

Part One: Fictional

On March 18th, 2286, the Mark I Chandley Class Strike Frigate, the USS Blackheart NCC-2327 launches from the Chandley Ship Yards orbiting Mars (Sol IV), a pet project of Chandley Corporation, and Marine Brigadier General Marcus A. Dunross (yes that Dunross, more on him later)

On April 30th, 2288 the USS Blackheart is officially commissioned in a ceremony in Earth Orbit and soars into the Galaxy under the command of Captain Maureen Studley.

For the next four years under Captains Studley, Ann Francesconi and lastly Donna Hanlon the Blackheart successfully patrol the core-ward reaches of Region Seven, until on November 22nd, 2092 it encounters a strange Glowing Probe (much conjecture about this device, and the sketchy record of it from the Blackhearts emergency message buoy, such suggestions include an encounter with the "Q" entity, the "Trelaine" entity, some natural phenomena, pirates from the Orion Syndicate, or other enemies of the Federation. In the end and as far as Starfleet was concerned, the Blackheart was missing, her crew lost, and on April 5th, 2293, the ship was removed from the roster of Starfleet, and presumed destroyed.

Unknown to Starfleet the USS Blackheart was hurled across the Alpha Quadrant into what is known as the Galactic Core. Here Star Systems are far older than in the spiral reaches, and civilizations have come and gone and come and gone again before Humanity or Vulcans or Klingons ever arose. The Blackheart's encounter with the Glowing Probe and its malignant or simply careless intelligence caused it to spiral through subspace at a phenomenal speed, traveling some 35,000 light years in mere seconds. As it was ejected out of this hyper-warp tunnel it crashes onto a planetoid in solar system devoid of sapient life. Casualties are severe, with two thirds of the crew killed from the impact trauma, and only 21 crew members fit enough to immediately take care of the remaining 123 survivors. Within two weeks all but 3 of those begun recovery, as the burial details begin the grim task of setting a fitting farewell to their ship mates.

The ship is nearly a total wreck, one of the nacelles was completely torn away, the warp engines are useless, impulse as well, there is not enough power in the maneuvering thrusters to leave the planetoid, weapons systems are offline. Subspace communications are equally unusable. On the positive side, the replicators are working, and 9 of the ships shuttles, and 4 of the Marine Aerospace Fighters are undamaged. While the system has no sapient life, and the next closes star system is two years away the highest impulse the shuttles can attain, one of the planets is M class with ample flora and fauna to be utilized. The ship's third officer, Engineer Lt. Commander Jason Berg, the senior surviving officer takes command and begins rebuilding the ship with materials fabricated by the replicators, and materials salvaged from the local environments. Advanced metals and plastics within the ship are scavenged for hull plating and engineering materials and replaced with wood and coral-like materials from the class M planet christened "New Tortuga" by the ranking surviving marine 1st Lt. Colin Thad Dunross (hmm that name again).

Back in Federation territory, 1st Lt. Dunross's father the General widowed in an incident with the Sheliak while serving as the Commanding Officer of the Excelsior Class ship the USS Texas, tries to convince Starfleet Command to continue searching for the Blackheart, finally despairing of getting any help from Starfleet Headquarters, and with the shakeup following the assassination attempt at Khitomer, Dunross retires from the SFMC, uses contacts he has with the Klingon Imperial Marines, and with the Chandley corporation, and 'acquires' an experimental long range warp shuttle of the Audacious Class (which he had designed for Spiro Chandley years before) and went looking for the Blackheart on his own. Three months later all telemetry with the Audacious Shuttle ceased, and Starfleet declared the Shuttle and Crew also lost. Nothing would be heard of General Dunross for another 78 years.

Within a year, the crew of the Blackheart had come together under an ad-hoc command structure, and utilizing unusual talents of all of the crew. An unusual plan to remove one of the ship's tractor beam emitters and an atomic power unit, and place them in geo-sync orbit above the ship, with three of the ship's shuttles acting as an encircling anchor around them, with what was available from the ship's power, the shuttles, and the APU, the tractor beam slowly but eventually was able to extract the wounded ship from the planetoid's gravity well, and with the ship's own maneuvering thrusters was able to get the wounded bird back into space. The ship then made its way slowly to New Tortuga.

But life was not yet aces and eights for the Blackheart. The Core-ward Reaches had their own version of the Orion Pirates, interstellar nomads known as the 'Efiltem' arrived in the system with five ships, roughly comparable to a Klingon Bird of Prey in size and capability, to re-supply on New Tortuga, unaware of the Blackheart's presence. The previous 12 months had ingrained a sense of caution for the survivors, and the ship went immediately to Red Alert, and deployed the four surviving Marine Fighters in stealth mode, to shadow each of the Efiltem save one. As the Efiltem deployed three of their ship around the Blackheart, the one ship held back, and one ship heading for the planet, and the Blackheart's base. As the communications between the two sides quickly devolved into threats, the ship heading for the base, began a strafing run. With the first firing of the Efiltem's weapon's systems, the three fighters in space, immediately fired their micro-photorps and with seconds three Efiltem ships has ceased to exist. The pilot of the fourth ship couldn't fire his photorps that close to the base, so he immediately ram his fighter in the rear right flank of the enemy ship, driving it into the ground a mere five kilometers but safely to the side of the base. The fifth ship, only seeing the Blackheart sitting in space, and four of his comrades blowing up, fled immediately with old style radio broadcasts to avoid the dread ship with Black Hearts painted on its sides.

The Marine who died sacrificing himself was the aforementioned Lt. Colin Dunross, his reasoning was obvious, his new wife, and their twin infants Tanya and Marcus II were in the base having just been born two days earlier. Those few lost in the battle are laid to rest in a cemetery on New Tortuga, Colin receiving a replicated headstone that reads "Lieutenant Colin T. Dunross: Husband, Father, Son, Marine". Later analysis of the crashed pirate ship showed 42 fatalities aboard the Efiltem ship, an upright walking equine race with a protruding horn in the middle of the their forehead, quickly earning them the nickname of "Unicorns".

The Blackheart after scavenging as much as it could from the Efiltem ship, and fully loading the ship with as much raw materials, ores, minerals, as well as lumber and biomatter, left orbit and headed for deep

space. It was decided because of the local threats being so unknown that communications silence would be maintained. In addition after studying the Efilem records, the 'Unicorns' would be fair game for supply raids as the crew made their way home. On full thrusters and with a nacelle still missing AND Impulse still down, the Blackheart limped out of orbit and away from the New Tortuga Cemetery where they left so many of their shipmates and began the generations long journey home. Those shipmates who remained by choice (as opposed to being interred), decided to form a permanent new colony, keeping the name New Tortuga. Twenty years later, the Blackheart sailed back into orbit, mostly repaired, with new equipment and technology. Hailing the colony, they find that it not only survived but thrived, after replenishing supplies, they take aboard a passenger as well as some new crew, replacing those who decided to stay at the colony. The passenger, daughter of the original crew's first contact specialist, Ensign Michael Fox (nephew of the famous Ambassador Robert Fox), is proclaimed Ambassador Yvette Marie Doyen Fox, and will represent the colony when the Blackheart makes it back to Federation space.

Many incidents occurred on the ninety year journey, but the records are not completely unscrambled, help from the current and future crew in filling out this portion of the ship's history would be much appreciated.

In 2370 The Audacious class shuttle with General Dunross, three Starfleet Officers, and two Klingon Officers return to 'our' plane of existence, it is later learned that they were trapped in a subspace bubble for 78 years real time, but only experienced three years of subjective time. Dunross returns just in time for new Fleet Admiral Michael D. Smith to appoint him Commandant of the Starfleet Marine Corps, then relieve him of duty less than a year later. Dunross rebounds from this career ending situation, to eventually command the Fifth Fleet during the Dominion War, and then later serve as Commandant of the Starfleet Academy following this time frame. Afterwards and because of the increasing level of political maneuvering at SFHQ, he settles down as the Fleet Historian.

In 239?, the Blackheart finally leaves the dense stellar mass of the Galactic Core and enters the Carnelian Regency. Initial contact with the CRDF are tense, but both sides decides to work together instead of against each other. The Blackheart and her crew are issued Letters of Marque by the Regency and begin hunting pirates that the Regency is unable or politically unwilling to deal with themselves.

Two years later, reports filter through the Archaeological community back to General Dunross, that a Chandley Class Strike Frigate of unusual design and markings is making its way through the Regency heading towards Federation Space. Dunross taps into some connections he has, and gets a long range image of the ship, with the definite silloette of a Chandley, and on one of the pylons, a fancy stylized black heart painted on it, amidst much artistic swirls and curlycues. He knows this ship.

Dunross immediately goes to Starfleet Headquarters – Operations, the new Chief of Operations still moving into his office, shunts him to his Vice Chief, who shunts him to an aide who had worked with Dunross at the Academy on developing coursework. She was glad to help the old General, and found that while Operations was too strapped to provide any ships to track down the signals, that the Quartermaster corps had some older Runabouts and Long Range Shuttles that would be perfect for this missions. Dunross, optimistic for the first time in years proceeds to the Chief of Starfleet Quartermaster Corps, to put in his request. And walks into a stone wall, a former adversary from the second fleet, now

running the QM Corps, tells Dunross that the entire crew of this long missing ship could die for all he cares, before he'd allow Dunross to have any vessel to go rescue them. Dunross tries again, and shows all of the data supporting the find. The Vice Admiral, walks around to the front of his desk and once again tells him "NO" and threatens to have the General arrested if he doesn't leave the office immediately. Dunross whose name does not mean "Diplomacy", stands up, prepares to leave, and then punches the Vice Admiral so hard that he flies over his own desk unconscious, and then slow walks out of the office leaves.