

Congratulations, you found the secret story!

“The Last Star Log of Mission HXQ-6873-E”

INCOMING TRANSMISSION:

SUBJECT: URGENT, PRIORITY ONE

From: Admiral Swanson

To: All Star Ranger Superior Officers

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The following log entry was recovered on meteor HXQ-6873-E in the Aquarius star system, near the last known place of the mission from Earth’s crew, just after all contact with them was lost. Please read and be aware. We will steer clear. Let’s hope to god the cursed object never reaches Earth, and if it does, be prepared to take the necessary precautions.

Yours Truly,

Admiral Roger G. Swanson,

Commander in Chief

Star Ranger Central Command

Attachment:

Log Entry: 7/7/2064, 8:09:36.77, Synchronized Earth Time:

“To whoever finds this, whether you are human or alien from a world other than Earth, STAY AWAY. TURN AND RUN. Know that we came in peace. We have no weapons. This was a peaceful mission. One of exploration. We have no weapons and they are coming. They will surely kill us all just like they killed the rest of our crewmembers. I am Private Lander Peterson, one of 3 left from the original crew aboard the landing craft of the HXQ-6873-E mission. We were sent here to mine for uranium. This asteroid is loaded with it. We need it on Earth to power everything, ships, colonies, etc. People are starving up there in orbit around our tiny blue marble. Even worse on the surface. Our mission was crucial. Get uranium. Yet we came in peace. Good God we came in peace, but to no avail! Well we finally get here after the 2-day star-jump trip and land and to our shock find forests embedded on this godforsaken rock. It’s full to the brim with greenery, and even small lakes. It’s a veritable traveling planetoid. It appeared uninhabited by anything other than plant life. Boy, were we wrong! Our captain discovered caves and went down with 2 other crewmen to try to see if there were an easy way down to excavate

the uranium. The 2 crewmen were killed in the expedition and only the captain came back, injured. He had an enormous wound on his shoulder, and began babbling nonsense before passing out in the ship's sick bay. He awoke several hours later with his wound mended and resumed his executive duties. Later that night the remaining 17 of us noticed the captain was acting weird. Making clicking noises, mispronouncing words, slurring his speech. Eventually he led all of us out of our base camp near the ship and addressed us. At midnight Earth-sync time we heard a loud rushing wind like the sound of 1,000 birds fluttering. Over the tops of the trees they came. Suddenly, our poor captain's head exploded and an insect head with feelers, complex eyes, and a proboscis emerged from his neck hole. The giant moth pulled its way out of his body, stretched its wings (the span of which was easily at least 7 feet wide) and it flew to the nearest commanding officer and bit his head off then jumped to the next. The creature's kindred joined it and descended on us, and we ran, scattering, some of us being devoured by the giant flying space moths, a handful of us scurried back into the camp habitat and closed the airlock hatch. Crewman Michaels saw Lt. Siri Williams trapped just outside, the moths circling to strike, and he sided with his humanity over his survival instinct and re-opened the airlock to try to help her in, ignoring our cries to leave it alone. The moths dove and killed both of them. I moved quickly to close the door again, but the automatic mechanism was too slow and a moth just managed to scrape its way in through the slowly shrinking gap and ended another crewman's life with its flailing appendages. I slew the moth with a large electric spanner. There were only 3 of us left alive then. We fortified the habitat as best we could then sat down to plan. We had to abort the mission, no doubt. Our ship, however, was on the other side of a grassy ravine, right next to the lush green forest and between us and her were legions of killer moths. We would have to hide out for a few hours and wait for the moths to settle down, then make a break for the ship and fly off while charging the star reactor. Surely the moths would chase us, but if we could keep them off long enough to get a charge, we could jump away from the system back toward Earth. We waited til 0400 Earth-sync and set out. We opened the airlock and made a mad dash for our lives towards the ship. The moths are nocturnal, and while we could no longer see them, we could hear the beats of their wings and swishing in the air and feel their dark presence and eyes watching us as they lurked in the shadows. As they swept upward in a great arc into the night air of the asteroid and prepared to plunge downward upon us, I lit a flare and threw it hard over my shoulder. Being allured by bright, luminous things, the moths dipped fast, altering course and swirling around the flare. They were intelligent as they were malicious, so it was only a few moments before they turned and chased us, but it was just the amount of time we needed to get into the ship and slam the hatch behind us. We fired up the engines and started charging the star jump reactor and the ship rose and we took off fast, giant moths slamming and splatting against the hull; we were unharmed within. When we got into the upper atmosphere in range of the comm sat we sent a delayed distress signal to the nearest Earth colony. We managed to keep the moths at a distance for a while as we rose, but then they strained and flew faster, catching up to us. Ensign Arthur manned the laser mining drill, and cut through many of them with a bright, blinding beam that vaporized each one that came within the cutting tool's range. We held them off just fine with the drill for a while, but then suddenly they all reared up together, clumping up in a dense mass that subsequently spread out wide, morphing into the shape of a humongous moth composed of thousands of smaller ones. Its enormous wing flapped and swung and slammed into our ship, sending us topsy-turvy and careening downward out of the sky. Emergency sensors and backups were knocked offline and we plummeted down to our doom. Emergency backup system finally kicked in a couple thousand feet and moments before impact. The force of impact was mildly mitigated, but not enough to save all three of us. I survived, but my two comrades perished. That was an hour ago. I came

to several minutes after the crash and was able to pull myself out of the inner wreckage inside the ship. Luckily the ship had landed belly side up and the drill was pointing skyward, aimed directly at the coming moth storm. They were all around me. I was surrounded on all sides. They were taking a brief rest, circling like hawks, before they plunged downward at me once more. I climbed into the control pod apparatus of the drill and took aim at them. I clicked down the trigger hard. Nothing happened. I clicked and clicked again but nothing. Nothing. The drill is dead. So am I. The moths are slamming now against the door, pounding into the airlock repeatedly. The door is holding for now and I am hoping to whatever god may exist out there that they get tired and give up soon, but my outlook is not optimistic. It occurred to me that no one has had the opportunity to record what has happened to this mission since we landed, so I backed away from the airlock and searched the wreckage. To my benefit I found a notepad under a wrecked support beam and one pen that had not burst in the crash. I am now scribbling down a brief report with as much detail as I possibly can as fast as I possibly can so someone will find it and know what happened to us and then get the hell away. And stay away from here. The moths are vicious, ravenous monsters, and relentless ones at that. They must have arisen to the top of the food chain on this god-forsaken rock quickly, but now, not being herbivores, and with nothing to compete with or eat, it is only a matter of time before they become cannibalistic and kill one another, and eventually become extinct from starvation. In the meantime, I urge anyone traveling by, whether Terran or alien, to mark this piece of space dirt and stay away. They want to stay on top desperately. My crew and I learned this the hard way. I hope this log finds you well and alive and you still have hope and time to escape. Sorry it is so strung together and a stream of consciousness but I don't have much time I am sitting in the wrecked ship I'm the last one and the moths are tearing into the hatch. I don't have much time and can only sit writing and waiting for death to rip the ship door off its hinges and take me. They are coming. I have no weapons and they are coming. We came in peace. I have to write as fast as I can they are almost through now, the hatch is cracking this may be the las

End of Log Entry. No bodies were found at the site of the crashed wreckage of Star Mission HXQ-6873-E, but there were signs of struggle. The emergency crew that answered their distress call barely made it out alive. Recommendation: quarantine meteor, drop payload containing universal signal chip pinning and emitting warning beacon on standard universal signal. Keep away.

END TRANSMISSION