

SubSpace Interference



Ship's Communications of the USS *Rendezvous*

Stardate: January 2001

From the Bridge...

It's hard to believe it's a new year already. 2000 just went way too fast. It was a really good year for the Captain and myself. I hope it was a good one for you as well.

The club had several fun activities last year. Our anniversary and New Year's parties were great as always. For those of you who made it to our house for the New Year's party, we hope you had a good time. It was fun playing games, watching movies, spending time with friends, and eating lots of food with you.

We also had a good time at our December meeting as we held our Christmas party. It's always nice to spend time with our friends in the club. Because after all, isn't that what this is all about? Sharing a common enjoyment of Star Trek and Science Fiction with our friends?

As we enter this new year, I want each of you to think about what it is that you would like to see from the club. Whether it is more activities or rank advancement, what is it that you desire most as a member of the *Rendezvous*?

We really do want to have your input on what you want to do. If there is an activity you think the club would enjoy, let us know. We'll do our best to work it into the schedule. If there's a story or departmental report you would like to have printed in this newsletter, do it! I love to have submissions for *Subspace Interference*. It means I don't have to write it. In fact, this month's story was written by Curtis Kidd. It's based on a trip that he, the captain, and Matt Chism (our Ops chief) made to Durango, Colorado. I think the story is great and couldn't help but laugh.

So anyway, I'm only making one New Year's Resolution this year for the club (the captain may have some of her own, however. Captain's prerogative). It's that we have a great year. I want us to have fun at our meetings and activities. I want us to spend time with the other ships in the Seventh Fleet. There are some

great people in the other clubs that we can benefit from. I know they enjoy spending time with the *Rendezvous*. It's a great organization and we should take advantage of it.

CONduit it mid May is a great time to rub shoulders with our fellow Seventh Fleeters. We'll also be holding several joint activities with them this year that will let you get to know them better.

Take care and have a great year.

Cmdr. Ross Trowbridge
Executive Officer
USS Rendezvous

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Coming Events

January 20th- Monthly meeting of the *USS Rendezvous* at 10:30 am in the USU Nutrition and Food Sciences building.

February 12th- Lincoln's Birthday

February 14th- Valentines Day

February 17th- Monthly meeting of the *USS Rendezvous* at 10:30 AM in the USU Nutrition and Food Sciences building.

February 19th- President's Day

Rendezvous Saga

by Curtis Kidd

Personal Log--Captain QurtIS reporting:

My leave of absence from the Empire does not yet appear to have a termination date. Until some chaos within my own Family is resolved, a return does not appear tactically prudent, based on recent experiences. However, my time on board the Rendezvous is not being wasted. I have been invited on an excursion with Captain Trowbridge and her Operations Chief, Matt Chism. The Captain assures me that this is a routine mission, to retrieve some biological specimens from the LaPlata colony, a voyage she has made on numerous occasions without mishap. For that very reason, I fully anticipate some kind of trouble.

"Every time you go somewhere with Captain QurtIS, you end up in some kind of trouble." Commander Trowbridge found himself once again in the increasingly familiar situation of having to resolve potential conflicts between his interests as First Officer and as the Captain's husband. On this point, however, the two were in accord...Marla had a long history of 'interesting' events when in the company of the Klingon.

"I always come back, don't I?" Marla countered, teasing him a little.

Lacking any credible argument for that point, Ross gave a little. "I'm just not crazy about the idea, that's all."

Marla smiled. "Jealous?" she asked.

"Of course," Ross replied. As Marla smiled, he teased, "I'd hate to miss the opportunity for phaser practice!"

The Captain swatted him lightly on the shoulder. "It's a routine mission," she explained, exasperated. "What could possibly go wrong?"

Matt Chism shook his head dubiously as he regarded the shuttle. "Is this the best we can do?" he asked Myqol.

"What do you mean?" the Fighter Chief responded.

Trying to sum up his thoughts briefly, Matt explained, "It's a cargo shuttle."

"Well, you do typically haul larger animals in a cargo vessel of some sort," Myqol explained. "If comfort was a big concern, the Captain would take her yacht."



“Yeah, I guess you’re right,” Matt answered, unconvinced.

Myqol couldn’t resist asking. “What’s the big deal? This is the same shuttle she’s used for the last three LaPlata runs.”

Matt grimaced. “She invited the Klingon.”

That was all the explanation Myqol needed. “We don’t have anything that’s armed...but I think we’ve got a cargo shuttle with stronger shields and improved maneuvering.”

“Thank you both for coming along.” Marla had taken a position at the navigator’s station, leaving Matt and QurtIS as pilot and co-pilot, respectively. “This does get to be a boring flight when you’re alone.”

Matt grinned. “I’m just happy to have a break. Between Ops and Engineering, I’m lucky to get any time doing anything else.”

QurtIS felt the focus of attention shift to him, and he grimaced inwardly. He was still adjusting to humans and their ridiculous penchant for small talk.

“I am grateful, as well,” he replied. “This is a welcome diversion, a chance to focus my attentions on other issues.”

Marla and Matt shot each other a look. It didn’t happen often, but every so often the Klingon Captain let a crack show in his stony exterior. Rumors floating around the Rendezvous said QurtIS was deeply distracted by recent news from the Empire. What exactly that news was, no one could say.

It was almost an hour into the flight when it became apparent that the mission was not going to be exactly the routine flight Captain Trowbridge had expected. The shuttle was passing near the Kaesvyl system when an automated navigation beacon indicated all vessels in the area should proceed on impulse power only...a precaution common when some kind of navigational hazard has become apparent. Captain Trowbridge’s attempts to hail someone for clarification took a few minutes to get a response...and she wasn’t crazy about it when it arrived.

“We’re clearing a debris field,” explained the captain of a small mining vessel. “We had a convoy of cargo haulers going through here that ran into some pirate traffic.”

“Orions?” QurtIS asked, becoming more attentive. He almost exuded anticipation.

“We’re not sure,” the mining captain answered. “So far as we’ve been able to determine, there were no

survivors, and we haven’t found any sort of record buoy to learn exactly what happened. We’ve contacted the Ticonderoga; their sensors will tell us more.”

Marla acknowledged that. “When Captain Stark arrives, please have him notify the Rendezvous of his discoveries. If pirate traffic is picking up in the sector, we should all be prepared.” She cut the com channel and indicated for Matt to proceed.

QurtIS leaned back in his seat, willing himself to calm. The thought that this mission could turn into combat had cheered him somewhat, enough to surprise even him. He didn’t share his observations with his crewmates, however...he didn’t expect that they would feel the same way, flying in an unarmed shuttle.

“Where’s the navigation beacon?”

Marla awoke to hear Matt’s question, and checked the chronograph on her instrument console. They should be approaching the Pro-Voorem docking facility...it was a regular stop for her when she made this voyage.

“Problems, Mr. Chism?” she asked, looking over at him. Even the Klingon was busily scanning his panel, searching for something.

Matt took his eyes off the viewscreen to look over at the Captain quickly. “Station Pro-Voorem’s navigation beacon appears to be off-line. Or else my navigation skills have totally gone to targ droppings.” Even as he said it, Matt looked surprised. Having a Klingon as part of the regular crew, even on a temporary basis, was rubbing off in unexpected ways.

QurtIS spoke up, having apparently missed Matt’s reference...or being so accustomed to hearing it that he didn’t react. “Position is confirmed. We should be at Pro-Voorem’s outer marker perimeter. In fact, the station should be visible right out there.” He pointed at the main viewscreen, indicating a silvery shimmer.

As they got closer, it became apparent why there was no navigation beacon. The station had been gutted; it was impossible to determine if the damage was due to an external source or had resulted from internal explosions. The remnants of the docking facilities, the most external part of the station’s circular layout, were relatively intact, but apparently abandoned. “No energy readings on the station,” QurtIS noted.

“What in the world...?” Marla wondered aloud.

Matt chimed in. "Bet it's related to the convoy attack back in the Kaesvyl system," he said. When Marla looked at him in surprise, he explained, "It's been quiet in this sector for a while. Now, suddenly, we have a devastated space dock and a destroyed cargo convoy? I don't think it's a coincidence."

Marla looked pensive. "We'll stop and report this before we enter the Soldier Nebula. Let's not stick around here."

As Matt set a new course, Marla prepared a message and sent it to the Ticonderoga, informing them of the fate of the Pro-Voorem space dock. QurtIS sat back, wishing they had the VaQwI' instead of a cargo shuttle. He was in the mood to go hunting.

QurtIS scowled at the sensor information, and slowed the shuttle. The scowl wasn't unusual...Marla thought he'd been scowling throughout the duration of the flight thus far, except for that moment near the Kaesvyl system. But the fact that he altered the flight of the shuttle was.

"What's up?" she asked. Besides having equivalent rank, the two Captains had been through such a variety of adventures and misadventures that any semblance of formality tended to drop quickly between them.

QurtIS gestured to the sensor screen. "That meteor swarm. It's drifting into our flight path...but its orbital profile doesn't match the rest of this system."

Marla surveyed the information. "Nothing terribly massive," she mused aloud. "We could probably push them out of the way with the navigational deflector...shouldn't be anything too serious." She didn't sound totally positive...while the words made sense, there had been too many unexpected events already to dismiss this as just a simple wandering meteor cloud.

Matt was already performing detailed scans, something in his head gnawingly insisting that there was more to this than showed on the surface.

"Very well," QurtIS said. "Setting deflectors to maximum." He began raising the ship's speed again, edging closer to full impulse.

The shuttle was moments away from contact with the edge of the meteor cloud when Matt's scans gave him cause for alarm. "Don't hit them!" he called out, inspiring QurtIS to throw the shuttle into an evasive maneuver that its designers had surely never intended. Structural integrity sensors screamed for a

brief moment before the inertial dampers caught up with the maneuver and settled the shuttle back onto its own framework.

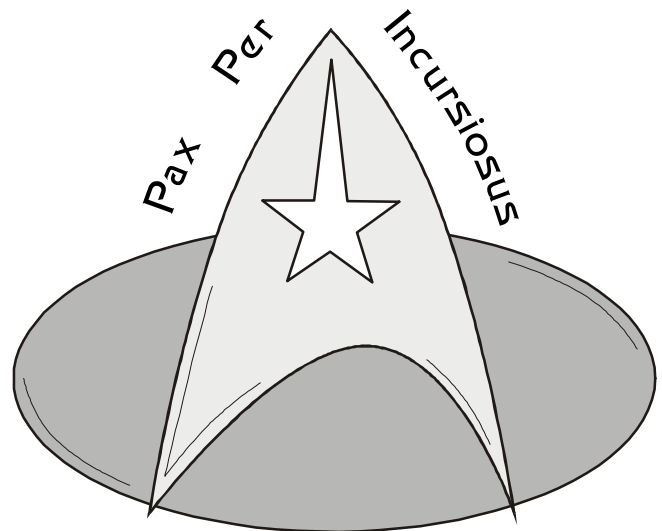
Clear for the moment, QurtIS looked at Matt without a word. Matt was already explaining. "Those 'meteors' are a nickel-iron shell over tritium gravitic mines. If we'd actually come in contact with one, the whole lot of them could have gone up, with us in the middle."

Marla looked out the viewport in surprise. Someone had gone to a lot of trouble to set up a booby-trap. "Can we detour around them?" she asked, knowing it was a ridiculous question. With three dimensions to travel in, there had to be some way around them.

QurtIS checked the sensor readout again. "No need," he said. When Matt and Marla looked at him in surprise, he continued, "Whoever laid this minefield obviously never expected anyone to discover its true nature until it was too late. They did a very sloppy job. There are at least three channels I could navigate in this craft."

Marla wasn't sure. "How long would a detour take us?" she asked Matt, who was busy checking alternate routes.

As the computer chewed on the problem he'd given it, Matt started to answer. "Well, the safest routes would set us back at least eight hours," he explained. "The best time possible, without going through the minefield, would be..." He hesitated,



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NCC-1896



waiting for the computer to crunch a few final numbers. "Three hours, twenty minutes longer than if we managed to traverse the minefield." He looked back at Marla, and shrugged. "If he can pull an evasion like that last one, I've got all kinds of faith in his ability to pick a course through there."

Captain Trowbridge didn't get a chance to argue the matter. By the time Matt had finished his explanation, the shuttle was already past the second mine and proceeding forward. The Klingon flashed her a toothy grin. "Relax. I could pilot the Ticonderoga through this minefield."

Marla wasn't reassured.

"Pirate traffic, huh?" Charlie Johnson didn't have any military rank...and he totally ignored the ranks of those around him. Like most colonists, his assessment of people was based on their individual capabilities, not how long they'd managed to avoid screwing up seriously enough to be noticed. "Doesn't surprise me. I thought traffic had been slow for the past month or so."

QurtIS sat back, letting the humans talk to each other. The fact that he was Klingon had done little to endear him with Charlie, even though Matt and Marla spoke highly of him. He focused his attention on the questions and answers being exchanged, trying to glean the reliable information from amongst the speculations.

"But you haven't actually had any attacks?" Marla inquired. It would be uncommon for pirates to go to that much trouble to set up ambushes and booby traps and not poke around an isolated colony.

Charlie sat back in his chair and scratched his beard. "Well, not attacks. We have had a few odd incidents...animals disappearing, and some of the shepherds have noticed signs of another colony of

some sort up in the mountains..." Charlie paused, trying to recall the details. "Lights at night, smoke where there shouldn't be any, things like that." He shrugged. "As cold as it gets this time of year, disappearing animals aren't anything unusual...local predators take 'em. The lights had me a little worried, until I found out what the shepherds were drinking to keep warm. After that, I figured they were seeing things...if they were even actually awake at all when they 'saw' them."

Matt stepped into the conversation. "But your supply deliveries have been slow?"

Charlie nodded. "We don't pay much attention to them, most of the year...but after the cold season kicks in, you start to realize how long it's been since the last power converters arrived, or since you had any fruit that wasn't dried. In fact, if you hadn't been scheduled for this visit, I was going to contact you to ask what was going on."

Marla nodded, looking out the window where crews were loading the shuttle. Their specimen assortment this time was limited...one large grayish equinoid that the colonists had domesticated as a beast of burden, and a small canine species that was mostly hair. QurtIS had been about ready to stomp on the thing until he found out they ate tribbles. "We'll go ahead and contact the Fleet," she said. "Maybe we can post someone on patrol in this region until--"

The explosion was massive, and unexpected. Part of the docking facility was little more than a smoldering pile of rubble...but the shuttle was intact, even though it was canted to one side on the landing pad.

"Romulan disruptor!" QurtIS barked out. He was already moving for the door. "We've got to get the shuttle in the air!"

Matt and Marla were right behind him, and the threesome hardly hesitated as they hit the door to Charlie's office. The equinoid could be heard inside the shuttle, making noises that sounded almost like a damaged hinge of some sort. As they approached the shuttle, QurtIS scanned the skies. The initial shock of the explosion was wearing off his hearing, and he could make out the high-pitched whine of engines, somewhere overhead in the cloud layer.

Matt already had sensors online when QurtIS stepped aboard, the Ops Chief deciding that it was an occasion to try out the shortened emergency start-up sequence he'd calculated last month. As the Klingon slid into his seat, Marla switched the sensors to active mode. The viewscreen lit up instantly with a ship overhead, and another crash resounded outside as a second shot at the shuttle landed wide of its target. Thinking quickly, Marla froze the info on the screen and set the sensors back to passive mode. "That ought to at least make them slow down and look before they shoot again," she stated.

It was an Orion vessel...mostly. Bits and pieces of other technologies were grafted onto the hull...Federation shields, Romulan disruptors, Ferengi sensors. And it was circling overhead, preparing for another strike as it picked up the increasing power of the shuttle's engines coming online.

"Can we spike the power feed to the engines?" QurtIS asked.

Matt paused for just a fraction of a second, asking, "Why...?" Then his face lit up as the idea suddenly made sense. It would make a mess of the power converters...but the energy surging suddenly outward served two purposes. The Orion backed off as it read what appeared, for just a moment, to be an

engine overload going critical; and the shuttle catapulted off the ground as the impulse engines roared to life.

Marla blanched. "I hope no one was standing behind us..." she muttered.

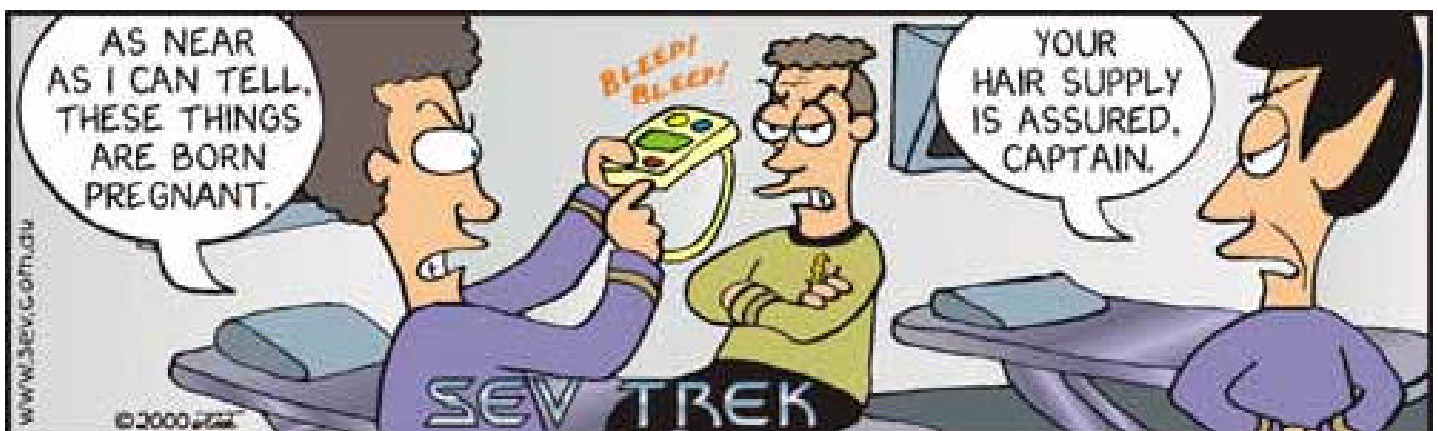
The Orion was coming back around for another run at the shuttle. "Get us out of the atmosphere, as quickly as possible," QurtIS directed. No one questioned the order...he'd spent a good portion of his command fighting Orions, and certainly was familiar with the pirate tactics that defied most conventional starship practices. "Head for the Nebula."

Well, that much makes sense, Marla thought. Once in the Soldier Nebula, they could lie low, drop into a particular dense cloud of plasma, and wait for a fleet vessel to arrive. It sounded almost pleasant. Then the disruptor fire began raining past them. The shuttle shuddered and pitched as the shields soaked up the abuse.

"Aft shields at forty percent," Marla called out, keeping a careful eye on the instruments. "Twenty-five," she corrected, after a pair of hits knocked the shuttle about again. "Fifteen...eight. Now five." She braced herself.

QurtIS absolutely beamed, and Marla reminded herself once again to have the Counselor do a psychological evaluation of the Klingon. If he was suicidal, she'd remember not to invite him on any more missions. "May I, Mister Chism?" he asked, hands hovering above the controls.

Matt wasn't about to argue. As Marla called out, "Aft shields dropping!" QurtIS pivoted the ship one hundred eighty degrees and cut the engines. Their momentum carried them into the Nebula backwards, with their forward shields taking another two hits



before the gas cloud got so thick that the disruptor beams could no longer effectively penetrate.

“Well, now, that was a new one,” Matt grumbled under his breath. He hadn’t particularly cared for the view of incoming disruptor fire at the nose of the ship, knowing his seat was closest to it.

QurtIS wheeled the shuttle around again, firing up the impulse drive. “Now, let’s go find that minefield again,” he said, a sadistic gleam in his eye.

“Are you nuts?” Marla asked. “I don’t think they’ll break off pursuit just because we go through a minefield they’ve laid.”

QurtIS gave an almost lazy glance over his shoulder. “Who’s going through it? I’m coming back.”

Matt nodded...the fact that he understood what the Klingon had in mind scared him, in a way. “We may not have any weapons...but we’ve got a tractor beam.”

It took the Orions thirty minutes to find them again, in spite of stopping in one of the thinnest portions of the Nebula. Matt had enough time to get the aft shields operational again, even. There was no questioning the pirates’ intent, however; once visual contact was established, they bore in on the shuttle like a homing torpedo.

“Ready, Captains?” Matt asked. This plan was just suicidal enough to work. The pirates had to rely on their viewscreens only...sensors were useless. And who knew that Klingons played ‘chicken’, too?

“Just remember, Mr. Chism,” Marla warned. “Better to swerve too early than too late.”

Matt grinned darkly. “But where’s the fun in that?” he asked. Before Marla could say anything official to change the course of events, Matt gunned the motors, sending the shuttle leaping toward the Orion ship. The pirates would have to be right on top of the shuttle to use their disruptors...and the sensors hadn’t indicated any torpedoes on board...

The range closed, the Orion ship getting larger and larger in the viewscreen. No one dared take their eyes off that image long enough to see how long the mutual charge of the ships lasted...but just when Matt was sure the Orion ship was going to come right through the viewscreen at him, he swerved. The Orion did, as well...right into the tractor beam the shuttle had been running. QurtIS cut the beam as he felt the jolt of the added mass and momentum.

Matt left the throttle wide open, trying to gain what distance he could, as Marla eyed a visual display aft from the shuttle. The Orion was turning to pursue...and then a swarm of nickel-iron shapes passed over and around its hull.

Every system shock alarm on the shuttle went off as the pressure wave from the exploding Orion vessel hurled it forward. Hull integrity monitors dropped alarmingly, navigational deflectors lost power, and engines went offline. Only one indicator on her panel stayed out of the red...antimatter containment, with so little yellow left that Marla swore the display was turning orange.

QurtIS pushed himself back in his seat, blotting lightly at the pinkish goo oozing from his forehead ridges. “No problem,” he said, sitting back with a large, very satisfied smile on his face. Matt let out a soft chuckle and began working on getting long range communications operable once again.

Captain’s Log--supplemental:

We ended up routing our emergency call through the comm station on LaPlata, and the Retributor and Rendezvous arrived within minutes of each other. The remaining pirates were located in a mountain base high above the colony site...in fact, they had just launched a second ship to verify the first one had finished the job, since it was taking so long to hear back. The entire group has been rounded up and is awaiting trial at Starbase 7. QurtIS has also been much happier in the past week than he’s been since he came aboard. He even talked to the Counselor, who assured me the Klingon Captain is in perfectly normal mental health, for a Klingon (he even had the bruises to prove it, when QurtIS demonstrated just how ‘healthy’ he was feeling by challenging him to a duel on the holodeck.) Our cargo survived the trip, as well, and the Klingon Captain has developed an unusual affection for the canine we brought back. Anything that eats tribbles and could survive a fight like ours without a scratch, he says, is animal enough for a Klingon warrior.



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