



# DaVinci Pilot

Newsletter of the U.S.S. DaVinci  
Columbus, Georgia

Volume 9 Number 2

AUGUST 2003

## FROM THE CENTER SEAT

WOW! What a super time was had by all at our annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July party! If you were not there, you missed great food, great companionship, and great fun! We had some special guests from Region 2 join us in celebrating America's birthday! A BIG Bajoran thanks to Ralph and Sunnie Planthold, from the Shuttle Dark Phoenix; Michael Henigan and Kelly Hilliard from the Shuttle Pleiades; and Jeff Kirkland and his mom, Martha (or "First Mom" as she is affectionately called) from the USS Republic for joining us. A couple of long lost "prodigal daughters", Karen Baker and Patty Williams, not only dropped by for the festivities, but renewed their membership in the DaVinci as well! Toss in the DaVinci personnel and their guests and you have a total of 37 - the biggest turnout for a 4<sup>th</sup> of July party in DaVinci history! Our resident chef, Connie Heller, had two grills fired up and kept a steady stream of hotdogs and hamburgers coming for the hungry horde. Add to that the macaroni salad, potato salad, 2 kinds of baked beans, coleslaw, chips and other snack food, various pies and cakes, and ice cream, and you can see why no one left the party hungry! Then, of course, there was the stash of chocolate that "Sunnie P" brought with her - The Region 2 Chocolate Vault.

Several surprise certificates and one promotion were garnered out during the festivities. Russell Ruhland was promoted to Commander because of his election to Executive Officer (although I had planned on promoting him anyway, long before the election) and Joe Perry was presented with the USS DaVinci "Legion of Merit" award due to his 7 years as my Number One and his hard work and dedication to his ship, Region 2, and Starfleet. Roger Wright, Lisa Neal, Karen Ferris, and Karen

Pynenburg all received "Certificates of Appreciation" for their donations and contributions to the various DaVinci charities. Finally, two well-deserved awards, "Officer of the Year" and "Enlisted Member of the Year", were presented to Russell Ruhland and Lisa Neal, respectively, for their contributions and hard work during the previous year. Congratulations to all the award recipients and thanks for making the USS DaVinci the best ship in the Second Fleet!



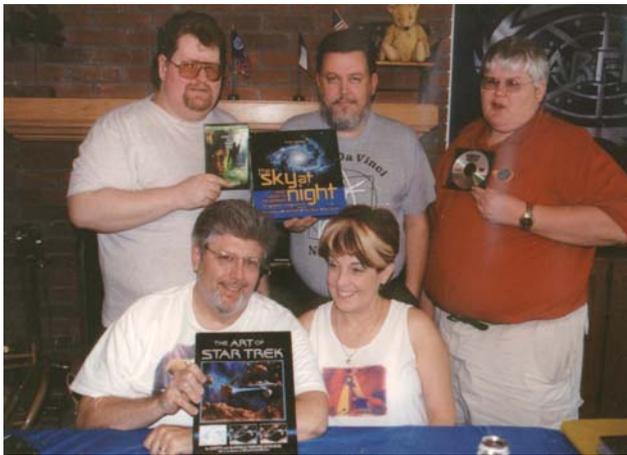
Pinning on the New Pips!



The New Commander and New XO of the DaVinci

After the awards, several games were played. There was a quiz from the Original Series and another from Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home in which those who participated had to figure out a saying having only the first letter from each word in the saying.

The winner of the Voyage Home quiz with 5 correct out of 21 was Ralph and Sunnie Planthold. There was a tie in the Original Series quiz. Both Joe Perry and Frazier Smith had 10 correct out of 21 possible. It was decided that a trivia question and answer round-robin would decide the winner. After a hard fought contest, Joe was declared the winner. Ralph and Sunnie received "The Art of Star Trek" and Joe "The Sky at Night". Four rounds of "SPACE: The Game" were also played and the winners each received a "Xena Warrior Princess" tee shirt. The winners were Jeff Kirkland, Martha Kirkland, Frazier Smith, and Rose Hutson. Finally, a couple of items were given away as door prizes. Rusty Touchton won the Nemesis DVD and Mike Henigan won the picture CD on Dragon Con and MegaCon put together by Todd Kes. Congratulations to all the winners!



The Happy Winners!

The Captain's Table, a table of goodies to sell, did a brisk business! Items bought included videotapes, mouse pads, tee shirts, and a Xena Chakram set. The sale raised \$65.00 for the DaVinci coffers and went a long way in thinning out all the stuff I have.

I wish to extend a very BIG Bajoran thanks to everyone who came to and made the 2003 DaVinci 4<sup>th</sup> of July party a resounding success! It was one of the biggest events and most fun we have had at a DaVinci event in quite a long time! Thanks especially to Ralph and Sunnie, Jeff and Martha,

and Mike and Kelly for driving down to help the DaVinci crew personnel celebrate our nation's birthday.

I need your HELP! I was going through the back issues of the Pilot and realized that I do not have a copy of the June 1998 issue! If anyone has a copy (either electronic or hard copy) please let me borrow it so that it can add it to the DaVinci web site. Again, it does not matter if it is electronic or a hard copy. Thanks.

A few weeks ago, I held a very informative meeting of the DaVinci senior staff and many good ideas came out of the meeting. Watch out for some changes, in the near future, in the way the DaVinci operates as well as some exciting new plans for away missions. The Morale Officer has been moved from Science to Operations, and I have created a new position, Computer Officer to fall within the Science Division. Both staff positions are in need of someone to take charge and run with them. If you feel that you have the time and inclination let either Russell or me know. If we feel you have what it takes, then the position is yours. Also, if you have not yet decided on which Division (Operations, Science, or Engineering) you wish to be a part of, give it some thought and then call the appropriate Division Chief. You need not hold a position within that Division to be a part of the Division. For instance, if Security is of interest to you, you can simply be a member of Roger's security team. You can find each Division Chief's telephone number later in this issue of the Pilot.

This month, we have a guest article from CPT Ralph Planthold, CO of the Shuttle Dark Phoenix. His article is reproduced from the June issue of the Region 2 Update (by permission) and is about keeping those pesky pips perfect!

COMM Freddy Heller

**THE NEXT DAVINCI NIGHT OUT WILL  
BE AT CICI'S PIZZA (BRADLEY PARK)  
ON MONDAY AUGUST 18<sup>TH</sup> AT 7:00 PM  
PLEASE COME AND JOIN US!**

**THE NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP  
MEETING WILL BE ON 07 AUGUST  
AT 7:00 PM AT THE  
RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE**

## EXECUTIVELY SPEAKING

Leadership is a trait that everyone finds themselves having a role in and the basics of leadership pretty much apply to all the roles we find ourselves leading. From parenthood, to senior sibling; from "the guy or gal others chose" to captain of the football team; from project leader to supervisor; leadership finds its way into all of our lives. I recently had the opportunity to overview some areas regarding leadership qualities and I'd like to share some of those with you this month, so here goes:

**BEARING:** First impressions are always the best impressions. A neat appearance, positive attitude and willingness to contribute can bring an acceptable bearing whenever we meet new people.

**COMMON SENSE:** Really! Be smart. Don't act rashly in any situation and be willing to exercise courtesy with all and around all. It always helps to think before we act to avoid opening mouth A and inserting foot B.

**ENDURANCE:** "I can do it all myself!", is only an excuse for burn out. If you can get others to assist you where and when necessary than the job gets completed with more open knowledge more open favor within the whole team.

**HUMILITY:** In spite of what we may think of ourselves, we are all created equal and being humble is the beginning of wisdom. This is what I find to be one of the more admirable leadership qualities that any person can have.

**HUMOR:** Laughter is the best medicine! Humor helps to encourage inspiration and esprit-de-corps within the entire team. Adding humor to a conversation at appropriate times will keep interest up. Remember that, "All work & no play makes the person a dull boy or girl."

Colin Powell once said, "Great leaders are almost always great simplifiers, who can cut through argument, debate and doubt, to offer a solution everyone can understand." We can all help one another to become the great leaders of our future!

Live long & prosper!

CMDR Russell Ruhland

## OPERATIONS REPORT

In case anybody has not noticed, I am no longer serving as Executive Officer of the USS DaVinci. At the elections in June Russell Ruhland was elected to replace me. I would like to thank those people who voted for me as XO, it was a close race. I would like to give a special thanks to those people who voted for me for CO, your confidence in me is much appreciated. I took the XO position because the club needed me, and I will continue to serve in any capacity that Freddy or the club requires me. Freddy dug up the old position of Operations Officer (and Second Officer in order not to get rid of me). I will fill this job with as much energy as I did the XO position, and Freddy will get reports for the Pilot about as frequently. It has been a pleasure serving as XO these last eight years and I look forward to many long years in the DaVinci.

In honor of the summer months (if I wanted heat, I would have stayed in Arizona), the crew of the DaVinci is hereby invited to a pool party at my house on 9 August. It will start at about 12 noon and finish whenever there is nobody left or I get too tired of looking at your faces. As usual drinks will be provided and the club will furnish the pizza. You might want to bring bathing attire and towels. Here is how to get to my house:

Going North on Veterans Parkway (South Phenix City). Turn left at Walgreens (on your left, Chevron Station across the street from it). Travel 1.9 miles. Turn right at Lokey Drive. Turn left at next street (Daisy Street). We are the third house on the right (cream colored; remember to count house on corner).

Going South on Veterans Parkway. Turn right at Walgreens. Follow directions for Veterans North

Going North (South) on I-185. Exit at Airport Thruway (I think it is Exit 8). Turn left (right) at off ramp. Travel 0.5 miles to Whitesville Road (4-way intersection with barrier on south side). Travel up Whitesville 0.4 miles to intersection with Veterans Parkway. Follow directions for Veterans Parkway.

Going West on 80 (Freddy). Take I-80 West to Exit 4 (Veterans Parkway). Travel straight thru the intersection at the off ramp (this is Double Churches Road). Travel about 1 mile. Right after you see a liquor/ice store on the right, take a left onto Daisy Street. Travel south on Daisy Street 3 houses before a 4-way stop sign intersection. My house is on left.

Coming East on I-80 (North Phenix City). Take 80 East to Exit 4, turn right and travel to the intersection with Double Churches Road follow directions for 80 West.

Some of you will recognize the off ramps for 80, this is our highway cleanup area.

Please note, those of you using 80, when you return use the reverse of the directions opposite from how you came. Example 80 West travels thru intersection coming to my house, when leaving they turn right and travel to the other set of ramps, 80 East turns right to get to Double Churches Road, when returning they travel through the intersection.

Anybody needs further directions, contact me or we can talk at the meeting.

FCPT Joe Perry

## SCIENCE STATION

Here is the conclusion of the article from last month on Nikola Tesla.

In 1887 Tesla established a laboratory in New York City where many of his inventions were created. Unfortunately a few years later a terrible fire destroyed his laboratory and much was permanently lost. Some historians have suggested that his lab was deliberately set afire by businessmen who were threatened by the fear of loss of income to their companies. Tesla was a great humanitarian in that his sole interest in life was to use his talents and inventions for the immediate benefit to humankind in the most direct way possible.

In 1900 Tesla began building a wireless transmission tower in Wardencllyffe, Long Island, NY. The project was partially funded by financier J.P. Morgan to the tune of some \$150,000, a considerable sum for that time. The object of the tower was to provide world wide broadcasting that would furnish facilities for sending pictures, messages, weather warning and wireless transmission of electricity. J.P. Morgan withdrew support partially for reasons that he feared he would be put out of business. Personal greed ruled Morgan's interests. Personally I would like to be able to go to J.P. Morgan's grave and reanimate him from the dead and then beat him up for a few days and then throw him back into the grave. But alas such Frankensteinian possibilities will never exist.

After Tesla's Death his papers and notes were inherited by his family and later ended up in the Nikola Tesla Museum in Belgrade in the former Yugoslavia. To this day his papers are under the constant study and scrutiny of modern visionaries and wizards of the twenty first century. At his funeral in New York City, three Nobel prize recipients addressed their tribute to, "one of the outstanding intellects of the world who paved the way for many of the technological developments of modern times."

ENS Lech Mazur

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

I wanted to thank everyone who came out to our recent highway clean-up. July seemed to be a very busy month with the club activities. We had an overcast sky to work out in which really helped a lot. My thanks go out to everyone who came out to help: Randy, Mathew, Freddy, Joe, and Mariaelena. They made a big job into an enjoyable task.

I also wanted to thank the people who stopped by to have breakfast with us at McDonalds (Connie, Ariana, Rusty, and Christopher Dunn). It was good to see all of you in the middle of a hectic summer (at least for me). I would also like to encourage others even if you can not stay to help with the clean-up to stop and have a breakfast with us before the clean up.

LT Tony Fleming

## UNIFORM GUIDE

Slow to impulse. Hailing frequencies open...

Whether we individuals in Region 2 own just one Starfleet uniform or half a dozen, we've usually spent enough on it/them that we want to look our best when we appear in public. This is the first in what I hope becomes a series of tips on wearing your Starfleet uniform proudly. In this way, I hope to improve our recruiting ability, to instill more pride in the individual members of Region 2, and to bring the Region closer together.

Obviously, I don't have a corner on all the possible tips for presenting a better appearance in one's uniform. So I'm soliciting tip suggestions from you our readers, and giving credit for each tip I share. I figure we have enough former military

types in the Region that we ought to run out of tips in about a decade!

This month's tip: A Pip Guide (basic idea courtesy of Capt. John M. (Mike) Clayton, USS Jubilee CO, Mobile, AL, Zone 3)

If you have only one or two rank pips on your uniform, you've got it easy. But just watch what happens when you acquire your third pip. Worse yet, when you receive your fourth or fifth pip! Getting all those little suckers lined up in a straight line is hard enough; keeping them evenly spaced apart is a nightmare!

What's the solution? A Pip Guide! It's simply a template for lining up your pips. They make bars for mounting ribbons. How do you make one for counting rank pips? Refer to the accompanying figures as you read on.

1. Start with a couple of 3-inch shirt collar stays made of thick plastic or cellulose. You can find these in the sewing department of your local Wal-Mart or in the notions department of any fabric store. Why two, you ask?

2. Lay one collar stay on top of the other, but pointing in the opposite direction. Slide the top one in the direction it's pointing, until the arc of its tail end is even with the place where the bottom collar stay starts to taper to a point. Use a Sharpie or other fine point permanent marker to trace that arc onto the lower one. Trim along that arc with scissors or shears, to yield a collar stay that's round at both ends [so it won't jab you in the neck] and approximately 2 ¼ inches long.

3. Lay the edge of a ruler down the centerline of the collar stay, and use the Sharpie to make a row of dots spaced ½ inch apart [just a little wider than the diameter of a butterfly clip or "dammit"]. If your first dot is placed 1/8 inch from either end of the collar stay, you can fit 5 dots along its length. [That's enough to hold the pips of any rank in Starfleet, up through Fleet Captain.] Now, using a small hammer and a thumbtack, poke a hole through the collar stay at the location of each dot.

4. Place the outer surface of your uniform collar face DOWN on a flat, fairly rigid surface that you won't mind having holes made in. [Something made of cork would be ideal.] Lay the Pip Guide along the inner surface of the uniform collar. Press the point of each pip in turn through the Pip Guide, through the uniform collar, and into the cork.

5. Remove the cork, taking care not to pull any pip out of the collar fabric. Now, one pip at a time, remove the pip from the inner surface of the uniform collar, taking careful note of the hole left in the collar when the pip is removed. Immediately reinsert that pip through the front face of the uniform collar, through the Pip Guide, and secure with a butterfly clip.

Could you omit the part about "through the Pip Guide" toward the end of Step 5? Yes, but the presence of the collar stay along the inner surface of the uniform collar adds a little to the crisp appearance of the finished uniform. Further, it minimizes any chance of "pip creep" when the uniform is on the human frame. Besides, this way you'll always know where your Pip Guide is!

If you REALLY don't like wearing the Pip Guide inside your uniform collar, try this variation [use one collar stay and skip Step 2]:

3a. Lay a ruler along an edge of the collar stay, and use the Sharpie to make a row of dots spaced ½ inch apart along that edge. Poke through the edge of the collar stay to make a small "rut" at the location of each dot, instead of poking a hole along its centerline.

4a. Place the front of your uniform collar face UP on the cork surface, lay the Pip Guide along the outer surface of the uniform collar, press the point of each pip through the "rut" along the edge of the Pip Guide, through the uniform collar, and into the cork.

5a. Remove the cork, and secure each pip with a butterfly clip.

As always, I'd be happy to hear of your problems as well as your successes with this Uniform Tip, at the e-mail address below. Your personal uniform tips are always welcome, too!

Hailing frequencies closed. Ahead, warp factor 1... Engage!

CPT Ralph F. Planthold  
Commanding Officer  
Shuttle Dark Phoenix, NCC-57299/01  
AdmiralR@aol.com

**THE NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP  
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## ATTENTION ON BOARD!

A Starfleet Marine unit has been activated on board the USS DaVinci! All crew personnel are encouraged to join. My name is LT Frazier L. Smith, and I have been appointed as Officer in Charge (OIC) of the unit. The Marine unit is the 678th Special Operations Marine Strike Group (MSG). If anyone has a question about the Marines you can contact me at murock44@yahoo.com or you can see me at DaVinci meeting. The Marines will hold a meeting on the same night as the DaVinci. Hope to see you there!

LT Frazier Smith

## WELCOME ABOARD!

Welcome aboard to the following crew personnel who have recently joined or renewed their membership in the DaVinci (D) or Starfleet (S):

Freddy Heller (D) (S)  
Connie Heller (D) (S)  
Travis Heller (D) (S)  
Ariana Heller (D) (S)  
Karen Pynenburg (D) (S)  
Joe Perry (D)  
Lech Mazur (D)  
Josh Ainsworth (D)  
Renee Ainsworth (D)  
Courtney Ainsworth (D)  
Hunter Ainsworth (D)  
Wyatt Ainsworth (D)  
Karen Baker (D)  
Kim Townsend (D)  
Chantel Billingsly (D)  
Malik Coles (D)  
Patty Williams (D)  
George Pimentel (D) (S)  
Cricket Pimentel (D) (S)  
Joey Pimentel (D) (S)  
Lindsey Pimentel (D)

WHEW!!

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## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Many happy returns to the following DaVinci personnel and Star Trek celebrities and events that are celebrating birthdays or anniversaries in August!

Michael Okuda (Art Supervisor)	6 <sup>th</sup>
Cirroc Lofton (Jake Sisko)	7 <sup>th</sup>
Matt Jeffries (Set Designer)	12 <sup>th</sup>
Jane Wyatt (Amanda)	12 <sup>th</sup>
CRMN Chantel Billingsley	13 <sup>th</sup>
ENS Joey Pimentel	13 <sup>th</sup>
Brannon Braga (Executive Producer Enterprise)	14 <sup>th</sup>
Harve Bennett (Producer)	17 <sup>th</sup>
Gene Roddenberry (Great Bird of the Galaxy)	19 <sup>th</sup>
Jonathan Frakes (CMDR William Riker)	19 <sup>th</sup>
Diana Muldaur (Dr. Katherine Pulaski)	19 <sup>th</sup>
CADET Hannah Walker	21 <sup>st</sup>
Jennifer Lien (Kes)	24 <sup>th</sup>
Gates McFadden (Dr. Beverly Crusher)	28 <sup>th</sup>

## NIGHT OUT LOCATIONS

At the Christmas party, we selected the restaurants for the 2003 DaVinci Night Out. Several locations were chosen that we have never been to before. It looks like a pretty good year! And so, without further ado, here are the remaining 2003 Night Out locations:

September: Golden Corral  
October: Cheddars  
November: Longhorn Steakhouse

## ACCOLADES

A BIG Bajoran thanks to Karen Pynenburg who donated several hundred cans to the DaVinci (much to the chagrin of Travis Heller who is responsible for removing the tabs and crushing the cans).

Congratulations to George Pimentel who not only joined Starfleet before joining the DaVinci, but also within a week of joining took and completed OTS and OCC!! Not only that but he also completed Level 1 of the School of Strategy and Tactics. All this in about 2 weeks! Watch out Russell! You have some competition.

Speaking of the competition, congratulations to Russell who recently passed yet another Starfleet Academy course: Test 1 of the Flag Officer's School - Starfleet Configuration.

## FINANCIALLY SPEAKING

Opening Balance	323.69
Deposits	194.00
Region 2 Donation (Shuttle Mission)	55.00
Postage	6.85
Office Depot/Staples (supplies)	20.07
Winn-Dixie (July 4 party)	18.33
Closing Balance	417.44

CPT Connie Heller

## FINALLY...

Many of you do not know when your membership in the DaVinci is due for renewal because most of the newsletters now go out via email. If you get your newsletter the old fashioned way, your expiration date is on the address label. Those going via email have no address label. So, to help those folks out, here are your expiration dates for the DaVinci and Starfleet:

	<u>DaVinci</u>	<u>Starfleet</u>
Josh Ainsworth	Jul 04	Mar 04
Karen Baker	Jul 04	
Karen Ferris	Sep 03	
Tony Fleming	May 04	Jun 04
Rose Hutson	Sep 03	
Fred Kemp	Mar 04	Mar 04
Todd Kes	Sep 03	
Lesh Mazur	Jul 04	Nov 03
Joe Perry	Jul 04	Nov 03
George Pimentel	Jul 04	Jun 04
Karen Pynenburg	Jul 04	May 04
Russell Ruhland	Aug 03	Aug 03
Frazier Smith	Feb 04	Apl 04
Joanne Vazquez	Nov 03	May 04
Michael Walker	Mar 04	Mar 04
Patty Williams	Jul 04	
Roger Wright	Mar 04	Jan 04

## DaVINCI STAFF ROSTER

<b>Commanding Officer</b>	Freddy Heller	562-8735
<b>Executive Officer</b>	Russell Ruhland	855-4146
<b>Operations Officer</b>	Joe Perry.....	327-5888
Finance	Connie Heller	562-8735
Community Service	Tony Fleming	568-6529
Publications	Freddy Heller	562-8735

Morale	VACANT	
<b>Science Officer</b>	Lech Mazur	596-9542
Counselor	Russell Ruhland	855-4146
Computer	VACANT	
Medical	VACANT	
<b>Engineering Officer</b>	Josh Ainsworth	989-0853
Communications	Gisela Stephens	689-4266
Quartermaster	Randy Dunn	291-0150
Security	Roger Wright	687-8052
<b>Marine OIC</b>	Frazier Smith	298-5074

**Cadet Corps Commander** VACANT

**Master Chief Petty Officer** VACANT

## RM HOUSE NEEDED ITEMS

Although The Ronald McDonald House needs quite a variety of items, the items needed most are listed below. Pick something from the list and bring it with you to each meeting. This is strictly voluntary. Thanks!

<u>Non-Food Items</u>	<u>Miscellaneous Items</u>
Trash Bags (XS and XL)	Copier Paper
Carpet Cleaner	Clasp Envelopes
Spray Air Freshener	Light Bulbs
Styrofoam Cups (L)	Avery Labels 5160
Laundry Detergent	White-Out Pens
Ziploc Bags	Staplers
Paper Plates	
	<u>Food Items</u>
	Sugar
	Bags of Hard Candy
	Snack Foods
	Non-Dairy Creamer

NOTE: Right now, they do not need canned goods, but always need perishable items such as bread, meats, cheese slices, fresh fruit, and snack foods. Gift certificates to local grocery stores, Sam's Club, Wal-Mart, and K Mart are also welcomed.

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## At the Edge of the Federation

For those of you who came in late, the following is a novella written by our very own CRMN Todd Kes. Hope you enjoy reading it.

### Part XXII

The boarding teams were ready, and they boarded their shuttles, wanting to find out who or what had been piloting those shuttles. They proceeded to the shuttles cautiously, and carefully made their way onto their hulls. Using armored space suits with thrusters, they jumped from their shuttle to the enemy shuttle, and used the thrusters to guide them on target. Making their way around the hull until they found a location to enter the shuttle, they went inside. Using their suit lights, and small glow-globs, they made their way into the shuttles, and began checking them for anyone that might be on board.

But on each shuttle, the scene was the same. Two members of a new race were on board, in two positions. The rear of the shuttles was a large cargo hold, but they were empty. When each team reported that their shuttle had been safed, they set the two bodies in the piloting section of one of the shuttles, and put demolition charges in the other. If anyone still on board the other shuttle tried to do anything with it, they could simply detonate the charges.

For the shuttle with the four bodies, the boarding party barricaded themselves in the piloting section, and kept a close eye on the other shuttle, which was visible through the window. The remaining boarding party took over the controls of the second Excellon shuttle, and guided it back into the Excellon's boat bay, where the assault team was waiting. One of the armed shuttles came back as well, and both shuttles were loaded up with the boarding parties. The three shuttles then proceeded towards the nose section, and the armored boarding units deployed from their shuttles. Landing on the hull of the nose section, they began making their way towards where the nose had been snapped off, figuring that there would be some way to get inside from there. Proceeding to one area that was relatively straight and had intact walls, they decided to set up a temporary airlock here.

A temporary airlock was a necessity in space boarding actions. If a temporary airlock was not

used, as the team gained access to more areas, those areas would vent air into the vacuum of space, and soon the entire ship would be without air. If you were trying to recover people, or fragile cargo, this was a very bad thing. As a result, a temporary airlock had been developed. This was little more than a simple door mechanism. However, since it was impossible to design a door that satisfied all hull configurations, so two more parts had been developed. The second part was a chemical that would stick to anything in vacuum, allowing a boarding party to create a location that would illustrate where the door would go. From there, the door could be moved into position, and the third item was created. This was a chemical that stayed liquid in vacuum, for a few seconds. The liquid was guided so that it would go between the door and the illustrated location. This would create the airtight seal. By using two people, one on each side, a single airlock door could be installed in one minute.

The assault teams detailed four of their people to this task, while the remainder was posted at the entrance at the end of the hall. By creating two doors in this way, a new airlock could be created. Adding in extra air tanks would allow the assault team to keep the ship pressurized from the many times an assault team would have to enter and exit the ship. By stationing one of their people at each door, this prevented anyone from opening both doors out of ignorance.

In the meantime, the team's demolition experts were applying a paste of high explosive to the door that led further into the ship, and the rest of the teams were readying their weapons. When the airlock group reported they were ready, and the demolitions team reported they were ready as well, the team leader selected gave the order. A sharp detonation occurred, and the door was no more. There were some shifting shapes in the darkness beyond, and glow-globs were thrown.

Glow-globs were designed to stick to anything, allowing a team to create a light source wherever they were. They lasted for two hours, and at the end stopped giving off green light and gave off orange light for fifteen minutes. That orange light was the cue for someone to replace them before the light was lost. The components inside were designed to be broken to allow the chemicals to mix, and the gloves on an assault team were coated

with a chemical that kept the globs from sticking to them.

Two of the shifting shapes began firing on the assault teams, and they returned fire. Their lasers made the air glow as the beams poured their energy outwards in a line. One of the shapes was caught by one of the beams, and the sizzling sound of frying meat was heard. The other though, pulled out something shaped like a pistol, and aimed it at the assault team. Out from the end came a pulse of energy, which slammed into one of the assault team, frying part of his armor. But the assault team's armor was designed to be heaviest in front, and of all the locations on the front, the chest armor was the heaviest. As a result, the only effect on the trooper inside was to merely shock him slightly.

The rest of the troopers saw what happened, and returned fire on the one that had shot. Five beams caressed the target's skin, and explosions occurred as the moisture within the skin was flash-boiled by the heat. The steam exploded out of the target's body and the being hit roared in pain. Surprisingly, the being did not attempt to find a good place to shoot from, but instead chose to rise up and pull out a knife. Yelling in fury, the being charged the troopers.

Several of the troopers were surprised by the attack, but none hesitated, and the beams were dialed up to a higher strength, and five beams again fired. This time though, instead of simply causing the water to be vaporized, the beams cut too fast for that, and the being charging them was cut to pieces by the beams. The other one got up and charged also, apparently trying to get revenge on those who had killed the first. But charging several people that are waiting with long-range weapons pointed at you isn't a course of action that leads to long life. Beams fired again, and this one was cut to pieces as well.

Proceeding further into the nose section, the troopers came across others who acted in the same way. They would fight for a little, and then charge into hand-to-hand combat. But each time they charged, they died, and within thirty minutes the assault team leader was reporting that there were no more hostiles on board the nose section. Regrouping at the temporary airlock, the assault team leader began exchanging command of the nose section with the standard team leader.

The Amemnon was doing something unusual in the meantime. It was turning around so that the second cargo module was facing the nose section. Captain Morgan was curious about the ship, and he knew that there was no way for that ship to be space worthy in the amount of time they had. As a result, he had decided to carry the pieces of the ship with him, where they could be reassembled at the Starbase, and analyzed to their heart's content.

In the meantime, it was time to deal with the tail section. The armed shuttles continued their dance around it, targeting any active power signatures with their ion weapons, preparing it to receive the troops. The shuttles came back around, and began deploying their troops again. This time though, the defenders were more prepared. The first wave of troops was thrown back, and the second wave was attacked slightly. But that seemed to be the limit of the defenders' attack capability, and the assault teams began moving forward again, this time investigating anything they found with laser fire. Most of the engineering section was still full of steam from the coolant leak, so they simply set a vent into there, and waited for the gas to disperse.

In that process, the ship was cleared of more resistance, and when the assault teams reported that the tail section was secure, Captain Morgan told the engineering department to get the tail section ready to be loaded on board the Amemnon. The antimatter fuel in the tail section was emptied, and the smaller fusion plants on board were shut down to prevent any accidents from happening. The shuttles were also loaded on board, and the Excellon and the Amemnon turned their attention to getting back on course. They had succeeded in their mission, and one less ship was available to the slavers.

They continued their route, but ran into no more trouble. The entire crew was in a state of euphoria, as they had managed to go up against one of the slavers' vessels in a straight up fight, and won. But a report from the Chief Engineer was about to change that. He told the Captain that he would like to brief the senior personnel on certain things his teams had discovered while going over the slaver ship. Commander Verrin was there by communications link.

"Captain, I don't think you're going to like what I've found out about the enemy vessel. First of all, those guns in the wings and the one in the nose are

identical. The only reason that the one in the nose was rapid-firing and the ones in the wings weren't is that the batteries for them were removed. I don't know why, but the nose gun had a battery near it that can store up to ten shots worth of power. I am figuring that the wing guns would normally have a battery like that too.

"Second, the shuttles were only carrying one gun each. They are normally designed to carry two each, and each of them normally has a battery with them as well.

"Third, most of the interior of that ship was covered with rust or oil. This tells me that the ship wasn't maintained that well.

"All those things together tell me that this ship was not a top-line ship. It was barely held together, the weapons didn't work properly, and it wasn't maintained."

"So you're saying that this ship does not represent the full potential of what the slavers can build?"

"Essentially yes Captain.

"Fortunately though, there appears to be no sign of any sort of shielding system, and the hull isn't even armored. This could be where they never realized the advantages, or chose not to use them."

"So the general consensus on the slaver ship is that it has lots of weapons, but almost no defense. What about the computer system?"

"We're currently going over the computer recovered now, but it is taking a while. We're probably going to need the Starbase's assistance to crack the secret though."

"Good. In the meantime, see what you can do to give me more information on the slaver ship, without tearing it up too badly. Is there anything else any of you want to add?"

"Well Captain, when we transferred the slaver ship, we emptied its antimatter tanks. I'd like to get a portable fusion unit into the hulk to start seeing how much of the hulk I can get back on-line. After all, you did say that we needed another ship out here."

Several officers looked at each other at the comment, and a mild chuckle ran around the table. The very thought of using a slaver ship to hunt other slavers seemed like a very good idea to them. Several officers began getting ideas too, about how they could improve the slaver ship.

Captain Morgan saw the grins on the various faces around the table, and said, "Now I know that several

of you want to get to work on the slaver ship, to improve it. But don't forget, that ship alone was a dangerous match. I also want you looking over the Excellon, seeing how she can be improved as well to fight a slaver ship like that in prime condition. In the meantime, we'll go with Commander Verrin's idea of naming the various classes seen. So Cheng, I want you and your teams to go over our captured Pirate-Alpha, and see what can be used to improve the Excellon. I also want you to go over the ship, and see where we can improve on it.

"Tactical, I want you to get on the sensors. I want to be able to tell exactly what type of Pirate variant we might face next, and how deadly it will be. What level of batteries, types of guns, and if there have been any changes to their armor or shield status. Also, I want to know if it's carrying anything in its main hold, and what it is.

"Ops, I want you to start looking over the Exellon, picking out anyone who might be willing to crew the ship.

"Security, I want you to put together plans to board a ship like that. This one was empty, but if we catch one with living beings on board in the main hold, I want you to be ready to board their vessel and rescue them.

"Commander Verrin, I have the most important task for you. Assuming we can get that ship running, I want you to think up a name."

**\*\*To Be Continued in Part XXIII Next Month\*\***

**THE NEXT DAVINCI NIGHT OUT WILL  
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