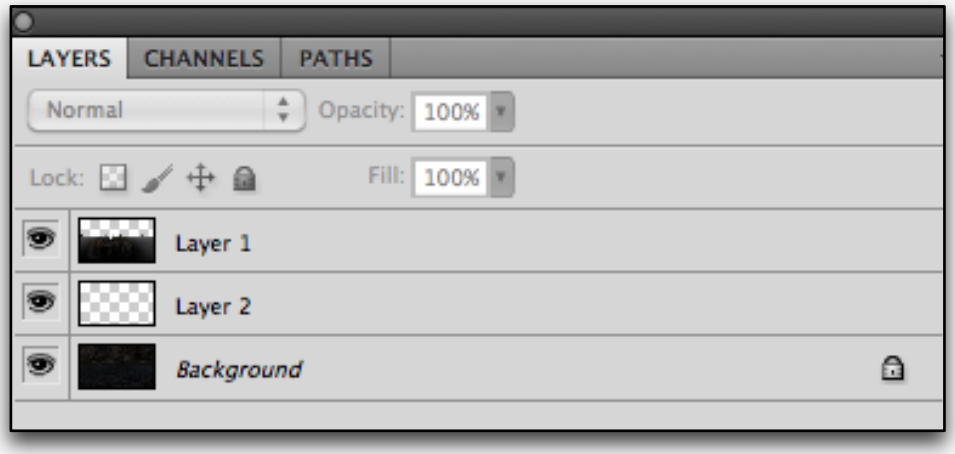
Then render the LCV hiding everything else, and save that render as a png.



I started to assembled the image in Photoshop. The beach was a little too bright, but when I tried to darken it, the bright parts stood out even more. I then started FilterForge and whipped up a little filter that used the brightests parts that I located with Threshold and set a darker Gamma on those parts, that way making the darkness more realistic.



The basic filter, and then I added a gaussian blur at the end for some DOF effect.



This is how I built it in Photoshop, Layer 2 expanding with all the extra layers with explosions and nice effects, Ron's stuff.

I hope you enjoyed the ride!