

DV-9999

When DV-9999 was discovered drifting in Jupiter's orbit by an extremely classified American military black-ops program, it was the US Navy that ended up getting the derelict interstellar ship after it was towed back to Earth (it is, again, an **extremely** classified program). Oh, sure, other groups tried to claim it, but the Navy just had the better bureaucratic knife-fighters this time. Sometimes it just comes down to that. It probably also helped that the discoverers' were sort of related to the Navy, in a fairly recondite sort of way. Besides, the Navy was willing enough to share.

Of course, the value of DV-9999 is actually a somewhat complicated question. Its tonnage is about 200 tons, and looks like it was designed for 6 crew members and 4 passengers (assuming human-sizes throughout). There are extensive open spaces inside the ship itself, with direct access to space via a set of doors. The outside also has two hardpoints that look like they were designed to fit weapons pods of some sort; one of the hardpoints is occupied with broken machinery, and one is a melted pile of slag. DV-9999 is also heavily damaged and open to

vacuum, with burn-throughs and impact craters consistent with energy and explosive weapons.

Or that could simply be a coincidence. Based on various tests and observations, DV-9999 has been derelict in space for at least fifty thousand years, probably two hundred thousand or so, and possibly up to a million. That's plenty of time for all sorts of random accidents and impacts. The current *suggestion* is that DV-9999 was drifting in the Oort cloud until fairly recently, as such things go; the wreck possibly fell into the inner Solar System by lucky chance, perhaps due to a comet or other space object perturbing its orbit. But nobody knows.

The ship doesn't fly, of course. Any organic residue left proved impossible to analyze for its DNA (assuming that it would have any), the computers and electronics onboard are slag, weapons ditto, propulsion ditto, and the hull is incredibly fragile at this point. There is only two things that can be gleaned from DV-9999 with any degree of certainty, in fact:

- We are not the first sapient species in the universe; and
- **Somebody** out there had interstellar travel.

That second one is more speculative, but DV-9999 is simply not configured for long sublight voyages (which is also speculative, but the arguments are persuasive). Either the starship was part of a larger vehicle as some sort of lifeboat or shuttle, or it could travel interstellar distances at effectively transluminal speed. And if DV-9999 is some sort of cargo vessel (the open spaces and hangar door are suggestive), then whatever it used to get around probably wasn't prohibitively expensive.

The people researching DV-9999 have no idea how such a drive would work, of course. But even slagged equipment should tell them something else. Besides, they at least know that it's **possible**, which is half the game right there.

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