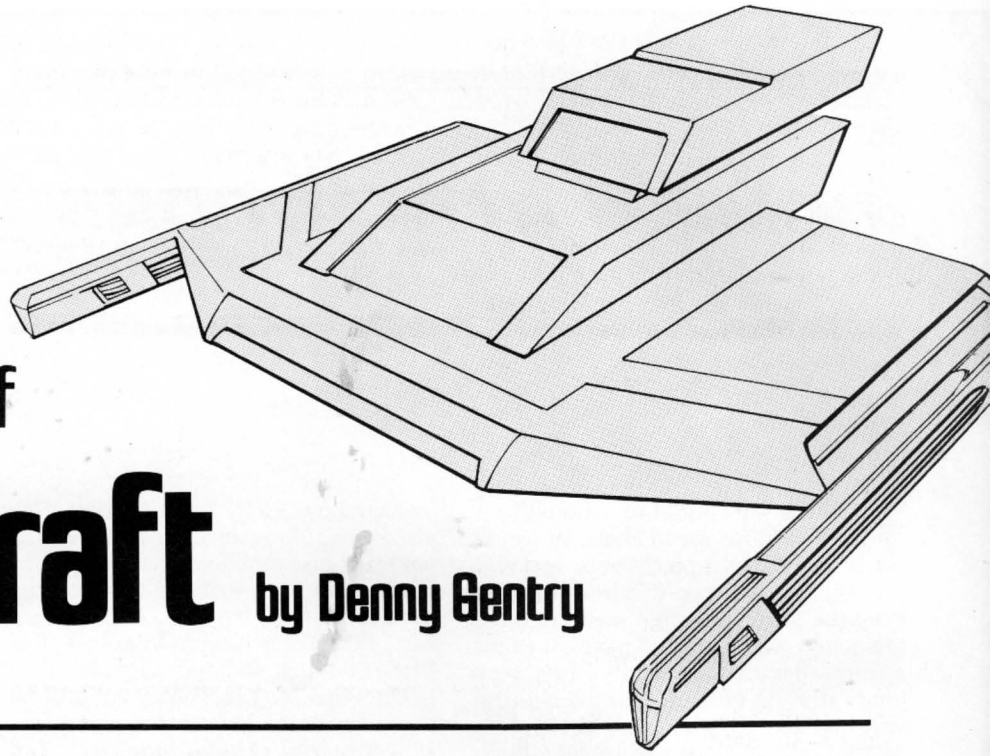
The Care and Feeding of Shuttlecraft

by Denny Gentry



Shuttlecraft are carried by most Star Fleet ships and assigned to all Star Bases. They must be able to go where the transporter beam cannot. There are specialized shuttles, and there are general purpose shuttles, but all of them have some things in common. They all carry high powered communications equipment, including an automatic homing beacon. They all contain emergency survival equipment and basic medical supplies, and all are fairly rugged and built to last.

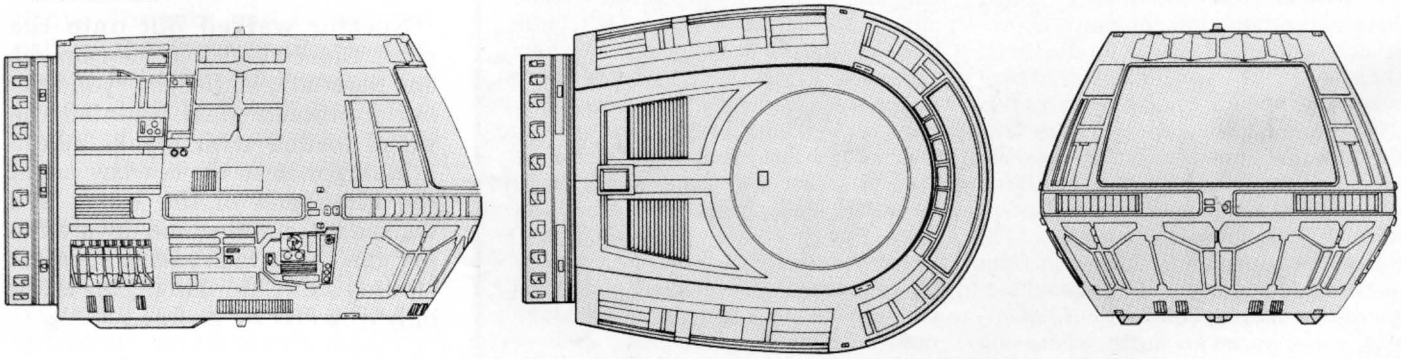
Shuttlecraft are used by Star Bases for a variety of purposes. They are used during repair and refitting of Star Fleet vessels and as VIP gigs for visiting dignitaries. A popular recreational activity is to fly a shuttle, or simply watch the activity of a shuttle bay (minor diversions are welcome at times). It is often necessary to dispatch a shuttle as a courier, to relay equipment to a destination beyond transporter range, or investigate some in-system activity. In one case, a group of Star Fleet officers used an S-6 shuttle as a meeting room, while they took a leisurely trip to Jupiter and back. It was one of the most productive meetings they ever had.

Aboard ship, shuttles are mainly used to land on worlds when using the transporter is impossible or undesirable. Shuttles are also used when a landing party expects to stay on the planet for some time, in which case the shuttle can serve as a shelter. They are used when planetary life forms might be harmful to unprotected personnel, or with contact of a primitive culture that could not comprehend the 'magical' transporter.

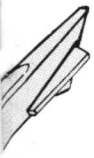
There are three types of hangar facilities which Star Fleet commonly uses to house shuttlecraft. They are Shuttle Bays, Individual Bays, and Docking Collars.

Shuttle bays are the largest type of hangar used for shuttles. They come in various sizes from the cavernous expanses of many Star Bases to the smaller shipboard hangar decks housing two or more crafts. Shuttle bays are designed to allow landing and storage of multiple shuttles. They all have three major sections to them: the landing area, the storage area, and the repair shop. The landing area is used for loading, launching, and landing of the shuttles. It is enclosed by large hangar doors and has atmosphere controls. The landing area is the responsibility of personnel in one or more control towers. They oversee the operation of the hangar doors, the elevator/turntables, atmosphere control, cargo handling, and the au-

Travel Pod



tomatic landing/launching computers. The storage area of a shuttle bay is usually located directly below the landing area. Here the ship's or base's shuttles that are not in use are stored. Some Star Bases have storage facilities capable of housing hundreds of shuttles, but these storage areas are rarely full. The repair shop is located near the storage area, usually on the same level or levels. This area performs the normal maintenance and refurbishment of the shuttles on a routine basis.



Individual bays double as landing area and storage area for a single shuttle. Used to save space, shuttles in individual bays on ships rarely have access to a repair shop. Individual bays are in use on smaller planetary bases and some Star Bases but repair facilities are always available.

Docking collars have been installed on newer shuttles, ships, and bases since Stardate 2/1209. They are intended to allow a shuttle to dock with a ship or base and unload its passengers or cargo. Standard procedure requires that the navigational computers lock on with a tractor beam to guide the shuttle into the Docking collar. This ensures safe and worry-free landings even when a vessel is moving on impulse power. Older shuttles are slowly being fitted with docking collars but it will be quite a while before the device will be standard throughout the Federation.

There are many types of shuttles in service. These are discussed below:

Type	Crew	Passengers	Speed	Introduced	Notes
S-1	1	4	.63w	1/8701	
S-2	2	9	.54w	1/8701	
S-3	1	7	.89w	2/0205	
S-4	1	5	.82w	2/1009	
Aquashuttle					
S-5	1	14	.76w	2/0210	
S-6	2	21	.56w	2/0307	
SW-7	2	6	.96w/2w	2/1408	
Long-range					
S-8	1	4	.89w	2/0907	Pressure
S-9	1	2	.63w	2/1112	Advance
Base					
S-10 Pod	1	4	.76w	2/1001	Travel Pods

Currently, the S-3 is the standard type shuttle. The S-1 and S-2 are obsolete types and are only found aboard commercial ships who have purchased them from Star Fleet. The specialized shuttles are described below:

S-8 Pressure Shuttle

This shuttle was designed to explore the outer layers of gas giant worlds such as Saturn or Jupiter. Its superstructure is extremely strong and capable of withstanding incredible pressures. It contains specialized scanning equipment for use in its investigations. After several disastrous failures when S-8s went too deep into gas giants construction of Pressure shuttles was discontinued as the limited uses of such a design became apparent. Some have been converted to oceanographic research to explore the deepest fissures and trenches on some planetary oceans.

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S-9 Advance Base Shuttle

This shuttle is intended for colonization and exploration work. It carries complete life support for a crew of three, and food for up to one month. Upon landing on a planet, the shuttle would be used as living quarters and the base of operations for the survey team. Special airlocks on each side of the shuttle allow several of them to be interconnected to form a larger complex on larger missions. Modular quarters can also be attached if necessary. The S-9 is still in service mainly with the Office of Colonization of Star Fleet but also with several scientific institutions.

Several other shuttlecraft are in operation that are not usually carried by Star Fleet vessels. Among these are the EVA spacepod, the Cargo shuttlecraft, and the Merchant shuttle. The EVA Spacepod (also known as the Repair Bug) is a small one man shuttle intended for orbital repair work. It is capable of planetary landings and is equipped with waldoes (mechanical manipulators) with a variety of tool options. In an emergency it could carry up to three people. The cargo shuttle is another one man craft which carries two 2-meter square cargo containers in an aft mounted framework. It also is capable of planetary landings.

The S-10 light travel pod and the SW-7 Warp shuttle are fully described in the *STAR TREK III Sourcebook Update* and need not be reprinted here. The S-4 Aquashuttle is described in the *Cadet's Orientation Sourcebook of ST:RPG2* and the Merchant shuttle is described in *Trader Captains and Merchant Princes.*

Star Fleet shuttlecraft are a well engineered design. Parts and service are available at nearly any Federation outpost of any size. Parts used on different types of shuttlecraft are usually interchangeable so repairs mainly consist of replacing various equipment modules. Shuttles are manufactured on various Star Bases and on major Federation worlds. Star Fleet produces thousands of shuttlecraft a year to replace older shuttles. Life expectancy is approximately 20 years of active service, after which they are usually sold to commercial concerns. Used shuttles usually sell for around 350,000 Credits and sometimes new shuttles are sold off (at around 700,000 Credits) if production overruns occur in one particular area. Currently, Star Fleet will not sell S-4 Aquashuttles (too new of a design) or S-8 Pressure shuttles (considered unsafe for widespread use). The S-9 Advance Base shuttle has proven quite popular among independent scouts and Star Fleet has begun to sell some of the older models as a result of intense lobbying by various groups.

Crews for shuttles usually come from the Helm, Security, or Engineering branch and must have Shuttlecraft Pilot Skill of 40+. Shuttle pilots must have many talents as their duties are some of the more diverse in Star Fleet's service. They may have to help repair a ship's (or Star Base's) hull, might have to serve as aide to a visit-

ing diplomat, or perhaps perform a rescue mission. Crews must be ready to respond 24 hours a day. At Star Bases, a crewman is usually assigned to pilot a specific shuttlecraft, and tends to become very attached to his/her shuttle, just like a Captain to his ship. On ships, pilots are usually assigned where needed, and generally do not develop this type of attachment.

Shuttles are a valuable addition to a starship or Star Base which few usually think of. If you doubt this, wait until the next time your character beams down to a hostile planet and the transporter suddenly breaks down. Won't you be glad your ship carries shuttlecraft?

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The Naming of Shuttlecraft

Naming of shuttlecraft is strictly up to the base or starship personnel it is assigned to. Shuttles can be (and have been) named after just about anything. Most ships or bases have a common unifying theme for their shuttles. The *U.S.S. Enterprise,* for example, uses names of famous explorers and scientists (Galileo, Columbus, Newton, Cousteau, and so forth). The shuttles on the *U.S.S. Ariksbane* are named after people and things that have to do with the sea (Nautilus, Calypso, Columbus, Nemo, Trident, and Mermaiden). The shuttles of the *U.S.S. Constitution* are named after the original homeworlds of the Federation (Terra, Andor, Vulcan, Edos, Tellar, Cait, and Alpha Centauri). The shuttles of the *U.S.S. Sunshine* are named with the same theme as the ship name (Dawnflyer, Daybreak, Morningstar, Moonbeam, etc.). Some suggestions on shuttle names are: the signs of the zodiac, the letters of the Greek alphabet, famous engineers (Goddard, Cochrane, Von Braun, etc.). Do not be afraid to use the same shuttle name that another ship uses. There are literally hundreds of thousands of shuttles in Star Fleet and no way that they all could have a unique name. (On many ships, the christening of a new shuttlecraft is a great excuse for a party.)

Besides names, each shuttle carries a unique registration number. This consists of the hull number of their home ship, followed by a slash, and the shuttle number. Aquashuttles follow this number with an 'A'; Warp shuttles with a 'W'; Pressure shuttles with a 'P'; and Advance Base shuttles with a 'B'. Star Bases and other permanent ground base shuttles use a four digit base number rather than a ship's hull number. Floating shuttles (those that have no home base or ship, but are located wherever their last mission left them, similar to rented vehicles) bear four alphabetic characters, a slash, and a single digit to designate them.

Examples: *U.S.S. Enterprise* shuttle NCC-1701/7, Star Base 3 shuttle NCC-6994/9, Floating shuttle NCC-KGGX/2. ★