



ORBITAL ELEMENTS



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE USS KATHERINE JOHNSON
STARDATE 0915.20

Special Ship Commissioning Issue!

USS KATHERINE JOHNSON

NCC - 53848



Having successfully completed all necessary requirements and having shown themselves willing to abide by all STAR-FLEET regulations, is hereby commissioned as a chapter of STARFLEET: The International Star Trek Fan Association, Inc. and is henceforth added to the STARFLEET roster as a Starship-of-the-line.

Becoming a chapter of STARFLEET: The International Star Trek Fan Association, Inc. is an honor granted to only a few. These commissioned chapters represent the best asset of STARFLEET, her members. It is their pleasure and duty to instill and uphold the ideals of Star Trek aboard their ship and in their community. A group who wishes to receive the honor of starship status within STARFLEET must complete a long and arduous apprenticeship to show that they are, in fact, worthy of joining the elite ranks of the chapters that have preceded them. Not all who attempt this difficult task succeed. Therefore it is with great pride that this charter is granted to one such group who, by their diligence, determination and willing spirit, has proven themselves to be true representatives of Star Trek and STARFLEET.

Fleet Admiral Steven Parmley, Commander, STARFLEET

STARDATE
2020.0829

Admiral Johnathan "Gumby" Simmons, Chief of Operations, STARFLEET

On August 29, 2020, The USS Katherine Johnson went from being NX-53848 to NCC-53848! We are an official Chapter of STARFLEET! We had what may be the first virtual Zoom Commissioning Ceremony, which went very well. Several dignitaries were unable to attend for various reasons, but Bob Vosseller, Region 7 VRC had some nice words for us, and we were also congratulated from representatives of several ships, including Bob Smith, CO from the USS Banneker; Maria Dutilly, CO from the USS Stella Pirata; Anthony Perez and Dion Powell, CO & XO from the USS Osiris; Matthew Barclay from the USS Solstice, Gwen Ensey from the USS Banneker, and most of our own crew!



XO CMDR John Lee presented CO VADM Tom Restivo with an official Dedication Plaque (which we later delivered to his house!) Then we ended by showing a binge-watch of the first 4 episodes of *Lower Decks*. It was truly a fun and great ceremony.



In addition, we also received another certificate from 7th Fleet!



And, we received the following email as well:

To the Ship:

I've enjoyed emailing you all back and forth as you submitted your MSR reports. They were upbeat, positive, and I knew this great day would come. Katherine Johnson was an incredible forward thinking woman who did the vast majority of her orbital calculations IN HER HEAD! Amazing is an understatement for that. There's an old saying, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste" and thankfully, hers wasn't. Her legacy should be a shining inspiration for young black girls, and children everywhere, who want to reach out to grasp their dreams and make them a reality.

In closing, I want to wish you all smooth sailing no matter the squalls!

V/r

VADM Dave Pitts
Vice Chief Correspondence Operations

STELLAR EVENTS

On July 30, the Region 7 Annual Awards were announced. **LCDR Elizabeth Gorman**, Ship's Counselor for the USS Katherine Johnson, was awarded the **Helping Hands Award** for the Year. Our ship had not even been fully commissioned yet and this really helped to make a name for us in 7th Fleet.

The story has been told in other places in more detail, but Liz was instrumental in helping another crew member find out who her birth parents were and led her to having a wonderful relationship with siblings she didn't know she had!

The Officers and Crew of the USS Katherine Johnson are extremely proud of LCDR Gorman's accomplishment.



STARFLEET
REGION 7

HELPING HANDS AWARD

2019

THE MEMBERS OF REGION 7 ARE PLEASED TO ISSUE THIS AWARD TO

ELIZABETH GORMAN
U.S.S. KATHERINE JOHNSON

AND IS GRANTED THIS RECOGNITION, WITH ALL RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES THERE UNTO.

GIVEN THIS DAY, THE 30TH OF JULY, 2020.



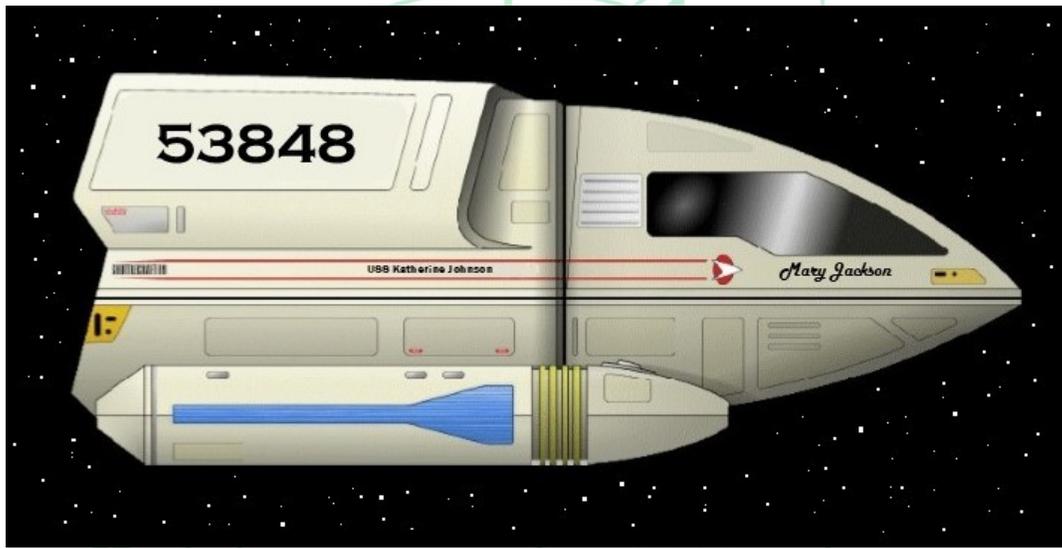
Wayne L. Augustson

Wayne L. Augustson
Region 7 Coordinator

Robert Vosseller Jr.

Robert Vosseller
Region 7 Vice Coordinator

UPCOMING AWAY MISSIONS



**Western Regional Summit Event for USS Stella Pirata NCC-82616
Event · by Maria Dutilly and USS Stella Pirata NCC-82616
Saturday, September 26, 2020 at 12 PM 3 Muse Ln, White Oak, PA 15131**

Have you ever wondered what it is like to be near the border of Romulan space (better known as Ohio) Well here is your chance to hang out with the Pirata Crew as we take a break from our border patrol duties. We are going to be hosting the first ever regional event in Western PA!

The USS Stella Pirata will host the first ever Western Pa Summit featuring members of area chapters of StarfleetRegion 7 plus others. The event will be held on Saturday September 26th at White Oak Park. No better place to hold the first ever Western Regional Summit than in the most western location in Region 7 Pittsburgh! A live/zoom meeting will be held at 1pm that will include VRC Adm. Bob Vosseller on zoom.

After the summit the USS Stella Pirata we will be celebrating our one-year anniversary being the Stella Pirata. We will be having a BBQ and have games to play at the event. We will be observing all COVID protocols at the event to ensure safety for everyone.

Please RSVP by September 20th to give us time to make sure there is enough food for everyone. If possible, we are asking for a small donation to help defer food cost. The Pirata Crew looks forward to hosting this event all are welcome!

NEW LOGOS!!!

Now that we're a commissioned ship, there has been some discussion about putting our logo on some things like T-shirts, coffee mugs, etc. The original logo was put together somewhat hastily and clumsily, and we asked for some help from Justin Donaldson, a graphic artist who resides on the USS Banneker. He graciously agreed to help, first of all by re-drawing the original logo and enhancing it, and also by designing another logo for us as an alternative. The 2nd logo will be easier to adapt as a one-color logo for T-shirts and applications where full color would be too expensive. So, we are presenting both logos for your consideration. We originally thought to choose between one or the other, but decided, at least for the time-being, to use both of them. Logo 2 will probably be the one for swag and FLEET websites, etc. A Black/White version of Logo 2 is included to show how it would look like on T-shirts. Logo 1 will be for our own newsletter and Facebook page, etc. We hope you all like them and we want to thank Justin Donaldson again for being so much help to us.

LOGO 1



LOGO 2



LITTLE CO GUY COFFEE TALK

"Members of STARFLEET,

Today is a great day. Today we commission into our ranks, the Starship USS Katherine Johnson, NCC-53848. She is an Oberth Class starship. This Chapter is based in Frederick, Maryland and VADM Thomas Restivo is the Commanding Officer.

VADM Restivo, you are hereby cleared to begin deployed chapter operations in your assigned patrol area, with CMDR John Lee as your Executive Officer after reporting in to ADM Wayne Augustson at Region 7.

Commissioning a new chapter is the greatest joy that I have as STARFLEET Chief of Shakedown Operations. I wish you fair winds and following seas.

Rear Admiral Steven P. Bowers

Mirror Universe Officer

USS William Wallace, Region 12, STARFLEET International

SFI SHOC"



And, with the words from VRC Bob at the Commissioning Celebration on August 29, the USS Katherine Johnson is now a Ship of the Line Chapter of STARFLEET.

I want to thank each and every one of you: XO John, Mo, Maggie, Liz, Geoff, Trevor, Sakira, Thor, Becky, Olivia, and Chief John. Your combined efforts have contributed to make this most unusual shakedown a success toward Commissioning, and you should be rightfully proud of your accomplishments.

I also want to thank FCapt Bob of the Mothership, USS Banneker, RC Wayne, the ever omniscient Alex from Department of Technical Services/Advanced Starship Design Bureau, Commandant Jill and CAPT Darlene from Starfleet Academy, VADM Dave from STARFLEET Correspondence Operations, BDR Frank, COMM Tony, and the staff at the STARFLEET Help Desk for their assistance and guidance during our Shakedown Cruise. I also want to thank the crew of the USS Stella Pirata, the USS Osiris, the USS Solstice, and the USS Banneker for attending our Commissioning Celebration.

I look forward to our future endeavors, and as my first CO, ADM Dave Ryan of happy memory, would say, "Well, this ship and the people aboard have gone through some rough times, but regardless of what the future brings, it's always been my greatest desire that we all remain friends."

And with that, Conn, hit it!

Orchard of Dragonflies

By Thor Halvorsen

Tarrying by the pen, Horse and Donkey likewise milling about, grazing,
Scraping the old earth of dirt & hay away, donkey rolls in fresh earth,
Dangling, twirling feel, a world upside down in bliss, jiggered lips jutting,
The horse walks along besides me, reminding me in gentle nudges he's there,
Dust blurs ever so briefly, the tempest of earth with cloudy horizons, threatening,

As sun dragged its course across the slanting sky, Bob Ross would paint view,
Red dipped, dripping clouds, redipped of horizon's stroke & influence,
Swirling in that shifting breeze, as if branches further smeared the heavens,
I stand there, pausing horse & man, rolling donkey, no cause in world seemingly,

Suddenly, catching my eye's attention, fleeting streaks of buzzing, tail & wings,
To & fro, from all heights & directions, these darting squadron clusters of them,
A most animalistic enactment o aerial acrobatics, worthy of any dogfight of yore,
Dipping, darting, rising, sliding, shimmering to & fro, looping, spinning so,

So many flittering zips all around, often lost in the bustle & hustle of life,
Yet, here, in this pausation, a world most strikingly alive & very active,
Roles enacted, from preying, to courtships, to even seeming playfulness,
I look beside me, to find the horse equally marveling at what I have been seeing,
Curious to my distraction, he looks up once more, then away he trots, tail flicking,
I cannot help but think, he just told me, "You could see this every day ya know?"



COUNSELOR CORNER

By LCDR Liz Gorman



Once again I want to state that I am not a mental health care professional; I just roleplay one in STARFLEET.

It's been a few months, hasn't it? Everyone is stressed out about various things and September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. And this September is certainly testing that. Stressors in our world are at an all time high. Please know that you are not alone, and people are there to help you.

It's okay not to be okay. What's not okay is to not get help.

NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, has a whole list of facts and resources on suicide prevention:

<https://www.nami.org/get-involved/awareness-events/suicide-prevention-awareness-month>

Most important of these is the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255 or 800-273-TALK. There is also a text feature: 741-741

Also coming up in the fall is the 2020 election. I promised XO John I wouldn't get political, and I'm not. But I was an election dayworker for a number of years, and now more than ever it is crucial to make your voice heard. Check with your election office to be sure your are registered. If you are voting via mail-in, be sure you know where your election office is to drop off your ballot as soon as possible. If you are voting in person, see if early voting is possible and **WEAR YOUR MASK TO VOTE!!** Keep the poll workers safe.

While I'm at it: L'Shana Toyah and Happy 5781. Counselor out.



Mo's CMO MOMENTS

BY CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

MAUREEN MEHRTENS LEE, MS, BSN, RN



If there's one thing I know, it's that the pandemic isn't going away anytime soon. And that we'll never get people to agree on facts or to trust the science. I have been wearing a mask where required in stores (and limiting my trips) since March when this whole thing went down. We talked about common courtesy last issue. I'm not sure how being considerate to others for the common good is now being mocked by some who are calling it "living in fear", but it needs to stop....

Anytime I wear a mask over my NOSE AND MOUTH (the proper way!) in public and in the stores/Supermarkets/Pharmacies/Offices - I want you to know the following:

- I'm educated enough to know that I could be asymptomatic and still give you the virus.
- No, I don't "live in fear" of the virus; I just want to be part of the solution, not the problem.
- I don't feel like the "government controls me". I feel like I'm an adult contributing to the security in our society and I want to teach others the same.
- If we could all live with the consideration of others in mind, the whole world would be a much better place.
- Wearing a mask doesn't make me weak, scared, stupid or even "controlled". It makes me caring and responsible.
- When you think about your appearance, discomfort, or other people's opinion of you, imagine a loved one - a child, father, mother, grandparent, aunt, uncle or even a stranger - placed on a ventilator, alone without you or any family member allowed at their bedside.....Ask yourself if you could have helped them a little by wearing a mask.

Are you caring and responsible? Or selfish and uncaring?

Are you contributing to making the world a safer place or spreading ignorance and fear?

Make the world a better place by being in it and doing what's right for yourself and others.

Wear the mask. Wash your hands frequently. Maintain social distancing.

Live long and prosper.

Sick bay out.

Fanfic Vol. 3: Closing Time

By VADM Thomas Restivo

The all-too-familiar shimmering of transporter energy subsided as the last of the dignitaries departed the USS Katherine Johnson.

"Sir, the Admiral is back on the Stormbringer, and is ready to depart."

Little Guy nodded back to the tech in acknowledgement, and headed out of the transporter room, unpinning his dress top to breathe.

For the Commanding Officer, it was a draining experience, with all the pomp and circumstance with the recommissioning of the ship after its third major refit. He walked very slowly down the halls, calling out, "Computer, is everyone still at the Celebration?"

He heard a voice from behind. "Captain." It was the computer's voice.

He turned around, "No, no, it's Admiral..." He was startled by the appearance of a Black woman in mid-20th Century dress and glasses. It was the ship's avatar, a historical holographic recreation of Katherine Johnson. The avatar was installed by Binar technicians during a previous major refit at the guidance of the Vulcan captain at the time, who was quite impressed of the mathematical capabilities of "The Human Computer".

"No, sir," she replied, adjusting her glasses back up. "Your rank is Admiral. Your position is Captain, sir."

"So everyone keeps telling me. I have to get used to that..."

"Yes, sir. The Celebration has ended, and most of the Senior Staff is now in the Mess Hall. I believe they are watching early horror films."

"Thank you, Katherine. That's one of the nice things about holodecks, that you don't have to clean up the mess..." Little Guy paused. "I did say 'Computer', not 'Katherine'..." Usually, the avatar appeared by the proper name only.

"Yes, you did, sir. I was asked to bring this to you." It was a small box, hand-size. "The person said that you would know what it is, and wanted to give it to you as a gift."

Little Guy looked at the avatar skeptically. "It's not ticking, is it?"

"No, sir. It is not a bomb."

"Well, I'm going to head to bed. It's been a long day. Good night, Katherine."

"Good night, Captain." and with that, the avatar disappeared.

Little Guy found his way to his Captain's Quarters. "Computer, Golden Oldies." As he

listened to doo-wop, he got himself ready for bed. "Wow. Command." He looked at the memorabilia from his other postings, from the Christa McAuliffe. The IDIC. The Highlander and the days of the Dominion War. The Jurassic. The Rutledge. And finally, the Richthofen.

He plopped himself on the bed, looked at the box from all sides. He opened it up, and his eyes got big.

There was a gold coin, mid-19th Century, worth 20 US dollars. "Computer, the person who gave this to you, it was a woman, about yea high, brunette, about..." His Sicilian mannerisms and gesturing took over trying to estimate build.

Little Guy heard an audio representation of the avatar. "Visual representation on screen." He got up and looked at the screen on his desk, then chuckled. "She got a nose ring, and she dyed her hair!" It was his old CO on the Rutledge, who he served with in many other capacities for the Academy and during the Dominion War. He knew her when she was a snot-nose Ensign on a diplomatic detail and....

I even babble in my mind, he chuckled to himself.

He sighed as he looked at the coin. "It's been 14 years since I transferred from the Rutledge to the Richthofen after..."

Fourteen years. Matagralli. He closed the lid on the box and put it on the night stand.

"Computer, lights." The room went dark, but he did not sleep.



Fanfic Vol. 4: A Day on the KJ

By CMDR John A. Lee

“Commander Lee? Are you awake?”

I open one eye and see a thin dark-skinned woman standing at my bedside, wearing a modest 60’s-era dress and a button-down sweater. At first, I think I’m dreaming, but no, it really is Katherine Johnson. A hologram, for sure. We chose to have our computer represented by a “real” computer— and the namesake of our ship. The real Katherine Johnson lived and worked about 450 some-odd years ago. When I was just a child.

“I’m awake, Mrs. Johnson.” I look around and notice that the other side of the bed is neatly made. “Where is Maureen?”

“Lieutenant Commander Mehrtens is at her post in Sickbay.”

I notice a lump in the bed next to me under the covers. That would be Sissy, the Wonderdog, although I never really knew why she was called that, other than once saving a ship Captain’s life. Yes, she sometimes sleeps under our covers. Don’t tell anyone.

I forget my modesty and swing around to sit on the side of the bed, although I see that she is looking away out the window, her eyes fixed on some star. “Admiral Restivo is due back from his, ahem, ‘diplomatic’ mission to Risa. We will rendezvous with his shuttle at 1400 hours. We are currently on course, cruising at Warp 4. You are due on the bridge in one hour.”

Oh good, I think. Just enough time to get a sonic shower and talk the food replicator into making a Sunshine Skillet. Now that I’ve thoroughly defined the molecular composition of white gravy. Shee-ish.

“Are those new glasses, Mrs. Johnson?” I notice the 1960s-style pointy Cat’s eyes frames. She smiles warmly. “Why, yes! Do you like them?”

“They’re very snazzy. Thank you for waking me, dear.” Our computer never responds to Kathy, Kate or Kat. Only Mrs. Johnson or Katherine— or “Computer” if you’re new and don’t know the rules. But for some reason, she *does* allow me to call her dear. I think she likes me.

“Of course, Commander Lee. Have a wonderful day.” She disappears and I’m left with a snoring old dog and the perpetual background hum of a starship. I smack the lump under the sheets. “C’mon Booger-butt. Let’s go get you some breakfast!”

I walk onto the bridge and it’s very quiet. All the stations are crewed, of course, and the helm and navigation/ tactical seats are occupied. I plop down into the Captain’s chair. No “acting-Captain’s on the Bridge” or “Ten-hut!” To quote the famous 20th century comedian Rodney Dangerfield “I don’t get no respect.” You had to be there. And I was.

You see, I’m a little misplaced in time. I was born in 1940 in a small town in Tennessee, on

Planet Earth. I was good at math and science in school and because of the sweeping advances in aviation during the World War I grew up in, I fell in love with airplanes. That's A-I-R-P-L... I'm just kidding, of course. Airplanes still exist on earth and there are exact replicas of some of the warplanes I loved while I was growing up. Of course, now they're just for purists who enjoy antique vehicles. Some people still pilot old sailing ships as well. Instead of ejection seats, now you hit a button and you're beamed out to a safe place. And if the plane crashes, there is a network of tractor beams that will grab it and keep it out of someone's back yard. Very safe, but an expensive hobby. Most people just experience them on holodecks.

Anyway, at 16, I talked my Dad into letting me take flying lessons, and by the time I finished college and spent every dime and spare moment flying, I had a pilot's license and had joined the United States Air Force— a military organization few of you have probably even heard of.

I had always flown conventional fixed-wing airplanes, but the recruiter talked me into learning a different machine— a thing called a helicopter. It was a craft that, unlike the conventional airplane, had a rotary wing and could hover, take off and land straight up and even fly backwards. You know— like any shuttle. It was a completely different skill set. but I gave it a try. Turns out I was pretty good at it. Helicopters were used for a lot of different purposes, but the one I enjoyed most was the rescue role. Saving lives was very satisfying. Then I wandered into a little war called Vietnam. Suddenly I was plucking downed pilots out of jungles while getting shot at. Sometimes we couldn't get them out, but most of the time we did.



I came home to a nation that blamed the warriors and not the politicians who put us there. I wanted out of the Air Force entirely, but was talked into joining the Air Force Reserve. I hated to admit it, but I still loved flying and this was a way to keep doing it. But no one, and I mean no one, thanked me for my service or welcomed me home. I started drinking a lot and was still flying on weekends, though I'm not sure how I managed it. PTSD wasn't a term then. It was just having nightmares and waking up in cold sweats. My biggest problem is that I had lost all sense of fear. I walked in on a liquor store robbery one day. I marched up to the guy and snatched a loaded gun out of his hand and slapped him in the face. And somehow got put in jail for my trouble.

Eventually I got a grip on things and became a helicopter pilot for the California Highway Patrol. How I wound up in California and based in San Francisco is a long story. Along the way, my surviving family passed away and my one attempt at marriage failed miserably. So I was all alone. I worked long hours, played hard and drank too much. Some records list me as a homeless veteran. I actually was *not* that. I had a very nice home, but I said it one day to an interviewer, being flippant and didn't realize that everything you say in this day and age gets recorded by someone.

Which brings me to the night that changed my life— or ended it, depending on what records you believe. I was actually flying near the San Francisco Naval Base chasing reports of a UFO – unidentified flying object. Well, I found it and this one fired a disruptor beam at me and turned my engine into junk. I was able to crash land in a deserted section of dockyards near the Bay and get away from the helicopter before it exploded into a giant fireball.

The area was still fairly deserted, although I could hear sirens off in the distance. Help would be arriving, so I just needed to stay calm and not get into any trouble. Right? That lasted about 3 seconds before I saw bright lights and heard what I now know to be the sound of phasers. I dashed into an alley where I heard the sounds. There was a woman on the ground, groggy, but conscious and two unconscious men next to her. All were wearing some sort of strange uniform. There were two— well I guess then I described them as alien beings standing over her. I was surprised to see a small black dog chewing on the ankle of one of them. He was howling in pain and trying to kick the dog away. As the woman pulled herself up to a sitting position, one of them produced a bladed weapon and said in a gravelly voice, “Time for you to die, Captain!” Long story short, I pulled a 9mm service pistol out of my shoulder holster, and as he started to swing the blade, I shot him in the head. The other one fired a phaser at me, but it missed and blasted a hole in the bricks. I shot him too. As someone once told me, it doesn’t matter how fast you shoot or how many times you shoot if you don’t hit what you’re shooting at. Something to think about. And I still have that pistol. Sometimes I think it’s more reliable than a phaser.

The “Captain” got on her feet and just as I was approaching to see if she was alright, she tapped the Comm Badge on her chest and yelled, “Emergency beam-out.” Next thing I know, I’m standing on a transporter pad. The two men with her were apparently beamed directly to sickbay. She jumped up and dashed out, yelling “get us out of here and back to our own time period.” Before anyone had a chance to notice that my uniform looked different from theirs, and that I wasn’t going anywhere, the ship had already dashed toward the sun, broken away at the last second, and we were in the 24th century. *Then* they finally noticed, not me, but a small black dog sniffing around the transporter room. Apparently the transporter operator had gone a little overboard beaming any life form in a 10 meter area. Sissy, as I came to call her, had been trapped in the alley and got caught in the transporter beam with the rest of us.

The Captain had finished making her report about someone who had saved her life and killed two Enemy agents of the Federation, when they broke it to her that her benefactor had followed her 400 years into the future. Obviously she was not amused. I can’t tell you the name of the Captain or the name of the ship I was on. That stuff is all highly classified, and I’m starting to realize that some people were involved in things they weren’t supposed to be doing. Wouldn’t be the first time in Fleet, huh?

As you might well imagine, life was very different after that! It was determined from historical records that I was reported as killed in the helicopter crash, and that my remains must have wound up in the San Francisco Bay somehow, which explained why they didn’t find any in the wreckage. So the timeline was unchanged— at least that’s what they tried to tell themselves. They couldn’t bring me back for a number of reasons— the aliens they were doing battle with

were still there, although reluctant to make themselves known to the human race. And since I wasn't married and didn't have children, it was hoped that I never impacted the timeline, at least, not drastically. When we got to present day (for them!) nothing seemed changed, so it was a safe bet that neither I, nor Sissy was ever destined to rock the world— at least not then!

When we got to the year 2390, I soon became the guests of something called the Department of Temporal Investigations. I think I got to meet just about everyone who worked there in the year or so Sissy and I stayed with them. I actually had a brief affair with one member. I think she was curious about me and attracted, shall we say, to “older” men. I, on the other hand, had never before slept with a woman who was green, so it was a win-win for everyone!

I wasn't the only one misplaced in time. There were the three people that the Enterprise famously rescued from a sleeper ship of some kind. And I actually got to meet them, but really I didn't have any more in common with them than they had with each other. The woman who was a stay-at-home mom wound up marrying her great-great-great-great grandson (why not?), the business tycoon joined Fleet and became an Admiral, and the country western singer found out that Nashville hadn't changed all that much after all! Good for him.

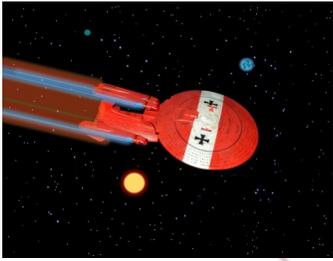
After another year of “technology and culture training”, as it was called, I was finally released into society on Earth. It took a while to get caught up, and I was constantly having to learn a whole new way of living. It took a lot of getting used to the idea that I could jump in a transporter and go anywhere in the world in seconds. It was suggested that since I was from a past Century, I might make a good history teacher. And I did try that for a while. But everyone expected me to know everything from the time I lived in. I was not the trivia expert they wanted me to be. I lived in the 20th and 21st Century, but jeez— I didn't know *everything* that went on.

So I was permitted to join STARFLEET, but I couldn't get assigned to a ship because I didn't have the technical skills. I did good just to master a food replicator. I was lonely and frustrated and sort of an outcast in a world that had lost its fascination with the novelty of a time-traveler. I worked at Star Fleet Academy, but basically had a “desk job.” Sissy and I were comfortable, but not happy. Well, *she* was happy....as long as she was with me.

Then I met Maureen. Yeah, I know— everybody calls her “Mo” but me. Turns out that even now they have online dating and somehow we managed to find each other. She was Chief Medical Officer aboard the USS Richthofen— an Entente-Class Dreadnought that had been through a number of battles and was truly designed from the keel-up as a warship. And it was bright red with a wide white stripe and two “iron crosses” on the primary hull. Long story about that...

Anyway, back to Maureen. She turned out to truly be the love of my life, and she brought me on board and introduced me to a few of her shipmates. She rescued me (and Sissy, don't forget her!) in every sense of the word. She pulled some strings and got me assigned to a huge ship with a huge crew. I advanced in rank pretty quickly and became Communications Chief before long. I wasn't really the ship historian, but I *was* the ranking expert on Baron Von Richthofen, and the guy who had to give a World War 1 history lesson when we were

accused of having Nazi Germany emblems on our ship. Not sure anybody ever truly believed me, but I told the truth.



So now Maureen and I are married, and I actually outrank her, for what *that's* worth. The Richthofen got decommissioned and yay! No more red ship to have to explain away. Most of the crew transferred to a ship called the Banneker, but I was a little tired of huge vessels (this one was Galaxy-class) and about that time, our friends Tom and Geoff and Liz started talking about finding a small ship we couldn't possibly get lost on. Turns out that Tom knew where all the bodies were buried, pulled a lot of strings, and we got our own ship!

I had spent my life in the 20th and 21st century blissfully unaware of Katherine Johnson and her contribution to early space exploration on Earth, but saw a movie called "Hidden Figures" which showcased her achievements, despite racial and gender bias that's almost impossible for anyone to believe in this age. So when I explained why I wanted the ship named after her, everyone was on board. We even found documentaries of her speaking and developed a hologram for our computer. So we talk to her every day, even though she's been deceased for 380 years. And I somehow managed to become a First Officer. Second in command of a starship! With real warp engines and a crew and everything! Who'd a thunk?

So enough history— back to the present. It's been a quiet day on the KJ. Even though Starfleet has been dramatized to the point where everyone thinks we spend every waking minute fighting off hostile enemies and dodging galactic anomalies that constantly seek to kill us, it's really not like that. Yes we have weapons on board and we occasionally have to use them, and yes, we do encounter things that prove deadly. However, for the most part, we get to explore interesting (actually fascinating) phenomena and usually do it without anyone or anything trying to destroy us.

"Commander, we are in sensor range of the Shuttle *Christine Darden*. Admiral Restivo is hailing us. Should I put him on screen?" I stare at the back of the Ensign's head in front of me for a second. She's new and I can't remember her name. "Well, yes Ensign. He *is* our Commanding Officer."

Little C/O Guy replaces the star field on the viewer. "Any catastrophes while I was gone?"

"Yes" I reply. "A dozen or so, but I was able to save the ship every time. You can start working on my commendations when you get here."

"I brought you and Mo a present!" He holds up a small Horga'hn, a Risan symbol of sexual fertility. "It's called a.."

"Yes, I know what it is. I'm sure we'll put it to great use. You want us to lock on to you and bring you in?"

"Nah. Just open the bay doors and I'll bring it in manually. I need the practice."

"Fine," I reply. "Just remember, we don't have arresting gear in *this* hangar bay."

“No problem! Now, if I can just remember where that slow-y down control and brake-y thing is...” Suddenly his voice lowers and he intones “Open the pod bay doors, HAL...”

I grimace at his reference to the old sci-fi movie “2001 A Space Odyssey.” He’s always testing me on old movies and songs from my day. Not sure when he finds time to watch them all. I’m tempted to say “*I’m afraid I can’t do that, Dave*” but the Ensign is already confused enough about the pod bay doors, so I just say “Welcome aboard, Admiral.”

Ensign Lefler is not getting all the jokes, but she figures out what to do. “Main Shuttle Bay depressurized. Doors open”, she says formally. I finally remember her name now. Her mother once served with the infamous Wesley Crusher on the Enterprise. She’s a Captain of her own ship now. And Mr. Crusher— well, that’s another story. “The *Christine Darden* is on board. Shuttle bay is secured.”

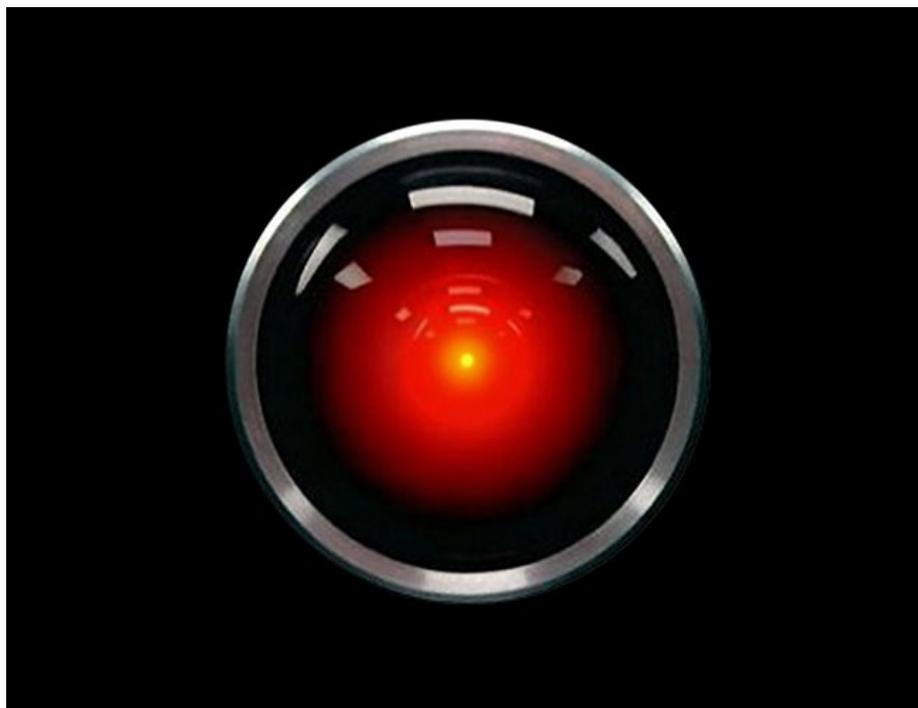
“What’s our next assignment, Ensign?”

“Mapping spatial anomalies in the Loki system, Commander.”

“Well, set a course. Warp 3 and engage when you’re ready.” My last order for the day. Hopefully.

“Yes, Sir!” She smiles sweetly, and soon the stars blur for a second and we’re rocketing through space. How many miles per second? Not sure. Katherine could tell me, though.

Another 2 hours on my shift, then I can spend some time on the holodeck. Maybe I’ll go flying in a Stearman Biplane. Or maybe I’ll just play drums for a while. I may sit in with the Beatles. You know – that famous boy band from the 1960s? They were right up there with the Monkees and the Archies. You know. The Giants....





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