Federation

HoloSHIP

Type: HoloSHIP

Launched: 2370s

Length: 247 meters

Defenses: Cloaking Device
Stand assembly:

Hook the stand over the back of the ship.

Final position
The Federation holoship was essentially an enormous flying holodeck. The interior featured a cavernous chamber filled with various technologies that could simulate almost any environment, so that it appeared to a user as indistinguishable from reality.

The holoship was 247 meters long, and shaped similarly to a brick. A small bridge module was located at the front of the vessel, and warp nacelles were positioned within the main body. It was designed for interstellar travel and was capable of warp speeds. It could enter a planet’s atmosphere and land on the surface. It was also equipped with 14 long-range transporters and a cloaking device, meaning that the entire ship could be hidden from view.

VAST CHAMBER
Most of the interior volume of the vessel was given over to the holodeck and the associated support systems to make it work. Holodecks on Starfleet ships were normally used for recreational purposes by just one person at a time, or at most a handful of users. The holoship could accommodate at least 200 people at the same time, meaning it could simulate various environments simultaneously. This required a holodeck several times the size of even the largest ones installed on Starfleet ships. It also needed enormous computer processing power to keep up with the demands of all the users.

In 2375, a Federation holoship was utilized by Vice Admiral Matthew Dougherty and the Son’a to secretly resettle 600 Ba’ku inhabitants from their home planet. Ru’afo, the leader of the Son’a, and Vice Admiral Dougherty were in league together in a nefarious plot to relocate the Ba’ku from their home planet. They planned to program a Federation holoship with an exact replica of the Ba’ku village, and then beam the inhabitants inside so they could move them to another world without their knowledge.
It was almost certainly Vice Admiral Dougherty who acquired the Federation holoship in order to relocate the Ba’ku. He knew that it was immoral to remove a peaceful race from their planet against their will. He felt justified because the metaphasic radiation would benefit billions of lives for the small price of moving just a few hundred Ba’ku. He received his just deserts when Ru’afo killed him by stretching his face in one of the Son’a’s surgical chairs.

This was because they wanted to collect the metaphasic radiation from the rings of the Ba’ku planet, as it had rejuvenating qualities on most humanoid species, allowing injuries and diseases to be cured, as well as significantly prolonging life. Unfortunately, the process by which this metaphasic radiation was collected would leave the planet uninhabitable. Dougherty and Ru’afo, the leader of the Son’a, therefore came up with a plan to transport the Ba’ku people to an exact recreation of their home aboard the holoship. They would then take them to a new planet without them realizing that they had been moved.

Their plan was discovered when Lt. Commander Data came across the holoship, which was cloaked and hidden at the bottom of a lake on the Ba’ku planet. After Data operated a dam to drain some of the water, the clear outline of a cloaked ship, which he identified as Federation in origin, became visible.

Taking a rowboat out to the holoship for further investigation, Data and Captain Picard opened a hatch and found an incomplete holographic recreation of the Ba’ku village inside. They were then attacked by a Son’a officer with a plasma rifle, but after a brief exchange of fire he was neutralized. Picard ordered the computer to end the program and decloak the vessel.

OUTWITTING RU’AFO

The holoship was later brought back into orbit of the Ba’ku planet by Lt. Commander Worf, where it was used to contain Ru’afo and his command crew in an exact replica of their Son’a ship’s bridge. Ru’afo was on the point of initiating the Son’a Collector, where he would have collected the metaphasic radiation from the rings of the Ba’ku planet, while there were still people on the planet.

In order to stop him, Data used the Captain’s Yacht to attack the Son’a flagship in the hope of getting them to reset their shield harmonics, and in that brief window the entire bridge crew was transported to the holoship.

Unaware of what had just happened, they believed that the Collector was capturing the metaphasic radiation. Determined to stop him, Picard also beamed over to the Collector, where he managed to activate its self-destruct sequence. He was then transported to safety by the U.S.S. Enterprise NCC-1701-E just seconds before the Collector exploded with Ru’afo still on board.

Picard and Data found a highly-detailed simulation of the Ba’ku village inside the ship. They were also attacked by a Son’a officer, and once they had neutralized him, Picard ordered the ship to decloak.

DATA FEED

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The conspiracy to relocate the Ba’ku using a Federation holoship was first uncovered by Data. He was part of the observation team that was secretly monitoring the Ba’ku when he followed a child into the hills surrounding their village. There, he came upon the holoship, but he was shot by a member of the Son’a, which damaged some of the memory engrams in his neural net. This caused Data to lose his memory and he entered a ‘fail-safe’ mode in which his moral and ethical subroutines took over, and he tried to protect the Ba’ku from the Starfleet and Son’a observation team who were spying on them. In retracing Data’s steps before he lost his memory, the android and Captain Picard discovered the holoship in the lake. It had remained hidden because not only was it cloaked, but the heavy deposits of kelbonite in the surrounding hills were limiting the functions of sensors. Nevertheless, Data picked up strong neutrino levels emanating from the lake on his tricorder. This led him to walk underwater along the lakebed where he discovered the hidden holoship.

The Federation holoship was fitted with a cloaking device, even though this was a violation of the Treaty of Algeron. This pact between the Federation and the Romulans was made in 2311, which expressly prohibited the development or use of cloaking technology by the Federation.

Holodecks were introduced on Starfleet ships in the latter half of the 24th century. The U.S.S. Enterprise-D had at least seven holodecks, while the U.S.S. Voyager had up to ten.
The holoship went through numerous changes as John Eaves searched for a design that would meet with the producers' approval. As a concept artist on STAR TREK: INSURRECTION, John Eaves really had his work cut out. He was responsible for designing all of the Son'a vessels and all of the Federation ships, including the Captain’s Yacht, a U.S.S. Enterprise NCC-1701-E shuttle and a scout ship. The design that really caused him the most problems, however, was the Federation holoship.

There had never been such a specialized Federation ship before in all the years of STAR TREK, and it caused Eaves some serious head scratching to know where to begin.

"The holoship went through a lot of changes," said Eaves. "Originally it was a traditional Federation design, so I started out with a saucer section. The way the (Ba’ku) village was designed, it lent itself well to that shape – a saucer would be the best place to encase that holodeck image."

Eaves’ first illustration of the holoship was the most conventional and featured a saucer section and nacelles, clearly indicating that it was Federation in design. The producers were not so keen on this direction, however, and they asked for something "more industrial."

"They wanted to go with something that was more freighter-looking," said Eaves. "So it went through another stage where it looked like a Guppy, one of those old 1960s cargo planes. That was my favorite one."

The producers still felt that this was too traditional and not quite right, so Eaves went back to the drawing board again. "They felt that the revised holoship still looked too ‘starshippy,’" said Eaves. "So it went through another stage where it looked like a Guppy, one of those old 1960s cargo planes. That was my favorite one."

In John Eaves’ first illustration, the design of the holoship closely resembled Starfleet's typical architecture and was obviously a Federation vessel. As he points out, the saucer section was the logical shape to contain the hologram of the Ba’ku village.
"I then moved onto a ‘flying brick’ design. The producers wanted something like an oil tanker. I bevelled the sides, and put the cockpit at the very back of the ship, just like a tanker."

BUILDING THE CG MODEL

This design was approved and the illustrations were sent off to the visual effects house Blue Sky/VIFX so the CG model could be built. The upper half of the holoship was the only part that would be visible in the lake for the scenes shot on the Ba’ku planet, so a physical 30-inch scanning model of the top half was constructed. This helped save time as it meant the CG artists would be spared the task of building a wire-frame model freehand.

It was only when the CG model had been completed that they realized there had been an error. Eaves had drawn the holoship with the bridge module at the rear of the ship, much like it is on modern-day oil tankers. Unfortunately, the design had been signed off in the belief that what they thought was the front of the vessel was in fact the rear — in other words, what was already a tight schedule. It was therefore decided to keep the bridge at the front, although Eaves did make some changes to the command center to make it blend in more seamlessly to the overall structure. As it transpired, there simply was not enough time to take in Eaves’ alterations, and as a consequence what was intended to be the impulse engines ended up on the front of the vessel.

The digital files were then handed over to another visual effects house, Santa Barbara Studios. They constructed the missing half of the ship for its scenes in space, meaning that the holoship was one of the very few models that was built by two companies.

Once it was realized that the holoship had been built with the bridge at the front, Eaves went back to make a few alterations. He blended in the bridge module at the front more organically, and altered the position of the nacelles. In the end, there was not enough time to make all these changes to the CG model.
Writing a screenplay for a movie is hard – very hard. Writing a screenplay for a STAR TREK movie is harder still. Not only do you have to come up with an action-packed plotline that is also cerebral and thought-provoking, but it also has to meet with the approval of a whole bunch of important executives at the film studio. All this and more has to be achieved, and that’s before the critics and the legions of fans see it and have their say. Really knowing STAR TREK and the characters is a must for any screenwriter who takes on the task. This is why executive producer Rick Berman asked Michael Piller if he would be up for the challenge. There really could not have been anyone more qualified for the job. Piller had been writing for THE NEXT GENERATION since the third season, had gone on to be executive producer, and then co-created both DEEP SPACE NINE and VOYAGER.

INITIAL IDEAS

Beginning in March 1997, nearly two years before STAR TREK: INSURRECTION was released, Piller began work. The previous film, STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT, had been a fantastic success, but it had been quite dark. Piller’s first thought was that they could not out-Borg the Borg. In other words, it would be almost impossible to come up with villains who could pose more of a threat. Instead, Piller wanted to play to STAR TREK’s other strengths. He wanted to write a movie that was more in the vein of STAR TREK: THE VOYAGE HOME – one that was warm and funny, and made use of the main characters’ unique qualities.

Over the next months, Piller wrote several treatments – these are pretty detailed 10-25 page summations of the story. There’s not room to go into detail on all his ideas here, but they did share some common plot points. Piller used Joseph Conrad’s novel ‘Heart of Darkness’ as inspiration. The Enterprise crew would venture, not up a river as in the book, but into a mysterious region of space where they had been sent to look for an old Starfleet Academy friend of Picard’s named Duffy. He had been attacking Romulan ships, but no one knew why.

Michael Piller was asked by Rick Berman to write the ninth STAR TREK film, and he was determined to get it right no matter how long it took.
In early versions of the story, the Romulans were the main villains. Later, they were replaced by the Son’i, and they eventually became the Son’i. They operated highly advanced ships with enormously powerful weapons.

Once in this area of space, the crew experience all manner of weird happenings, as well as starting to behave oddly themselves. Eventually, they find Duffy and he looks exactly the same as he did at the Academy. We learn that the planet is hiding some kind of ‘fountain of youth,’ and he is trying to protect it and the inhabitants.

**BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD**

While all these treatments had merit, it was felt that they were just too political and not quite working. Piller then came up with another idea. What if it isn’t Duffy that Picard is asked to find, but Data? What if Starfleet asks Picard to kill Data? That would have loads of potential.

Piller then wrote another treatment in which Data fits the role of the mad Colonel Kurth from Conrad’s ‘Heart of Darkness.’ He “goes native” when he suffers some kind of malfunction, but he is still ‘healthy’ enough to protect a small alien culture. In act one, Picard goes up the river and finds Data, kills Data in act two, and then in the third discovers that he has killed his friend to cover up a conspiracy. Outraged, Picard resigns his commission and takes Data’s place on the planet. Finally, because Data is an android, he is reactivated in time to help save the Federation from its alliance with the Romulans.

This treatment was also rejected, but it did lay many of the foundations for the final script. Piller continued to work on the story and he decided to lose the Romulans as the main villains. Instead, there were some new antagonists, originally called the Son I, whose of course later became the Son’a. The story was coming together, but with pre-production for the movie now only weeks away, Piller was still working on it. He introduced some warm, funny and even touching aspects that arose from the crew being exposed to this “fountain of youth.” Gerald La Forge regrets his sight and witnesses a beautiful sunset. Worf shaves off his beard and rekindles his romance with Troi, and Worf has to explain that the pock on his face is a Klingon pimple.

By November 1997, with the collaboration of Berman and input from director Jonathan Frakes and many others, most of the elements of the story were in place, but they still had not come up with a title. Many alternatives were tried, including ‘Stardust,’ ‘Regeneration,’ ‘Prime Directive,’ ‘The Betrayal,’ ‘Breach of Promise,’ ‘Dereliction of Duty,’ ‘The Disbandment,’ ‘High Treason,’ ‘The Enemy Within,’ ‘The Resignation,’ ‘Sacred Honor’ and ‘Apocalypse.’ None of them seemed to work.

**FINAL CHANGES**

Piller continued to work on and refine the screenplay. He found that he had to take some elements out, as the movie was in danger of going over budget. He had actually scripted a sequence with flying motorcycles as Picard and his fellow officers tried to evade Son’a troops, who were abducting the Ba’ku. In the end, the motorcycles were replaced by automated drones, capable of firing isolinear tags into the Ba’ku so transporters could beam them to a Son’a ship.

Piller also wrote a scene in which an exhausted Dr. Crusher takes a rejuvenating mud bath in a mineral-rich cavern until she sees a llama-like animal urinating in the mud. This was cut from the script after Berman commented to his wife, “I think Michael’s starting to lose it. He wrote a scene today in which a llama pees on Beverly Crusher.”

But Piller did hold it together, despite all the false starts and the problems of tying together all the elements that they wanted to include, and he finished the screenplay. Some have commented that it was too long an extended episode of the series and there wasn’t wall-to-wall action. Piller was going for a different direction, though. He wanted to write a movie that was warm and funny. One that was uplifting and optimistic in the Gene Roddenberry tradition. He wanted to explore the intellectual and moral leadership of Picard, the qualities that he felt set him apart from other heroes. He wanted to show the crew as a family that love and support one another. In the end, he wanted to engage the heart and mind, and make the audience feel something too. There’s no doubt that he achieved those goals.

The only thing left to do was come up with a title for the movie. A friend of Piller’s named Alan Spencer, who being given lots of moral support, suggested ‘Insurrection.’ As it happened, someone else independently came up with the same title. They had a winner – STAR TREK: INSURRECTION.

**AN ENDING WAS FILMED**

An ending was filmed in which Worf is transformed with metastatic particles that caused him to age in reverse until he disappeared all together. It was felt that it was not clear what had happened to him, so another ending was written and filmed.

**THE SPACES AROUND THE BA’KU PLANET**

Once in this area of space, the crew experience all manner of weird happenings, as well as starting to behave oddly themselves. Eventually, they find Duffy and he looks exactly the same as he did at the Academy. We learn that the planet is hiding some kind of ‘fountain of youth,’ and he is trying to protect it and the inhabitants.

The space around the Ba’ku planet had a ‘fountain of youth’ quality, which rejuvenated the crew. This led to some funny and poignant moments, such as the rekindling of the relationship between Riker and Troi.

**THE ONLY THING LEFT TO DO WAS COME UP WITH A TITLE FOR THE MOVIE.**
ON SCREEN

TRIVIA
The use of the Federation holoship to relocate the Ba’ku to another planet without their knowledge may have been inspired by the STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION season seven episode ‘Homeward.’ This saw the Boraalans (pictured below) being transported to a holodeck recreation of their world aboard the U.S.S. Enterprise NCC-1701-D and then being resettled on another world. This pre-warp civilization was almost wiped out when the atmosphere of their planet was destroyed. Dr. Nikolai Rozhenko, Worf’s adoptive father, tricked Captain Picard into saving them, even though it went against the Prime Directive.

The scenes of the holoship on the Ba’ku planet were filmed at Convict Lake in the Sherwin Range of the Sierra Nevada in California. The temperature of the water the day that Brent Spiner as Data walked into it was a numbing 5°C. Understandably, Spiner wanted to make sure that he got this scene right in one take. As it happened, only stuntman Brian J. Williams’ walk into the lake was used in the final cut of the movie.

The only other purpose-built holoship seen in STAR TREK was the one built by the Hirogen with the help of Voyager’s crew, so they could hunt holographic prey instead of actually killing other species.

KEY APPEARANCES
STAR TREK: INSURRECTION
A Federation-Son’a survey team is secretly observing the Ba’ku when they are attacked by their colleague Lt. Commander Data. Captain Picard is contacted by Vice Admiral Dougherty and asked how they can shut down Data. Wanting to find out for himself what has happened, Picard orders his crew to the Ba’ku planet.

After eventually capturing Data, they discover that he had been hit by a blast from a Son’a weapon that damaged his memory engrams. They retrace Data’s last steps before he was injured and it leads them to a lake. Tricorder readings indicate elevated neutrino emissions, and Data follows the source to a cloaked Federation holoship. It becomes clear that the holoship was going to be used to relocate the Ba’ku to another planet without their knowledge.

When confronted with these findings, Dougherty confesses the truth. They need to move the Ba’ku before they can tap the metaphasic radiation that is being emitted by the planet’s rings, as it has regenerative properties on all life forms. Dougherty orders Picard to leave, but he is outraged by this violation of the Prime Directive and is prepared to risk his crew, career and his ship to protect the Ba’ku.

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FEDERATION HOLOSHIP

GORN STARSHIP

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