VULCAN
SURVEY SHIP (1957)

TYPE: SURVEY SHIP
IN USE: 20th CENTURY
CREW: FOUR
LENGTH: 24 METERS
VULCAN SURVEY SHIP

OPERATED BY:
VULCAN SCIENCE DIRECTORATE

TYPE:
SURVEY SHIP

IN OPERATION:
20th CENTURY

LENGTH:
24 METERS (APPROX.)

CREW:
FOUR

MAX SPEED:
WARP 4.5

DESTROYED:
1957

Stand assembly:
Attach the stand to the back of the wings.

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A Vulcan survey ship was a type of starship operated by the Vulcan Science Directorate in the 20th century. It was mainly used to scout unexplored areas of space or investigate unusual readings received from planets or spatial phenomena. If what was found was of interest to the Vulcans, a survey ship could then make a more thorough scientific study of what had been discovered.

The main body of the Vulcan survey ship was zepplin-shaped, while various curved fins were attached to its rear. It was roughly 25 meters in length and was normally operated by a crew of four. Its maximum speed was somewhere between warp 4 and warp 5.

In the 20th century, Vulcans used small survey ships to conduct scans and gather information on planets. The survey ship also had impulse engines for travel around planetary systems, and its aerodynamic shape and various fins meant it was suitable for atmospheric flight. Landing pads allowed it to touch down on planetary surfaces. The main bridge of the survey ship was on top of the vessel towards the front, and although small and fairly cramped, there was enough room for all four crew members to work side-by-side. There appeared to be only one chair on the bridge, and most of the consoles and scanning workstations were operated from a standing position.

LONG-TERM MISSIONS
Survey ships were often sent on missions that could take weeks to complete, and this meant that they were equipped with crew quarters where individuals could rest and sleep. There also must have been some type of food replicator technology on board, as although there were emergency ration packs sealed in individual bags, they could only sustain the crew for about a week.

A Vulcan survey ship was sent to Earth in October 1957 after the Vulcans detected the launch of Sputnik 1, Earth’s first artificial satellite. The Vulcan crew consisted of a captain, his second-in-command T’Mir, who was T’Pol’s great-grandmother, Stron, a warp field engineer and Mestral, who was the youngest and most junior member of the ship.

During their third week of making statistical scans of Earth and gathering information about humanity from high orbit, their ship’s impulse manifold developed a fault. The vessel crash-landed on Earth after developing a fault with its impulse manifold.

In 1957, a Vulcan survey ship was sent to study Earth after scans detected Sputnik 1, Earth's first artificial satellite. The crew of the Vulcan ship, which included T’Pol’s great-grandmother, performed statistical scans from high orbit. The vessel crash-landed on Earth after developing a fault with its impulse manifold. The survey ship also had impulse engines for travel around planetary systems, and its aerodynamic shape and various fins meant it was suitable for atmospheric flight. Landing pads allowed it to touch down on planetary surfaces. The main bridge of the survey ship was on top of the vessel towards the front, and although small and fairly cramped, there was enough room for all four crew members to work side-by-side. There appeared to be only one chair on the bridge, and most of the consoles and scanning workstations were operated from a standing position.

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The Vulcans had landed on Earth in 1957 to study the planet's environment. However, during their mission, the vulcan survey ship’s impulse manifold developed a fault. This caused the refusion pressure to drop and the ship’s orbit began to decay. The crew tried everything to fix it, but in the end they had no choice but to attempt an emergency landing on Earth.

Despite deploying the survey ship’s stabilizers, their landing vector was too steep and the Vulcans crash-landed in an isolated area of North America. The impact wrecked the ship, causing fires to break out throughout its systems and making repairs impossible. The captain was killed in the crash, while the other crew members were lucky to escape with their lives.

The one fortunate aspect of the disaster was that they landed in such a remote area that they did not attract the attentions of the indigenous population. Once the survivors had regained their bearings, they realized that the ship’s subspace transceiver had been damaged and they were unsure if their distress call had been transmitted.

REAL FIRST CONTACT

T’Mir decided that they should remain in the woods and await rescue. They consumed their rations within a week, but after another five days without food, they reluctantly decided to venture into the nearest town, which turned out to be Carbon Creek, a small mining town in Pennsylvania.

Over the following weeks, the three Vulcans took menial jobs and integrated themselves with the local community. Stron became a plumber, T’Mir took work in the local tavern, and Mestral became a coal miner. He was by far the most enthusiastic when it came to interacting with humans.

After three months of living in Carbon Creek, the Vulcans thought they were going to have to live there forever, but then they were contacted by Captain Tellus of the Vulcan survey vessel D’Vahl. He explained that their distress signal had been picked up by a Tellarite freighter, but it took them some time to report it to the Vulcan High Council.

When it came time to leave Earth, Mestral decided he wanted to stay. He wanted to study humans up close, as they stood on the verge of countless social and technological advancements. T’Mir and Stron returned to Vulcan, but Mestral remained on Earth presumably for the rest of life. This could have been for 150 years or more, which would have meant that he was still there when official ‘first contact’ between the Vulcans and Zefram Cochrane happened in 2063.

DATA FEED

At first, T’Mir had little regard for humanity. She believed that they were on the brink of self-annihilation because they seemed to revel in violence. But as time went by, T’Mir saw more potential in humans, and she became fond of the tavern’s owner, Maggie, and her son Jack. Before she left Earth, T’Mir sold some Velcro, which she took from her crashed survey ship, to a local businessman. She gave the proceeds to Maggie, so she could afford to send Jack to college.
VULCANS ON EARTH

Of the three surviving crew members of the Vulcan survey ship, Stron had the most trouble adapting to Earth and did not enjoy spending time around humans. He especially did not appreciate humans likening him to Moe out of “The Three Stooges” because of his hairstyle. T’Mir too had a low opinion of humanity, certainly at first, although she was partially won around by the time she left.

Mestral, the youngest of the Vulcan crew, had a strong fascination for humanity, however. He integrated into the local culture, liked to watch TV and even went with tavern owner Maggie to a baseball game. When some of his fellow miners became trapped underground, he was determined to help his “friends,” even though T’Mir and Stron were much more reluctant to get involved. Mestral used a Vulcan particle weapon, which he retrieved from an armory case aboard the crashed survey ship, to blast a hole through the rock in order to rescue all 12 miners.

Mestral became so engrossed in humanity that he did not want to leave. T’Mir knew that the Vulcan High Command would never allow him to stay, so she told their rescuers that Mestral died in the crash along with their captain, and that they had burnt the bodies. T’Pol presumed that Mestral remained on Earth for the rest of his life, without his true identity ever coming to light.

VULCANS ON EARTH

In reality, Velcro was not a Vulcan invention, but was first made by Swiss engineer George de Mestral in 1955, two years before the events depicted in “Carbon Creek.” De Mestral initially made Velcro out of cotton, but when this wore out too quickly, he discovered that nylon worked much better. It was this Swiss inventor that also gave the Vulcan character of Mestral his name.

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Leading into Season Two of ENTERPRISE, illustrator John Eaves was asked to come up with a design for a Vulcan ship for the episode ‘Carbon Creek.’ At this point, the Vulcans really did not have that many ships in the STAR TREK library, but there had been the Surak-class vessel designed by Doug Drexler that featured in the Season One episode ‘Breaking the Ice.’

“Doug Drexler designed the first Vulcan ship on ENTERPRISE,” said Eaves. “He set the architectural tone for the Vulcans, so I played off what he had done. I just followed his opened-ring starship, so it would all tie together. The first idea I had came from a football shape cut open like a sandal. The producers liked that idea immediately, so I drew up a couple of color sketches.”

In order to gauge a sense of scale of the ship, Eaves was encouraged to design another larger Vulcan vessel, and this led to a further breakthrough. “I also had this piggyback idea of two ships locked together, which came from the US Navy,” Eaves. “There was this nuclear submarine called the USS Dallas that featured in the film ‘The Hunt for Red October.’ On occasion, this submarine had a small Deep Sea Rescue Vehicle docked onto it for rescue missions. I thought it would be pretty cool to do something similar on a starship, and the warp ring of a Vulcan ship lent itself to having a little shuttle parked in there – the football-shaped shuttle I had designed earlier.

MECHANICAL MOVEMENT

“I also thought it would be a nifty idea if the warp ring folded up and down mechanically. Since we were now creating CG ships, I thought it wouldn’t be difficult for them to animate this, whereas before when they had to make physical models it would be hard to rig. I also thought having a mechanical moving ring made it look more retro and this tied in with the fact that it was supposed to be from the 20th century.

“The only problem I had with this design was that when it was shown to one producer, the same one who had flipped the direction of Ru’afo’s flagship from STAR TREK: INSURRECTION, he started looking at it with a confused look on his face. I quickly ran over and drew a big forward arrow on it to indicate its direction of travel so there wouldn’t be any similar misunderstandings.”

At this stage, the larger Vulcan ship was known as a D’Vahl transport and Eaves drew up an illustration of it with the smaller survey ship docked inside its warp ring. The producers loved this design, but they decided not to use them for the survey ship and the D’Vahl-type vessel in ‘Carbon Creek.’ Instead, they thought the design was so good that they decided to use it for the 22nd-century D’Kyr-type vessel that was first seen in the Season Two opener ‘Shockwave, Part II’ and would go on to appear in several more episodes.

UNCLEAR ORIGINS

Sixteen years after ‘Carbon Creek’ was first broadcast no one can quite remember where the design for the Vulcan survey ship that did appear in the episode first came from. The popular opinion seems to be that lead CG artist Pierre Drolet from Eden FX adapted Eaves’ design for the football-shaped survey shuttle. Drolet certainly seems to have used it for inspiration, but the final design did not feature an opened-ring look, but was more of a conventional shuttle shape, which perhaps better reflected a 20th-century design.

John Eaves designed such great Vulcan ships for ‘Carbon Creek’ that it was decided it would be a waste to use them just for one episode.

Eaves was also asked to come up with a larger Vulcan ship known as the D’Vahl for ‘Carbon Creek,’ and he thought it would be a clever idea if the smaller survey ship docked inside its warp ring. The producers loved this concept so much that they decided to use it for a totally different Vulcan ship – the D’Kyr-type – which would feature in many more episodes.
Behind the Scenes

The Writers on Enterprise’s Second Season

Executive producers and co-creators Rick Berman and Brannon Braga were feeling the pressure going into Season Two of Enterprise. The show’s pilot, ‘Broken Bow’, had been an absolute success in most people’s eyes, but much of the rest of the season didn’t live up to the promise of the feature-length debut episode. The ratings, while very good by today’s standards, were not up to what they had expected and they were aware that they had to turn things round. What many people forget, however, is that Enterprise would not been given this kind of time, whether through franchise fatigue or expectations that were too high.

Enterprise launched in 2001 when Star Trek fans for the first time could instantly make their views known on the internet through message boards and blogs. The show came in for criticism for being too derivative and rehashing plots and themes that had already been seen in earlier incarnations of the franchise.

Inundated with Work
Braga felt some of the criticism was valid and knew he had to shake things up. The problem was that he was snowed under with work. He had hired a bunch of writers, who he knew were creative and talented, but had not written on a sci-fi show like Star Trek before. It required a particular skill-set that took time to learn and they were thrown in at the deep end.

The upshot was that Braga had to do at least some rewriting on all 26 episodes of the first season, and some of them required substantial rewrites. On top of this, he had to break the next episode, deal with set issues and attend production meetings. He was absolutely overwhelmed with work and found himself in the midst of the most difficult Star Trek season he’d ever experienced.

The consequence of all this was that he didn’t have the time to be doing what he really should have been doing as showrunner and that was looking ahead to story development rather than being mired in rewrites.

When Berman and Braga first took their idea of Enterprise to the studio, they wanted to employ serialized storytelling. The studio, however, did not want that and insisted on standalone episodes where the plot was tied up in an hour of television. Braga felt that this demand to do more of the same kind of storytelling was stifling them creatively, but he battled through. Going into Season Two, Braga knew he had to change things and many of the writers were not rehired. What he really needed was a trusted lieutenant or a core group of writers like they had on The Next Generation or Voyager, who could keep the storytelling consistently high, but he just did not have that kind of backup.

Enterprise got off to a tremendous start with ‘Broken Bow’ when a Klingon pilot crash-landed in a corn field in Oklahoma. This first episode was ambitious and full of action, but the rest of Season One had trouble living up to its promise and did not feel as fresh and exciting as many had hoped.

A perfect storm of writers unfamiliar with Star Trek, constant rewrites and pressure from the network forced Rick Berman and Brannon Braga to make major changes in their approach to Season Two.
Chris Black decided to join ENTERPRISE after he was told that it would be like ‘The Right Stuff’ in space. He finally got to explore this notion in Season Two when he worked on the teleplay for ‘First Flight,’ which saw the crew explore the boundaries and putting their lives on the line. He was told that it would be a fresh way of telling a story, which Braga was delighted with, and the episode was nominated for a Hugo Award.

‘Carbon Creek,’ in which the Vulcans were first seen visiting Earth in the 1960s, introduced a whole new idea of how to tell the story. It wasn’t until the fourth season, however, that there was a perfect opportunity to delve into this idea. Braga felt that it was too off concept to do in Season Two. It was an allegory for AIDS, in which the Vulcans discovered that T’Pol had Pa’nar Syndrome, a neurological disease caused by a mind-meld, which at the time her people considered a disgusting practice. The idea had come to Braga after he attended a seminar that the network had for their showrunners about AIDS. He was immediately struck by the idea of digging a little bit into the canon of what we thought was the first time Vulcans had come to Earth, only to find that in fact it was not the first time they had visited Earth."

PERFECT ALLEGORY

Braga also felt that “Stigma” was a great episode from Season Two. It was an allegory for AIDS, in which the Vulcans discovered that T’Pol had Pa’nar Syndrome, a neurological disease caused by a mind-meld, which at the time her people considered a disgusting practice. The idea had come to Braga after he attended a seminar that the network had for their showrunners about AIDS, and he felt it was an issue that would be perfect to tell through the lens of STAR TREK.

Even though Braga had sworn to himself that he would not do any Cure episodes on ENTERPRISE, he felt that when Mike Sussman pitched him the idea to get these Vulcans into different clothes. Most notably, Mestral wore a woolen hat to cover his green-skinned head.

CREW CONFLICT

Similarly, he wanted more conflict within the crew. He knew that in Gene Roddenberry’s universe everybody got along and that there was harmony amongst humans, but he felt that this had grown out of all proportion. Even in THE ORIGINAL SERIES, Dr. McCoy and Spock were often at loggerheads and McCoy sometimes called him all manner of racist names.

Looking back, Berman and Braga admitted that they were probably a little too conservative in their approach, and a little too worried about what was the whole point of setting it a hundred years prior to THE ORIGINAL SERIES was that it was going to be a throwback to old-fashioned STAR TREK where the captain would get in fistfights and romance green-skinned women.

Some writers were kept on, like Chris Black, André Bormanis, Mike Sussman and Phyllis Strong and they were eager to help, but felt that the reality was somewhat different to the vision of the show that they had been sold on.

MISSING THE POINT

Chris Black believed that ENTERPRISE was going to be like ‘The Right Stuff’ in space. He finally got to explore this notion in Season Two when he worked on the teleplay for ‘First Flight,’ which saw the crew explore the boundaries and putting their lives on the line. He was told that it would be a fresh way of telling a story, which Braga was delighted with, and the episode was nominated for a Hugo Award.

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MISSING THE POINT

Chris Black believed that ENTERPRISE was going to be like ‘The Right Stuff’ in space. He finally got to explore this notion in Season Two when he worked on the teleplay for ‘First Flight,’ which saw the crew explore the boundaries and putting their lives on the line. He was told that it would be a fresh way of telling a story, which Braga was delighted with, and the episode was nominated for a Hugo Award.

‘Carbon Creek,’ in which the Vulcans were first seen visiting Earth in the 1960s, introduced a whole new idea of how to tell the story. It wasn’t until the fourth season, however, that there was a perfect opportunity to delve into this idea. Braga felt that it was too off concept to do in Season Two. It was an allegory for AIDS, in which the Vulcans discovered that T’Pol had Pa’nar Syndrome, a neurological disease caused by a mind-meld, which at the time her people considered a disgusting practice. The idea had come to Braga after he attended a seminar that the network had for their showrunners about AIDS, and he felt it was an issue that would be perfect to tell through the lens of STAR TREK.

Even though Braga had sworn to himself that he would not do any Cure episodes on ENTERPRISE, he felt that when Mike Sussman pitched him the idea to get these Vulcans into different clothes. Most notably, Mestral wore a woolen hat to cover his green-skinned head.

CREW CONFLICT

Similarly, he wanted more conflict within the crew. He knew that in Gene Roddenberry’s universe everybody got along and that there was harmony amongst humans, but he felt that this had grown out of all proportion. Even in THE ORIGINAL SERIES, Dr. McCoy and Spock were often at loggerheads and McCoy sometimes called him all manner of racist names.

Looking back, Berman and Braga admitted that they were probably a little too conservative in their approach, and a little too worried about what was the whole point of setting it a hundred years prior to THE ORIGINAL SERIES was that it was going to be a throwback to old-fashioned STAR TREK where the captain would get in fistfights and romance green-skinned women.

Some writers were kept on, like Chris Black, André Bormanis, Mike Sussman and Phyllis Strong and they were eager to help, but felt that the reality was somewhat different to the vision of the show that they had been sold on.
T’Pol found herself ostracized by Vulcan society after they learned she had a neurological condition and now he had carte blanche to put it into action. He had a concept for a world where humanoids were not the only one to develop intelligence. What if there was a world where sea-dwelling creatures had done it, other primates had done it and insects and reptiles. And what if they had a grudge against Earth? This was the seed of the idea that became the season-long arc to feature the Xindi threat.

EXCITING TIMES
Braga and Berman put their heads together to figure out how it would work and set the ball rolling in the Season Two finale 'The Expanse.' In it, an alien probe visited Earth and cut a huge swath of destruction from Florida to Venezuela, killing seven million people. There was nothing timid about this approach. Trip even looked Archer in the eye and asked if they were really going after the perpetrators with “none of that non-interference crap T’Pol is always going on about.”

After realizing that they had to shake things up, Berman and Braga had decided to really go big. Braga was delighted. “We wrote, I think, a killer future, Dolgen loved STAR TREK and gave the producers permission to do anything they wanted.

BOLD DIRECTION
This was music to Braga’s ears, as he always felt that ENTERPRISE should feature an on-going serialized arc rather than standalone episodes. This way they could push the stakes very high and put Earth at stake, with only Captain Archer and his crew able to save the planet. Braga already had an idea, which was the Xindi concept and now he had carte blanche to put it

NEW PROBLEM
While for Braga this was the nadir of the season, there were still too many episodes that were rehashing old ground. However, the biggest problem was that UPN had gone through a change of management. Before this, the network had just let STAR TREK get on with making shows without any interference. However, after this big change at UPN, they suddenly started giving Berman and Braga copious notes on how to improve ENTERPRISE.

It was clear that some of these executives really didn’t understand STAR TREK at all. One suggestion came in that left Braga unable to tell if it was serious or not. They wanted ENTERPRISE to feature a different boy band each week where they would sing their latest single on the ship. They felt it would encourage more young people to tune in and up the viewing figures.

This was just beyond ridiculous on so many levels. When Braga asked how they were going to get a different band on the ship each week when it was in deep space, the executive entirely missed the point and said, “Don’t you have a restaurant on the ship where they can play?”

It was clear that ENTERPRISE was not being met with the same passion from the network as the earlier incarnations of the franchise, and something radical had to be done. Braga was desperate to bring in an additional high-level person to help him with the planning and writing of the show. To that end, Iris Steven Behr, who had worked on THE NEXT GENERATION and run DEEP SPACE NINE, was brought in for a chat.

EXTRAORDINARY DIATRIBE
It was certainly a memorable meeting. Behr absolutely let rip at the show, saying he hated the characters, hated the concept and thought the whole thing was terrible. Braga was both aghast and entertained by the tirade. While he agreed with some of Behr’s critiques, he didn’t really understand why Behr had taken the meeting at all. It was his way of really shaking things up. Instead, salvation came from another source. Jonathan Dolgen, who was chairman of the Viacom Entertainment Group and “head of fantasy” for 24th-century species and should not be seen in ENTERPRISE. After it aired, many changed their minds as it not only offended some thrilling scenes, but also did not contain many shockers.

Initially, Regeneration came in for flak when fans heard it was going to feature the Borg, which they believed were a 24th-century species and should not be seen in ENTERPRISE. After it aired, many changed their minds as it not only offended some thrilling scenes, but also did not contain many shockers.
ON SCREEN

TRIVIA

Actor J. Paul Boehmer, who starred as Mestral in ‘Carbon Creek,’ also featured in several other STAR TREK roles. He appeared as an SS Kapitan in the VOYAGER episodes ‘The Killing Game, Parts I & II’ and the technically advanced Borg drone known as ‘One’ in ‘Darmok.’ He then featured as the Cardassian Voron in the DEEP SPACE NINE episode ‘Talking Into the Wind.’ His final STAR TREK appearance was as another Nazi SS officer in the ENTERPRISE episodes ‘Zero Hour’ and ‘Storm Front.’

Before the episode was officially called ‘Carbon Creek,’ the script had the working title of ‘Population: 612’ in reference to the sign seen on the edge of town [see picture below]. The episode was not filmed in Pennsylvania as the footage suggested, but in the Californian town of Crestline.

The ENTERPRISE episodes ‘Home’ and ‘Daedalus’ revealed that Vulcan was approximately 16 light years from Earth. According to several sources, including the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, Vulcan would most likely be in the real-life trinary star system 40 Eridani.

KEY APPEARANCES

STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE

‘Carbon Creek’

Captain Archer and Commander ‘Trip’ Tucker invite T’Pol to have a celebratory drink with them to mark her first year of serving on Enterprise NX-01. Archer has been reviewing T’Pol’s record and notes that while on Earth she visited Carbon Creek, a small town in Pennsylvania. T’Pol tells the story of a Vulcan survey ship that visits Earth in 1957 after it is attracted by the launch of Sputnik 1. After weeks of running scans from orbit, the survey ship develops a fault with its impulse manifold and crashes. The captain dies instantly, leaving T’Pol’s great-grandmother, T’Mir, in command of the other two Vulcans – Stron and Mestral. After several days with no response to their distress call, the Vulcans disguise themselves as humans and head into the local town – Carbon Creek. There, they take menial jobs and blend in as best they can, while awaiting rescue. After about three months of living among humans, the Vulcans are rescued, although Mestral, who develops a strong fascination with humans, decides to stay. Archer and Trip are unsure what to make of T’Pol’s story, but later in her quarters she is seen with the same handbag used by T’Mir while on Earth.

FIRST APPEARANCE: ‘CARBON CREEK’ (ENT)

TV APPEARANCE: STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE

DESIGNED BY: John Eaves

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