

The image is a vertical composition of three distinct scenes from a space station. The top section shows a dark, metallic ceiling with a grid of panels and recessed lighting. The middle section features three large, rounded rectangular windows with dark frames, each offering a view of a starry space. The bottom section depicts a long, narrow hallway with a dark floor that reflects the bright, rectangular lights mounted on the ceiling. The overall aesthetic is clean, industrial, and futuristic.

CHALLENGE

JANUARY 2022 | ISSUE # 1



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WILL IT
WORK?
I HAVE
NO IDEA,
BUT WE
WOULDN'T
BE THE ISDII
CHALLENGE
IF WE
WEREN'T
TRYING
OUT CRAZY
IDEAS.

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Welcome to the very first edition of the Challenge newsletter. We're experimenting with switching from weekly squadron and ship reports to a long-form monthly format, and for me it's my first foray into print design. In these newsletters, we will highlight the kinds of things that Challenge pilots get up to, whether it's competitions, flight, art, fiction, or anything else. Will it work? I have no idea, but we wouldn't be the ISDII Challenge if we weren't trying out crazy ideas - like the time we threw Tempest Squadron at the Hammer's homeworld during Imperial Storm 3. (They managed to survive and take it over, despite all odds, and despite a miscommunication where Honsou thought he had the backup of the entire fleet... but they were fine.)

January, and the new year, comes with a lot of news. All of last year's year-long and end-of-year competitions have completed, with CM Colo Deste earning the title "Lord of the TIEs" for his winning entry in "There and Back Again: A COMPOST tale," one of the most difficult competitions of the year. GN Anahorn Dempsey has also earned the title "SP Ace of the TIE Corps 2021" for the most singleplayer entries across the year. We also have seen a number of new and interesting competitions begin, including two major competitions: TIE Corps in Battle, which is explained in the ISDII Challenge News section in a few pages, as well as the Chalquilla Cup, a 3v3, squadron-vs-squadron competition. This year it pits squadrons against each other in fleet battles, with representation across nine squadrons.

We've seen a number of changes across our squadrons and the fleet (and some major changes in early February... but those will have to wait for next report!) Several squadrons have had new members as well as members retire. CPT LegionX has been hosting a number of competitions, as well as the brand-new Airlock Podcast. And, with GN Stryker's retirement, I've begun taking applications for a new commander for Firebird Squadron.

Please feel free to forward any feedback about this format to me over email or DM - and I hope you enjoy the rest!

//ACTIVITY REPORT

COM / VA SILWAR NAILO
#12630

Flight activity: XvT, XWA,
Squadrons PvE, Squadrons PvP,
COO Shootouts
TCiB Battles
Challenge Newsletter #1
Challenge Admin
New Competition submitted:
Chalquilla Cup II
New Fiction: "Holos for the
Holidays"
Member of top EH squadron in
Squadrons Premiere League Season 3

Medals awarded:
LoS x 1
LoC x 25
IS-CR x 1
IS-CW x 3
IS-BW x 2
IS-SW x 3
IS-GR x 1
IAR x 1
BS x 1



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ISDII CHALLENGE NEWS

TIE CORPS IN BATTLE

TIE Corps in Battle is one of several TIE Corps-wide events run by the TIE Corps Commander. In it, three battles are posted- one each for the game platforms TIE, XvT, and XWA. Points are earned for each pilot, squadron, and ship based on score, ranging from 8 points to the top pilot to a minimum of 2 points for anyone who submits a battle. The ISDII Challenge won the competition in season 3, and is the favorite to win in season 4 according to a random polling of pilots among the Challenge.

INFERNO SIGNAL SCRAMBLE

COL Marenta has relaunched Inferno Signal Scramble, a competition where she posts a number of random “acronyms” and it’s up to the pilots of the Challenge to fill them out. Keep an eye on #chal-competitions for details, and to submit and vote on your favorites.

LEGIONX’S CHALLENGING TIME TRIALS SEASON 3

CPT LegionX has launched a new season of the popular competition “Legion’s Challenging Time Trials.” In this competition, the goal is to fire up Squadrons, join a 1v1 match against him, and score three kills as quickly as possible while he evades you. In season 2, the top scores were upset at the last minute with a blistering 32.63 seconds by COL Genie of Lambda squadron! This season, an IS-PW is up for grabs.

NEW PILOTS, PROMOTIONS, AND ROLE CHANGES

Nothing ever stands still, and this month was no exception with a number of changes across the squadrons of the Challenge. Sub-Lieutenants Saeko Shan and Parzival have joined Inferno squadron, SL James Baboli has joined eagle, and SL Tyris Sal has joined Thunder. CPT Trevor Rastyn - former Fleet Admiral and Infiltrator Wing Commander - has joined Thunder. Lieutenants Silver Ajax of Inferno and Stralen have both been promoted, as well as CM Taurus of Firebird. CM Cody Lance has moved into a flight leader position in Inferno as well.

GN STRYKER RETIRES

The commander of the first Infiltrator Wing squadron opened in the TIE Corps in over a decade, GN Stryker has decided that it’s time to take a step back and join the layabouts on the reserves. He led Firebird through many victories, including taking first place in Chalquilla Cup I, high placements in RtF and ReMob, and was instrumental during the Challenge’s Imperial Storm victory. CM Jaxx Nassin has taken over as acting commander until an official announcement has been made regarding Stryker’s replacement.

TCIB BATTLES FOR JANUARY

These battles can be flown from Jan 8 - Feb 8. TCCOM Plif will submit a new list at the end of the first batch.

TIE-TC #165: “The Hunt for Zsinj”

This battle, rated 4.4 by 15 reviewers, allows you to unleash your wrath at a whole lot of capital ships with a whole lot of missiles. Lots of opportunity for high scores!

XvT-TC #59: “Cosmetic Wars!”

A typical example of a, zany “Frodo” mission, rated 3.8 by 22 reviewers, has a lighthearted story and plenty of dogfighting.

XWA-TC #4: “Privateer”

A classic mission, rated 3.8 by 27 reviewers, has you flying Rebel craft against Imperials and Rebels alike. Just make sure to ignore the hint to use “Q” to quit the mission in mission 4 - use the hangar!



TIE CORPS NEWS

CHALQUILLA CUP SEASON II BEGINS

The ultimate Emperor's Hammer TIE Corps 3v3 tournament has returned, this time featuring Star Wars Squadrons Fleet Battles. Individual squadrons have signed up to fight weekly battles for the next eight weeks. Keep an eye on the #chalquilla-cup Discord channel for updates!

DISCORD UPDATES

A couple of new off-topic channels for Music and Star Wars Episode I: Racer have been added to #role-assignments.

Another small server change of note: The EH Command Staff and TC Command Operations categories have been moved up the list to help the admins keep tabs on the channels that need attention more often.

A slightly more significant server announcement: We've invited the Hydra music bot to the server following a recommendation from LC Taygetta. The channel for issuing commands to the bot is #hydra-song-requests.

FA LA'AN RETURNS TO ACTIVE DUTY

The EH Communications Officer has decided to rejoin TIE Corps active duty once more as a Flight Member role in Beta Squadron.

MSE PROCESS CHANGES

The monthly squadron evaluation process has been updated. The MSE process will now primarily track pilots' competition and flight activity, while a separate process will keep track of other contributions. On top of the standard monthly review, each pilot will receive a 4-month review with additional merit medals available based on contributions to the TIE Corps.

LCM KEBLAOMEGA DOMINATES WEEK OF WAR

LCM Keblaomega earned a Distinguished Flying Cross in January, one of the rarer medals and one reserved for taking the top spot in an official Combat Event. He played 25 games in Week of War V, winning nearly all of them.



CHALQUILLA CUP II 3V3 FLEET BATTLES BEER LEAGUE

BEGINNING FEBRUARY 1ST, 2022



AN MP EVENT FOR THE WHOLE TC
SIGN UP BY JANUARY 20 WITH YOUR SQUADRON
LEAGUE ORGANIZERS ARE GENIE AND SILWAR NAILO
SEE #CHALQUILLA-CUP FOR FULL RULES AND DETAILS

TEMPEST SQUADRON NEWS

THE TEMPESTUOUS TIMES #1

Ever since Tusorix, Honsou had wondered what in the galaxy the Imperial Sovereign Protector, more commonly known as Maverick or “The Drunken Admiral” had bid Tempest Squadron to deliver to the Grand Admiral, Rapiet himself. All Honsou knew about it was that whatever this artefact was, he was not allowed to open the lockbox and nobody else was to know it existed. Not that he could have looked if he had wanted to- the only person that could open the container was, of course, the Grand Admiral, using his personal code cylinder and likely a bio scan.

As Honsou sat ruminating at his desk, his comm chimed.

“Major Honsou.” he said respectfully, his mind snapping back to the present.

“Ah, Major, I was hoping to catch you before your mission back into New Republic space. You are aware that your Tempest Squadron report is due?” It was the Challenge Commodore, Vice Admiral Silwar Naiilo.

“Ah nerf-it!” Honsou thought to himself “I haven’t forgotten, sir; you will have it before I depart. I may, however, have forgotten how to write one... I spent nearly two months in sickbay sir.”

“In that regard, I have not forgotten either. Do you know how difficult Captain Morgoth can be at times?!” His reply was clearly rhetorical.

“I will report mission findings to you directly upon my return Vice Admiral.” As the comm unit chimed again to signal the end of the call, Honsou sighed, “Well, better get this written up before the old man has Nexu kittens!”

SQUADRON NEWS

Well, here we are, the end of the first month of this Imperial standard year. However, all is not as it was. As you can see, we have a new format for how we present our comms to the TIE Corps and the wider Emperor’s Hammer.

The first item to address is a massive congratulations to EchoVII on the safe arrival of her baby. Mother and child are both well and doing great. We will retain constant comms with Echo and watch little “Echolettes” career with great interest.

Next up, general activity. We had our expected lull over the holiday period and the beginning of January was a slow starter. However, most if not all of Tempest are now active and doing their respective favoured activities. Great work all!

TCiB, I know it’s early days, but we have some of the most prolific Single Player pilots in the TIE Corps. Obviously I expect to see them doing what they do. I urge and encourage anyone else with a PC to give the battles a shot. Even running them on easy with cheats will net us participation points and this is how we do things, as a Squadron. I will be doing them myself this week. The cutoff date is February 8th for the current set. Also, if just half the squadron (six of us) complete the battle, we will pick up the Citation.

Bringing me to my next point. I mentioned this before the holidays, in losing Hermann to the reserves we dropped from 20+ citations to 5. That means just one person needs to fly each of those 15+ battles to earn those citations back again. Please contact me for the list if you have not checked that you have completed them or wish to step up to regain us some lost pride. You can also find the list on the Squadron Battleboard:

<https://tc.emperorshammer.org/battleboard.php?sqn=45>

Finally, I would like to thank you all for being so patient with me during my Leave of Absence due to



sickness. Keep an eye out for the “Air Lock podcast” with Captain LegionX of Thunder Squadron along with other great events and competitions coming up. With congratulations to our own TCCOM’s Honour Guard Chalquilla Cup 2 team. Even severely undermanned managed to pull off an outstanding 1-1 Empire split with Lambda Squadron’s team. A fantastic feat!

That’s all for this month. Always remember “We are the Storm!”



Listen to MAJ Honsou and Tempest Squadron interviewed on the Airlock Podcast at [https://www.twitch.tv/videos/1278217460!](https://www.twitch.tv/videos/1278217460)

TEMPEST SQUADRON DIRECTORY

1-1 CMDR / MAJ HONSOU
#55973

Happy first anniversary!

Communication: Email, Discord
Flight activity: Squadrons PvP and PvE, COO Shootouts
Chalquilla Cup game
Newsletter submissions

Tempest Squadron Admin

Medals awarded:
LoC x 24
LoS x 17
IS-CW x 2
IAR x 1
BS x 1
OV x 1

1-2 FM / LCM AKRESEUS
#56005

Communication: Discord
Flight activity: Squadrons PvP, COO Shootouts
Chalquilla Cup game

Medals awarded:
LoC x 3

1-3 FM / MAJ KALVE RYDER
#1968

Communication: Email, Discord

Tenth place for MP Ace of the TIE Corps 2021
Ninth place for Co-Op Ace of the TIE Corps 2021
New Tempest Squadron banner
Work on new database style guide

Medals awarded:
IS-BW x 2
ISM

1-4 FM / LT TWINJEDI
#56184

Communication: Discord

2-1 FL / CM COLO DELSTE
[LORD OF THE TIES]
#56017

Communication: Email, Discord
Flight activity: Squadrons PvP, Squadrons PvE, TIE, XvT, XWA, COO Shootouts
First place in There and Back Again: a COMPOST Tale
New PVE Rating: Campaigner 4th

Medals awarded:
LoC x 42
LoS x 21
IS-CW x 2
IS-BR x 1
IS-SW x 2
IS-GW x 1
IAR x 1
BS x 1

2-2 FM / CM ECHOVII
#55922

Communication: Discord

On leave

2-3 FM / GN ANAHORN
DEMPSEY
[SP ACE OF THE TIE CORPS]
#12945

Communication: Discord
Flight activity: TIE, XvT
TCiB Battles
First place in SP Ace of the TIE Corps 2021

Medals awarded:
IS-BW x 2
IS-SW x 1
IS-GW x 2
IS-PW x 1

2-4 FM / CPT RICHLET
#4607

Communication: Discord
Flight activity: Squadrons PvP, COO Shootouts

Medals awarded:
LoC x 15
BS x 1

3-1 FL / CPT MORGOOTH
#55942

Happy first anniversary!

Communication: Discord
Flight activity: Squadrons PvP and PvE, COO Shootouts, XvT, XWA
TCiB Battles
New Flight Certification Wings: 15th Echelon

Medals awarded:
LoC x 58
LoS x 3
IS-CR x 2
IS-SW x 1
IAR x 1
SS x 1
OV x 1

3-2 FM / COL PHALK STURM
[TCCOM'S WINGMAN]
#6874

Communication: Discord
Flight activity: XvT, TIE, XWA
TCiB Battles
Third place in SP Ace of the TIE Corps 2021
Crossword Challenge

Medals awarded:
IS-CR x 1
IS-BR x 1
IS-GW x 1
IAR x 1

3-3 FM / LT GISORNATOR
#56116

Communication: Discord
Flight activity: Squadrons PvP, COO Shootouts
Chalquilla Cup game
New Flight Certification Wings: 4th Echelon

Medals awarded:
LoC x 8

3-4 FM / LT NEWT
#56197

Communication: Email, Discord

An incredible amount of artwork (largely distributed through this issue)

Medals awarded:
PC x 1

FIREBIRD SQUADRON NEWS

COMMANDER'S LOG

"We're heading back to the fleet?", CM Nassin responded with a puzzled note to his voice. "I feel like we just started this mission."

GN Stryker leaned back in his desk chair and took a long sip from his steaming mug of coffee, "Yes. But it turns out that there's more important issues at the fleet. There's nothing out here we're learning from the Republic comms we can't decipher back at home."

"What will I tell the squadron then? They've been amped about going under cover for a while.", Nassin stood up from the chair he had been occupying and paced about the small, cramped office. The Nebulon B frigates weren't known for their luxurious space, and even though Firebird was the only squadron assigned to this mid-rim infiltration mission, everyone still felt as if they were constantly walking over each other.

Stryker placed his mug down, and leaned forward, his eyes gazing down at some mission files, "Tell them we're returning for the Chalquilla Cup. The High Admiral authorized it to start soon, and to be honest, I think we'd be better off honing our skills against pilots who know how to fly properly than these untrained bandits we run across out here."

The XO stopped his pacing, leaned on the back of the visitor chair, and looked at the war weary commander, "You make a good point, sir. I'll let the crew know and confirm it with the ship's captain. Do we have any 'official' orders to return? I don't want a repeat of the last time we scuttled a mission early and I had to spend a night in the brig for putting the deck officer in the med bay because he protested over paperwork."

Stryker chuckled to himself and he thumbed through some papers on his desk. He slid the return orders across the scuffed surface of the desk, "Here. One of these days, you'll figure out that the pen is mightier than the blaster." Nassin scoffed a bit and picked up the piece

of paper.

"Uhh...the Vice Admiral didn't sign this, sir."

Taking the paper back from Nassin, Stryker mused to himself as he picked up a nearby pen. "Is that so?" He scrawled a very practiced signature that looked good enough to pass for the Vice Admiral's. "Looks to me like they were signed."

It was Nassin's turn to chuckle, "Glad to see the Chal Com has ordered us home. I'll let the crew know."

The hatch to the tiny office clanked shut behind the XO leaving Stryker to muse to himself. "These fresh pilots still have so much to learn."

INFILTRATING YOUR NEWS - FIREBIRD STYLE

Having been on a recon mission, deep in New Republic space, Firebird has been keeping a low profile to start the new Imperial Standard Year. At the end of last year, we welcomed a new pilot, Jarl Torment, into the roost, who has already been kicking butt and taking names.

However, it is with a tear in our eyes, and the finest Chalquilla in our cups, that we bid our faithful Squadron Commander, General Stryker, a fond farewell as he takes a well earned tour on the Phoenix with the Reserves. Stryker has been the glue that has kept Firebird together for the last 16 months. He has played mother hen to the craziest bunch of Imperial pilots who either have no sanity left, or just get a thrill at flying 30 year old rust buckets that are always on the verge of flying apart mid-mission. We'll be sure to keep the bars of the Phoenix scarce of Chalquilla in order to entice him to visit. CM Jaxx Nassin has accepted the honor of filling Stryker's enormous boots.

In lighter news, our very own Taurus was recently promoted to the rank of CM. The ChalCOM was kind enough to loan us his cash card to pay for drinks in celebration!

TCiB has kicked off! COL NiksaVel and LT Ericson1803 have both posted for the first month with many more scrambling to get the first month in under the wire. COL NiksaVel posted a mission high score for Mission 5 of XWA-TC 4. Outstanding flying!

And speaking of NiksaVel, let's congratulate him on 24 years of commendable service to the Emperor as he was awarded his 24th Order of the Vanguard this past month!

Season 2 of the Chalquilla Cup is underway. Firebird has fielded the Funky Chickens in hopes of defending our champion title from Season 1. CPT Travis, CM Jaxx Nassin, COL Niksavel, and CM Taurus are proud to raise the Firebird banner.

FIREBIRD SQUADRON DIRECTORY

1-1 GN STRYKER
#12292

Submitted squadron report
Newsletter submissions
Third place in MP Ace of the TIE
Corps 2021
First place in Armchair Admirals

Medals awarded:
LoS x 2
LoC x 2
IS-SR x 1
IS-GW x 1

1-2 FM / LT WOLF
#56038

1-3 FM / CM TAURUS
#56071

Communication: Discord
Flight activity: Squadrons PvP
Promotion: Captain

Medals awarded:
LoC x 10
IS-CR x 2
PC x 1
SS x 1

1-4 FM / LT MAGNOMOOSE
#56020

2-1 FL / CM JAXX NASSIN
#56051

Communication: Email, Discord
Flight activity: Squadrons PvP and
PvE
Inferno Signal Scramble
Member of top-placing EH team in
SPL Season 3

Work on TTT3 helmet meshes

Medals awarded:
LoS x 2
LoC x 20
IS-CR x 3
IS-CW x 2
IS-BR x 3
IS-GW x 1
BS x 1
SS x 1

2-2 FM / LT BADKID312
#56069

Communication: Discord

2-3 FM / LCM SYLAS PITT
#56043

Communication: Discord
New fiction: Holo Home
First place in Signal Scramble
Round 16
First place in Holos for the Holidays

Medals awarded:
IS-CR x 2
IS-SR x 1
IS-GR x 1
ISM x 1

2-4 FM / CM TUREL
#12989

Communication: Discord
Flight activity: Squadrons PvE

Medals awarded:
LoS x 2
ISM x 1

3-1 FL / CPT TI-40026
#8044

Communication: Discord
Flight activity: Squadrons PvP

Medals awarded:
LoC x 1
IS-BW x 1

3-2 FM / LT JARL TORMENT
#56202

Communication: Discord
Flight activity: XWA
TCiB battle
Updated uniform

Medals awarded:
ISM x 1

3-3 FM / LT ERIKSEN1803
#56108

Communication: Discord
Flight activity: TIE

3-4 FM / COL NIKSAVEL
#536

Happy 24th anniversary!

Communication: Discord
Flight activity: TIE, XvT, XWA
High score in XWA-TC 4 mission 5
TCiB battles
Submitted battle review: XWA-TC 4

Medals awarded:
OV-24E

EAGLE SQUADRON NEWS

COMMANDER'S LOG

Major Graf D’Jinn walked down the corridor leading from his quarters to the Officer’s Mess. The Squadron Commanders had made a habit of having dinner together once a week, and while the dinners always started as a serious bit of business where they could unleash some pent-up frustrations or workshop some ideas, they invariably devolved into raucous nights of karaoke or high-stakes games of sabacc until very early in the morning.

As the Challenge continued its slow crawl through the unmapped regions, sorties were few and far between, and these dinners had become increasingly more anticipated by the Commanders. They knew that the Commodore and their own subordinates would leave them alone, unless it was something exceedingly important or urgent, and it was an opportunity for them all to let off some steam before returning to their daily routines of discipline, planning and service.

Graf’s black R2 unit trundled along behind him, a new tune quietly emanating from the droid. Graf had taken to bringing his droid with him almost everywhere. He had spent many hours in his X-wing with only R2-9Q to accompany him, and he had grown very attached to it. It helped that it had started whistling tunes, which was surprising in that it had no programming loaded into it that should make it possible. Nevertheless, R2-9Q had simply started one day, rather crudely, and now it produced some wildly advanced melodies.

The droid and the Major entered into the mess, and he realised that he had missed the ‘serious’ part of the dinner. Colonel Marenta, not a squadron commander, but one of the senior officers of the Challenge, was standing on a table, a bottle of chalquilla in one hand, throwing food scraps the length of the room in the open mouth of one General Stryker, who appeared to not have dropped a single scrap. Every time he snatched a piece of flung food out of the air, he raised his arms up triumphantly and announced the running total of credits that he was owed.

Major Honsou was locked in an arm wrestle with Lieutenant Colonel EvilGrin. It looked more like a war of attrition than anything; both men were roughly equal in size, and the arms pendulously swayed back and forth from one side to the other.

Captain LegionX nodded to Graf. “You’re late. Party started.”

The Captain’s mask was, of course, still on. He cut a solitary figure at these events, as he didn’t seem to eat or drink, at least not in public. But he always attended.

Graf replied, “yeah, I was finishing off my squad’s simulator reports. I was behind in some paperwork.”

“Your droid, do you like its music-making?” he asked.

Graf responded with a grin, “absolutely. When you’re stuck in a hyperspace jump for five hours, it can be really soothing.”

“My advice would be to keep him quiet then, at least around people you don’t implicitly trust. Protocol stipulates that any Imperial droid performing functions outside primary and secondary require them to be memory-wiped and reformatted. I would hate for you to lose your friend.”

“Hey Graf!” shouted General Stryker. “Bring your droid over and get it to play ‘The Ballad of Nomi Sunrider’!”

Graf looked into the hideous grin of LegionX’s mask and smiled, before replying, “I can’t mate. I had the little guy wiped a few days ago. Protocol, you know?”

SQUADRON NEWS

It is with great excitement to start off 30ABY with a collection of squadron news and views within this fantastic format. I recall the CHALCOM himself talking at length with Captain LegionX on the recent Tie Fighter Podcast about having something tangible and super high-quality as a memento of the community that we’re all a part of within the EHTC, and I couldn’t agree more. From a personal perspective, I certainly felt that the work that Squadron Commanders put into their Weekly Squadron Reports flew under the radar. Being able to craft something a bit more engaging and in-depth, with potentially a wider range of readers due to the periodic nature of the zine format, was a proposal that all of the Challenge Commanders were readily in agreement about. The updates from each squadron has now become one of quality rather than quantity, and I hope that you, dear reader, also see this as a positive indication of innovation and progress.

To Eagle news!

The roster is currently sitting at 12 pilots, a full squadron, however, there are a couple of pilots MIA and this may change over the next month. Regardless, the remainder more than make up for that blip in regards to their engagement across the TC. From competition involvement to regular attendance at the COO’s Saturday Shootout Events to quality music recommendations, there is almost always an Eagle pilot around to shoot the breeze.

Our number 2 Flight Leader, LCM Critical Hit, is taking some official leave due to some unavoidable RL things, and we wish him all the best and hope that things are looking up. Our SQXO, CM Xylo Pethtel, is heading up Eagle’s inclusion in the second season of the Chalquilla Cup, supported by Lt Drummer Nate, Lt Yubel



Cobblepot, LCM SirCaleb and the Eagle CMDR. There are some outstanding teams across the TC, but Eagle feel confident that we can go deep into this competition.

In other news, congratulations to Lt Stralen on his recent promotion; to Lt Drummer Nate for completing his TCCORE (and hopefully having it graded very shortly); and to Lt jospence for his first placing in LegionX’s Time Trials for the Challenged.

For when you absolutely, positively, need to bring down that **Wookie**, or **Bothan**,

or **Rodian**, or **Nikto**, or **Yuzzum**, or **Chagrian**, or **Kitonak**, or **Dressellian**, or **Trandoshian**.



There isn’t much better, than the **E-10R**

now available in Stormtrooper White

EAGLE SQUADRON DIRECTORY

1-1 CMDR / MAJ GRAF D'JINN
#55842

Communication: Email, Discord
Flight activity: Squadrons PvP, PvE
Submitted fiction: "The Intersection, Part 1." (See page 32.)
Second place in Holos for the Holidays
New PvP Rating: Veteran 1st
Submitted squadron report
Newsletter submissions
Second place in 4x4 Frenzy event

Medals awarded:
LoS x 20
LoC x 49
IS-CW x 2
IS-CR x 4
IS-BW x 1
IS-BR x 1
IS-SW x 1
BS x 1

1-2 FM / LT K PERKIS
#56003



1-3 FM / SL JAMES BABOLI
#56221

Welcome to the Eagle Squadron and the TIE Corps!
Joined January 30
Communication: Email, Discord

1-4 FM / CM CUPCAKE
#55938

Happy first anniversary!
Communication: Email, Discord
Flight activity: XvT PvE
Medals awarded:
LoS x 3
ISM x 1
OV x 1

2-1 FL / CM XYLO PETHTEL
#56072

Communication: Email, Discord
Flight activity: Squadrons PvP and PvE
Updated INPR
New PvE rating: Guner's Mate 1st
First place or placement in Inferno Signal Scramble Rounds 13-19
Medals awarded:
LoS x 60
LoC x 16
IS-CR x 4
IS-CW x 1
IS-BR x 3
IS-SR x 1
IS-GW x 1
MoI x 1
PC x 1

2-2 FM / LT JOSPENGE
#56175

Communication: Discord
Flight activity: Squadrons PvP, Legion's Challenging Time Trials
First place in Legion's Challenging Time Trials Season One
Medals awarded:
LoC x 9
IS-CR x 1
IS-CW x 1
IS-SW x 1
ISM x 1

2-3 FM / LT DRUMMER THE GUNNER NATE
#56156

Communication: Discord
Flight activity: Squadrons PvP, COO shootouts
Updated Uniform
Second place in 4x4 Frenzy event

Medals awarded:
LoS x 8
LoC x 16
IS-CW x 3
IS-CR x 1
IS-SW x 1
IAR x 1
ISM x 1

2-4 FM / LT YUBEL COBBLEPOT
#56195

Communication: Discord
Flight activity: Squadrons PvP
New PvP rating: Trainee
Medals awarded:
LoC x 2

3-1 FL / LCM CRITICAL HIT
#55995

Communication: Discord
Flight activity: Squadrons PvP
Medals awarded:
LoC x 1

3-2 FM / LCM SIRCALEB
#56053

Communication: Discord
Flight activity: Squadrons PvP
Medals awarded:
LoS x 5
LoC x 53
BS x 1

3-3 FM / LT AQUA VALKYRIE
#56183

Communication: Discord
Medals awarded:
BS x 1

3-4 FM / LT STRALEN
#56201

Communication: Discord
Promotion: Lieutenant
Updated INPR
Artwork



INFERNO SQUADRON NEWS

SQUADRON NEWS

Inferno Squadron! Since I last put out some news, we've had some significant changes in our lineup and structure!

A stalwart of our squadron, Commander Cody Lance was given the honour of leading flight 2, the Heat Wave Racers! A hearty congratulations to Cody, he has more than earned it with his loyalty and hard work for the squad. Although he's deadly in his Tie Interceptor, he's been leading the battle on the front with our ground forces for quite some time. I've had the privilege of fighting alongside him in some operations and I'm damn glad that he's on our side! He has received his briefing and is setting to his duties as our new FL.

In other news, our indomitable XO, COL Marenta, was keeping the Flight Leader seat warm in flight 3 for a relatively new pilot in our midsts who has been with us for just 3 months, Lieutenant Commander LQC-75-3! An incredibly impressive pilot who I've had the privilege of flying against in our simulators, and dare I say it, he has already become one of the TIE Corp's finest pilots. The rebels should be afraid, very afraid indeed. Having been newly installed in his role as flight leader, we will be having our briefing soon, although I've seen that he has shown an interest in creating new missions for our simulators - I can't wait to see what's next in store for our LCM.

General squad flight activity has been low since October, we need to start bumping these numbers up a bit (myself included)! We still have TCiB ongoing - just about a week left to go now, it would be good to help the challenge and get on the board here! We have the 2nd Chalquilla Cup underway from today - a 3v3 Squadrons fleet battle competition - and your CMDR and XO are leading the charge with a Challenge based team called Infernder along with CPT LegionX and CPT Richlet, wish us luck! We currently have space for 2 FMs, and I feel we have a nice spread of skillsets from the old games, XvT/XWA etc. to Battlefront 2 and Squadrons.

Let's make February a good one all!

As has been a mainstay of the TC competition scene for the last year, COL Marenta's incredibly popular competitions are still going strong;

The challenge with words - Season 2 round 2 has just finished, with round 3 starting imminently: <https://tc.emperorshammer.org/competitions.php?id=3356>

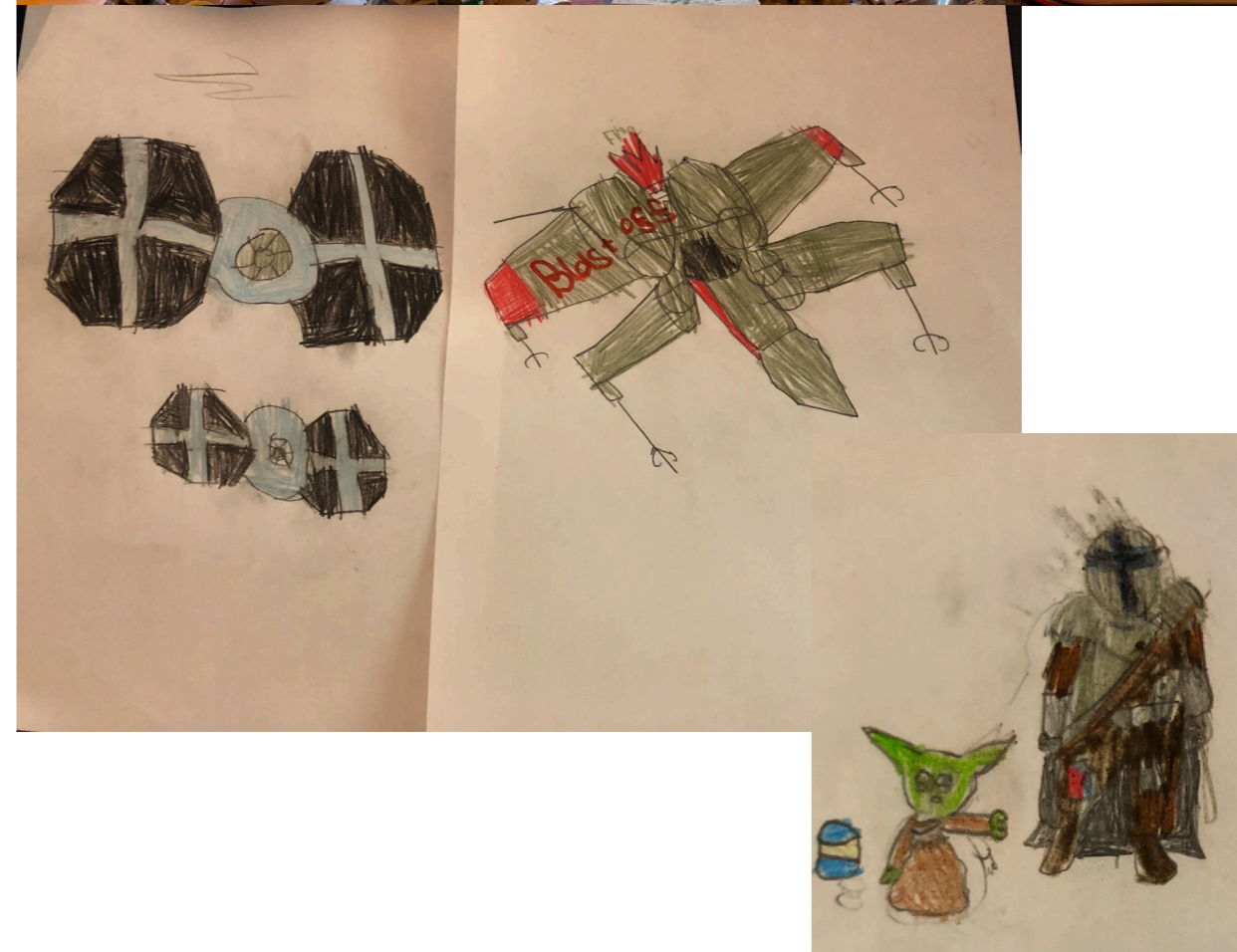
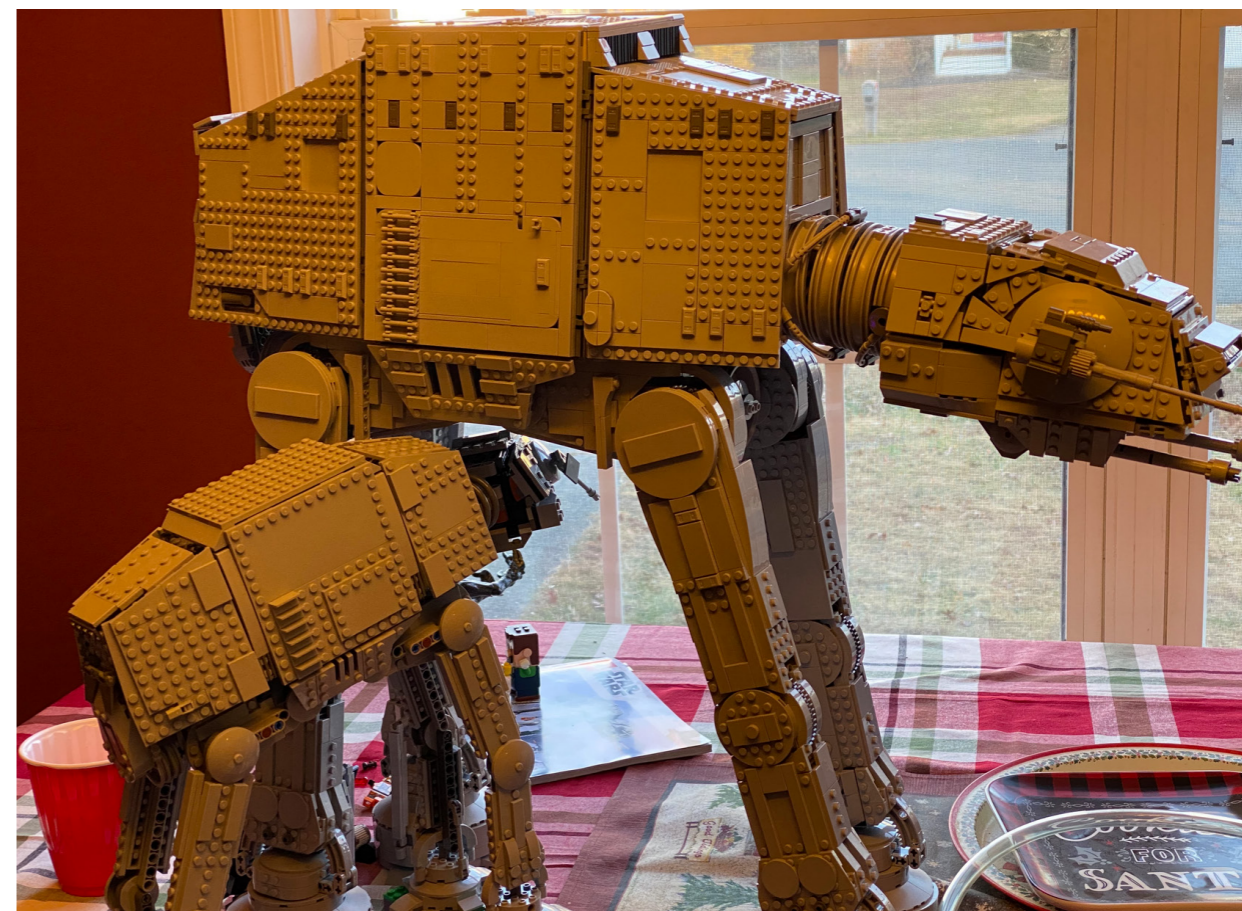
Inferno Signal Scramble - get your entries in for season 2 round 3!: <https://tc.emperorshammer.org/competitions.php?id=3355>

A few real life updates: SL Saeko is currently on leave for personal reasons. COL Marenta's eldest son has just joined the USMC - OORAH! CM Cody Lance passed his exams in January - congratulations!

COL Marenta wanted to share this cute picture of a baby and mother Lego AT-AT, d'awwwwww. LT LQC-75-4 has shared a few screens of his XvT sorties with CM Cupcake from Eagle Squadron. Also I'd like to share a few pictures my youngest daughter drew of my favourite subject matter - Star Wars!!



LQC-75-3 of Inferno Squadron, and CM Cupcake of Eagle Squadron, on patrol



INFERNO SQUADRON DIRECTORY

1-1 CMDR / LC EVILGRIN
#55788

Communication: Email, Discord
Newsletter submissions
Flight activity: Squadrons PvP
Third Place in MP Ace of the TIE
Corps

Medals awarded:
LoC x 3
IS-SW x 4
IS-GW x 2
BS x 1

1-2 FM / LT MOSEY
#55939

Happy first anniversary!
Communication: Discord
Medals awarded:
OV x 1

1-3 FM / LT SHIRO KUSANAGI
#55998

1-4 FM
VACANT

2-1 FL / CM CODY LANCE
#56001

Communication: Discord
Flight Activity: EABF2 PvP
Position update: FL
New PvP combat rating: Marksman
3rd

Medals awarded:
LoC x 2
IS-CR x 1
IS-BR x 1

2-2 FM / SL PARZIVAL
#56212

Welcome to the TIE Corps!
Communication: Discord

2-3 FM / SL SAEKO SHAN
#56203

On leave

2-4 FM
VACANT

3-1 FL / LCM LQC-75-3
#56182

Communication: Discord
Flight activity: XvT PvP, XvT, XWA
Promotion: LCM
New flight certification wings: 5th
Echelon

Medals awarded:
LoS x 3
LoC x 10
IS-BW x 1
PC x 1

3-2 FM / COL MARENDA
#708

Communication: Discord
Flight activity: Squadrons PvP

Medals awarded:
LoC x 1
MoI x 1
PC x 1

3-3 FM / LCM DOUGAL
CEALLAIGH
#55801

3-4 FM / LT SILVER AJAX
#56196

Promotion: LT

THUNDER SQUADRON NEWS

COMMANDER'S LOG

CPT Legion X is seen at his desk, mumbling some words and typing some notes on his datapad while staring at a container that seems to be holding some strange red glowing liquid. A low hum can be felt coming from the container, with a sort of eerie feel the closer you get. While the Captain is working MAJ Honsou walks into his office to discuss the current mission they are preparing for, Operation: Parasite. "Captain, I hope your not busy but I...what is that container filled with?"

"Ah, Major. This is the solution to my fuel issue with the Hyper-drive prototype, the one on my TIE/IN remember?"

"Yes, I recall you saying it takes some sort of core as a fuel source but never got the specs for it. Is it a newer refinement of Coaxium?"

"Not at all, Coaxium is powerful sure, but finite. It's energy will be used up and become useless. This core, I have dubbed Red Matter, is a limitless source. It will never run out of energy."

"Unlimited? What did you refine to get such an energy source?"

"Ah see that's harder to explain. Element-173, which I'm afraid the info about the element is classified by Grand Admiral Rapier and known only to a select few he has cleared, is what I use to make Red Matter."

"That hard to find for so little to be made?"

"N-no...its actually very easy to find...it's just the refinement process is...messy."

As Honsou notices he had been staring at the core for too long, he shakes his head to snap out of the trance he was in and continues, "Um, as I was saying we are ready to finalize Operation: Parasite. We got confirmation

from Graf that our infiltrator is on that Frigate. Oh also...sorry to hear about your AWOL pilot, but don't let it get to you."

"Oh I'm not bothered about that, it brought an..." Legion pauses for a moment and looks right at the Red Matter core, "...perfect opportunity."

Honsou has never felt dread crawl up his spine until this moment. He dares not to ask what he meant by that statement, and starts walking towards the briefing room with Legion.

SQUADRON NEWS

G'Day Pilots of Thunder Squadron.

Welcome to the new format of how we get our news. I will have a lot more to cover now that we are switching to a monthly format instead of weekly, so bear with me. Also, since we are starting off with just a week's worth of new news, if I repeat myself here from a previous report I apologize but it is only to help make sure all bases are covered.

Now to start of with, our squadrons pilot count. Yes we are low in it, and yes we unfortunately had a pilot go AWOL. Remember that this can be completely avoided if communication is kept between your Flight Leads and/or myself. Also if you feel you need to take a break from EH due to anything please do not worry about contacting myself our your Flight Lead as well. We can move you to the Reserves so that you are still EH but not confined to the communication requirements as an Active pilot. We will always be here for you whenever you decide to return.

In other news, a wave of fiction writing has appeared in the corps. Yours truly has started to write his background fiction, Captain LegionX: The Hunt for The Valkyries. I do hope that if you read it, it is actually enjoyable to read. I would love to also hear opinions from you as well. There are also plenty of other fictions



out in the works as well, so be sure to catch up on those.

Chaquilla Cup 2 is also underway with again yours truly participating in a wildcard team since we did not have the numbers to make our own team. I'm hoping that as the squad starts to build up after our recent....purge.... we can finally start fielding teams in these competitions. More news about CC2 will be made available as time progresses.

And that is currently it. I believe we have done all we could on our side with recruitment, we just now have to wait to see who joins. Also as a means of a fresh start, I am changing our Squadron Patch to something that was made months ago, but held on to it in respect of our previous CMDR's wishes. So be on the lookout for that.

CMDR/CPT LegionX #55991



Listen to CPT LegionX and VA Phoenix Berkana's interview on the Airlock Podcast at <https://www.twitch.tv/videos/1260178988>

THUNDER SQUADRON DIRECTORY

1-1 CMDR / CPT LEGIONX
#55991

Communication: Email, Discord
Flight activity: Squadrons PvP and PvE, Battlefield 2 PvE
Submitted competition # 3367
Updated uniform
3 Reports submitted
New Flight Certification Wings: 8th
New PvP Rating: Marksman 3rd

Thunder Squadron Admin, running Legion's Challenge Time Trials Season 2 and planning Season 3, planning Armchair Admirals Season 2, Airlock Podcast

Medals awarded:
LoC x 12
LoS x 3
IAR x 1
PC x 1

1-2 FM / CPT TREVOR RASTYN
#7766

Welcome to Thunder Squadron and the Challenge!

Joined from the reserves January 29

1-3 FM/ SL TYRIS SAL
#56222

Welcome to Thunder Squadron and the Challenge!

1-4 FM
VACANT

2-1 FL / LCM RYUZOKIN
#56117

Communication: Discord
Took part in Inferno Signal Scramble (and received a lot of backdated medals for it)

Medals awarded:
IS-CR x 4
IS-CW x 1
IS-SR x 3

2-2 FM
VACANT

2-3 FM
VACANT

2-4 FM / LT THE DICE GOBLIN
#56009

Communication: Discord

3-1 FL / CPT DYNAMUS
#55811

Communication: Discord
Flight activity: SWS PvE

Medals awarded:
LoS x 3
IS-CR x 2
IS-BR x 1

3-2 FM / LT ARTIFICIAL
#56200

Communication: Discord

3-3 FM
VACANT

3-4 FM
VACANT



SOME OF THE PILOTS OF THE ISDII CHALLENGE, PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT:

Honsou

TI-40026, Colo Delste, Xylo Pethtel, Dynamus, Artificial, Joespence, LQC-75-3, Akreus, BadKid, Syllas, LegionX, Shiro

Cody Lance, Newt, EvilGrin, Silwar Naiilo, Drummer Nate, Marenta

THE INTERSECTION

MAJ GRAF D'JINN

ONE

ORIGINATOR: Graf d'JINN, [redacted]

CLASSIFICATION: RESTRICTED-PERSONAL (non-military encryption)

ATTENTION: Colonel Ginojoh MELBIL, Mid-Rim Directorate, Security Operations, IMPERIAL SECURITY BRANCH

Greetings from [redacted], old friend.

I hope this finds you in good health and cheer, and not too far gone into the politics that your rank and position now invariably brings. I remember well our short stint in StratComms, under Colonel Millarren, and how we both withered under the to-ing and fro-ing of the bureaucracy. I'm sure you're much better equipped to deal with the Millarren's of today however. It also helps when you are the Colonel.

The last intel assessment from SO-ISB, whilst anonymised, still has all the hallmarks of your authorship. It would appear that only you can write that way. I'm surprised that your colleagues or direct reports haven't started duplicating your style. But then, most others don't see the threads in between the cracks behind the curtains that you do. It makes copying you that much harder.

I'll spare you the details of the Tusorix incident. You probably know more about it than I do by now, and I

was there! Suffice to say, we were caught with our pants down (some quite literally), and it has forced perhaps a long-overdue review of how to manage shore-leave and ensure battle-readiness.

The new COM has been a worthy successor to Dempsey. He is Silwar Nailo. A Mandolorian. I suspect you've already met him through the back channels that you move in, though I don't know if he has much respect for the ISB in general.

The Challenge herself has been a good home to me since my transfer from the Hammer. You'll remember I was promoted to the commander position for one of the Infiltrator squadrons? We're equipped with old T-65 X-wings. Ancient. Beautiful craft though, but the maintenance on them is horrendous. One of my squad lost his hyperdrive on the way to Tusorix, and managed to cross a whole NR-controlled system unscathed. I'll come back to these craft soon, as I have a request to ask of you in regards to them.

Despite our best efforts, the NR has a firm grip in this region. Its made for some risky feints, on both sides. Strategy best not discussed here, of course, but it would be remiss of me to not mention that we've had slow but steady recruitment of some top-tier NR pilots. The further one is from the core worlds, the more the cracks appear to be bigger. And its those cracks that continue to highlight the greed and corruption and factionalism that have been the hallmarks of the New Republic since its self-appointed reinstatement. But more and more systems are longing for the universal prosperity and

safety that existed under Imperial power. We fight the good fight.

30ABY mere weeks away. Tusorix was supposed to have been time away from the routine, but my squadron barely got a sip of a shared bottle of Chalquilla. The COM has prioritised downtime, but how this will be managed without compromising our security remains to be seen.

As we enter the new year, I have one extremely self-centered, short term goal - to replace our T-65s. Along with one other squadron, Firebird, we have the only NR ships in the fleet, and their unreliability has become too great a risk. Firebird has T-70s in their makeup, yet the Challenge's mechanics spend

two-thirds of their time just trying to keep my X-wings flying, let alone maintaining space superiority against newer NR or pirate fighters.

I know this is outside of your remit, but I am calling in every favour you owe me (remember the Duke's concubine's hand-maidens on Caladan?). I can't keep putting my pilots' lives at risk, or my own, for that matter, when there has to be some alternative. We have a hugely important role in reconnaissance and supply line disruption, but at some point very soon, we will be a greater threat to our own people than the enemy.

I am asking for you to do what you do best, and find me either a batch of newer models that are being flown by rookies, or a shipment of NOS replacement T-65 parts. Shit, I'll even take whatever R-unit droids that can be scrounged up, as they're the perfect complement to our mechs here and will help lessen the maintenance loads.

I haven't spoken with the COM about this yet; I'm doing my own enquiries through my old ISB network and contacts. I need to present him with a solution rather than the problem (which he is absolutely aware of). I'm certain that between the two of us, I can provide some solid intelligence that the COM can action with a level of confidence in success.

Its back to the sim for some more training for me. We've been practising a new tactic of using 3 fighters against NRN Frigates with some success. The load-outs aren't exactly what you'd call traditional, and we'd be in a hell of a time if those Frigates launch their own fighters, but our simulations consistently point to scenarios where we can disable the Frigates before they can deploy. Destroying them is a different matter ...

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

GDJ

TWO

ORIGINATOR : Colonel Ginojoh MELBIL, Nar Shaddaa, Mid-Rim Directorate, Security Operations, IMPERIAL SECURITY BRANCH

CLASSIFICATION : RESTRICTED-PERSONAL (non-military encryption; +FG235 cypher)

ATTENTION : Major Graf D'JINN, Wing X, ISD-II CHALLENGE

I really hope you remember the 235 cypher, or else this is going nowhere! I figured best to use it, specific to our references below. At least you won't have black redaction boxes throughout.

Graf, you one-eyed eel, at some point you're not going to be able to use Caladan as an excuse. If I'm counting correctly, this will be the third time you've brought up Caladan to get me to do 'a favour'.

I will be the first to admit that what you did for me there will never be forgotten, but I could argue that if you save a person's life you're ultimately responsible for it. Having said that, I doubt I can ever truly repay you. At the very least, in galaxy full of deception and betrayal, you can be assured that I will always have your back.

Greetings from Nar Shaddaa.

I hate this place, Graf, I fucking hate it.

Despite a solid team of agents and a surprisingly effective network of informants, the Hutts remain steadfastly in control. No issues from me in that regard, but you'd think they could at least clean up this forsaken Narsh City. 30 years of the same; the Hutts have no love for anything outside of their periphery, unless, that is, if its good for business.

Suffice to say, Narsh City is as dangerous as it ever was, so at least one can count on that. The sewers bubble up through the streets of the middle-levels. It has been years since I've been to the lower-levels. An epidemic broke out earlier this year; forcing a huge percentage of the population to remain indoors. The death rates were horrendous; even though it only affected humans, every other soul on the planet felt its touch. Trade dropped through the floor, even the black market stuff. The legitimate merchants cut their losses and changed to neighbouring planets and systems, which meant that the black market runners became prime targets for NR patrols and Hutt-controlled private security. Early estimates have put the trade down 45% across the board. People have been dying in the streets, and not just from the infection either.

Bah, who am I to complain? We maintain a balance with the Hutts, feeding them with intel and the occasional 'security assistance' against the local NR militias. They leave us well alone, and well paid for the information. They maintain a precarious position between the NR and their own vested interests.

They have always straddled that line, and they will always play one side against the other. It makes for interesting times down in the Mid Rim. You'd enjoy it here.

OK, let's talk about your X-wing problem. I do not, as you well know, have unlimited resources and access to the ISB networks. My position allows a certain amount of leeway in collation and interrogation of data outside of my sphere of influence, but finding starfighters, or even starfighter parts, will raise too many red flags. Your COM may uncover what you're seeking before you do. That will not be presenting him with a solution, rather, it will be presenting him with a problem, which I believe he would not be appreciative of.

But I can do this; I can point you in a general direction, and you will have to do the rest. Surely you haven't forgotten your analytic skills? I imagine they would transfer well to your current role.

I have reinstated your access to the ISB tool- and datasets. Specific to Incom-Freitek Corporation, Fresia, and the Torranix sector.

My suggestion to look: the partners, specifically Alnitak Spar. My words of advice: as always, follow the money.

Good hunting, you Serrenian fox.

Again, this will not count towards Caladan. I would enjoy such an adventure again, at least once, before it's all too late. Though, I highly doubt we'd get out of it twice.

Your friend,

Gino

THREE

Graf crossed the floor of the expansive maintenance hangar. Huddled around one of Firebird's Y-wings was a group of pilots, engrossed in the outcome of a droid ball fight being played out underneath the starfighter's nose. He absent-mindedly sidled up to the pilots, who quickly realised the presence of the Major and swept up the tiny ball droids and pocketed them out of sight.

Mutterings from the group made it apparent that one of their number had failed in their duty of standing watch for precisely such an incursion as a senior officer. Judging by the long glance to the hangar floor, Lt Perkis seemed to be the beneficiary of the displeasure of the other pilots, indicating that it was he who had failed to properly stand guard. The rest of the pilots stood uneasily, knowing they'd been caught. Gambling was something that had, and likely would, always occur during the long downtime between sorties. The pilots of the Challenge were known for a broad variety of games to place bets on, but would usually ensure that such games weren't played so brazenly.

In normal circumstances, the presence of gambling would be considered a serious breach of protocol, and would usually see those involved submitted to some form of disciplinary action. The group of pilots waited expectantly for the Eagle Squadron Commander to mete out an appropriate punishment; at the very least, a sharp reprimand and a promise to have their own Commanders dole out some menial tasks. But Graf was not in a normal circumstance frame-of-mind, and stared blankly at the pilots, who by now were nervously shuffling their feet. The group had become more uneasy; expecting Major Graf D'Jinn to eventually break his silence and unleash some pent-up rage in their direction.

When the Major failed to break the silence, it was LCM Sylas Pitt who stepped forward. Clearing his throat, he asked "Is everything ok, sir?"

Graf blinked, as if coming to from a deep sleep. His eyebrows went up, and he looked with purpose at each of the pilots. He spent quite a bit longer looking at Lt Perkis, who was the only Eagle pilot amongst the group, before finally turning back to Sylas and replying, "Everything is fine, Lieutenant Commander. Unless you are all involved in maintenance of your craft, or there is a mission that I'm not yet privy to, I would suggest you immediately return to your respective quarters."

The group noticeably relaxed, and quickly dispersed. Lt Perkis did not stick around, but fell in with the other pilots and hastily departed the hangar.

He leaned against the smooth nose of the Y-wing. The

ambient sounds of the hangar returned; compressors automatically switched, plasma torches spat, the low hum from the power generators. His eyes caught the familiar lines of his squadron's T-65 X-wings, their streamlined shapes low and menacing, despite the state of disassembly of several of them, his own included. He noticed his personal R2 droid happily working away under the port wing. Graf could just make out the droid's whistling. "It's getting better", he thought. "More tuneful. Not so random. What a strange little machine it is."

His thoughts were suddenly interrupted by the hulking figure of Commander LegionX. Graf was a very tall man himself, but LegionX was a commanding physical presence. Almost as broad across his shoulders as the business end of a turbolaser, Graf always wondered how the Commander squeezed himself into the cockpit of a TIE.

"This is uncharacteristic of you."

LegionX wore a mask and a rebreather, and in public it never came off. The mask was disconcerting to most, with a permanently nightmarish grin. With the stilted, mechanical edge to his voice from the

rebreather, as well as his size, LegionX was amongst the most feared officers in the Emperor's Hammer fleet. Behind closed doors however, the Coruscanti giant was known for his patience and empathy. Amongst the senior officers of the Challenge, Commander LegionX was seen as a voice of calm and reason. It remained a closely-held secret amongst the commanders, as Vice Admiral Naillo preferred to employ more traditional Sith ways, whereby fear was as useful a tool as was respect. Graf had always been at odds with this approach, and wondered if his Squadron Commander counterpart would've preferred to be a bit more open with his Thunder pilots. Regardless of his disposition, the mask would remain on, and the Imperial pilots would always treat him with a level of uncertainty that comes from not knowing what lies beneath.

Graf sighed, and looked squarely at the grinning mask. "I should've disciplined them?" "That is correct. And you would've done so normally, albeit leniently. What concerns you?"

"Do you remember when one of my pilots was lost on our way to Tusorix? His hyperdrive failed, and he found himself stranded parsecs away from the nearest Imperial outpost."

"Yes, I recall this unfortunate situation. I also recall that the pilot conducted themselves in an exemplary manner, as befitting a pilot of the Infiltrator Wing, and safely returned himself and his craft back to our fold.

You refer instead to the X-wings themselves."

Graf nodded, impressed that LegionX had picked up on the core of the problem so quickly.

LegionX continued, "You are worried as to the longer-term issues that these craft will continue to present. You believe that the failure of your pilot's X-wing is symptomatic of the entirety of your squadron's readiness."

Graf smiled faintly. "Am I that transparent?"

"Not at all," LegionX responded. "But it is apparent that you have serious concerns for your pilots. You made it clear during our last strategy meeting when you acquiesced for Firebird to take on tasks that you would normally fight for."

"The COM will of course take these things into account, but will not accept faulty starfighters as an excuse to deploy."

"To which he is correct. The COM has a growing number of concerns in this sector alone. The loss of an entire squadron is unacceptable."

Graf visibly bristled.

LegionX cut him off, and continued, "You believe that unless something is done, he will literally have the loss of an entire squadron due to the unreliable Eagle starfighters."

There was silence between the two men. Graf focused again on the R2 unit. "It's changed its whistle again," he thought. "Is it picking up on the tone of our conversation?" Indeed, the R2 was whistling a tune that comprised of two melodies; one was high and trilling, played in a minor key, discordant and depressing. The other was slower, steady and grounded, anchoring the first melody to itself, and not letting it get away.

LegionX followed Graf's gaze across the hangar. "You have a plan?"

Graf shook his head no. "Not entirely, no. But I have information. I have the beginnings of a plan."

"When will you share this with Silwar?"

"When I have the plan in its entirety. I need to present the COM with the solution, not the problem." LegionX tilted his head. "Is that R2 unit whistling a song?"

"You picked up on it too, huh? Yeah, it's been doing it for a while. It's getting much better as well."

“That is very interesting. But back to your problem; your command is suffering because you are too caught up in this as an issue. Ignoring small disciplinary infractions such as gambling in the hangar might not mean much to the pilots, but it means a great deal to Silwar. If you drop the ball on the little things you are certainly dropping the ball on the big ones too. Tie this up quickly, and present something to the COM, regardless of whether it is a complete plan.”

Graf turned back to the Coruscanti. “Alright. I will. I’ll almost there.”

“If you have doubts before bringing this to Silwar, seek out advice from someone better versed in battle tactics. I would suggest Major Honsou. I cannot think of a finer tactician. I do not doubt your analysis, but a second opinion on the how will only strengthen your argument.”

LegionX bowed his head towards Graf, and strode away towards one of the exits.

Graf walked over to his X-wing. He stooped down, and moved underneath the wing, to where the R2 droid continued to work on a power coupling. The droid’s eye swivelled to watch the Major. “Do we have enough data to make a call?” he asked the droid.

The R2 let out a long whistle and series of beeps, and then broke into a melody that was cheerful and bright. Graf nodded, and rapped his knuckles on the R2’s dome head. “Alright. Let’s go over it one last time.”

FOUR

The Major’s quarters were on the starboard side of the star destroyer’s wedge, just underneath the bridge superstructure. It was a large area, with an adjoining bedroom, bathroom and a small kitchenette, which all led off from the main room. A ceiling to floor viewing port dominated the space. Two wooden armchairs faced outwards, a small sidetable nestled between them.

Against one wall was a series of shelves groaning under the weight of books. A long, narrow couch rested alongside the wall adjacent to the viewing port, with a large canvas artwork hung above it. The art itself was bright and colourful, quite at odds with the muted tones of the furnishings of the rest of the room. A solid, freestanding desk sat off to one side, a series of monitors sitting atop, and a holo floated in space directly above it. Graf’s black R2 unit stood silently beside the desk, projecting the holo from its lens.

Graf sat at the desk, the familiar blue glow from the holo illuminating his face, his eyes darting back and forth among the clusters of infographics, cargo manifests and comms logs. He scribbled on a datapad in his lap without taking his gaze from the screens, and occasionally nodded, as if answering a question that he had put to himself. His hair was a mess. He sat in a plain white t-shirt, his uniform jacket thrown across the back of the desk chair when he had removed it hours earlier.

After a long while, Graf triumphantly threw the datapad onto the desk. He stood up and stretched, his tall frame arching back over itself. He crossed the room into the bathroom, splashed some cold water on his face and yawned deeply.

A chime notified the Major of a visitor at his door. He poked his head out of the bathroom and looked towards the screen set into the door frame. It was the Eagle Squadron XO, Commander Xylo Pethtel. “Come in!” shouted Graf. He grabbed a towel and started to dry his face and wet hair. The door slid open and the SQXO walked into the room.

“What is it, XP?” Graf asked, without turning from the mirror.

“Sir, you missed the sim training again.”

Graf knew his SQXO well enough that if he let the silence linger, Xylo would fill it. He was tired, his focus was elsewhere, and he wasn’t in the mood for pleasantries or chitchat. Xylo recognised the look on his CMDR’s face, and obliged.

“Sir, this is the second sim session you’ve missed in a row. You will recall this was a training session with

Firebird, and General Stryker was none too happy with your absence.”

“General Stryker can get...” Graf started to mumble under his breath, but caught himself. “Is everything alright?” Xylo asked.

Graf dropped the towel and walked into the living room. He smiled and nodded.

“Yeah, yeah I am now. And I want to show you something. Before that, please go and see if Major Honsou and Colonel Marenta will come to my quarters right away.”

The young commander nodded, saluted, turned sharply on his heel and headed for the door.

FIVE

Xylo returned about twenty minutes later, accompanied by Colonel Marenta. The two officers buzzed themselves into Graf’s quarters, and were greeted by a fresh-looking Major in a clean uniform.

“Major Honsou will be with us momentarily,” XP announced.

“Please, sit, make yourselves comfortable,” Graf motioned towards the armchairs. Colonel Marenta had been in many officer’s quarters, and took the room in in a single glance, with her eyes resting momentarily on the painting above the couch. She moved one of the armchairs so that it was facing inwards, seated herself, and let her gaze go back to the art. XP remained standing off to the side of the desk.

The door buzzed again, and Xylo crossed the floor to let Major Honsou enter. He stepped into the room, nodded to Marenta and Graf, and sat in the other armchair.

“What’s going on, Graf? This a mutiny?” Marenta asked.

Honsou snorted. “Mutiny or not, I’ll take a drink please.”

Graf smiled, “No to the mutiny, but yes to the drinks. Marenta?”

“Yes please,” she said. “I’ll take some Corellian wine if you have any. I can do without the hard spirits for a while.”

Graf nodded to Xylo, “would you please fetch everyone some drinks? I will have the wine also. Honsou?” “Wine will be good, thanks.”

Xylo walked into the kitchenette and busied himself

with glasses and a bottle opener. Graf turned to the two senior Challenge officers. “I have a proposal.”

“See? Mutiny!” Marenta said to Honsou.

Honsou raised his eyebrows. “Let’s hear it.”

Xylo brought the drinks out, poured a glass for all but himself, and took a seat. Honsou took a deep mouthful of the dark amber liquid. Marenta merely swirled the wine and breathed in its perfume. Graf left his on the desk.

“Please allow me a brief history lesson, my good officers,” Graf began. “Our story is about the T-65 X-wing ... the fighter that killed the first Death Star. Incom Engineering took the best bits of the ARC-170 and the Z-95 Headhunter and packaged it into a revolutionary design that was revered for its role flexibility and refined combination of speed, durability and combat lethality.

“This fighter was the spearhead of the rebellion push against the Empire. Favouring the strategy of avoiding large-scale fleet actions, the Rebels successfully deployed snub-fighters against lone ISDs, with significant capital ship losses on the Imperial side. The X-wings, in force, were simply too fast and too well-armed, and could easily hold their own against our TIE squadrons. In short, a devastating and outstanding fighter.

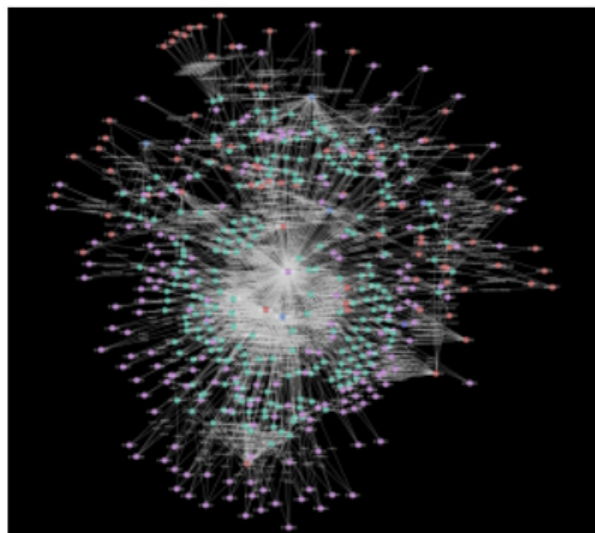
“The Emperor’s Hammer brought the Infiltrator Wing into operation in about 4ABY, before being

disbanded about ten years later. The Wing utilised captured NR-fighters and an MC-80 cruiser, and were very effective at behind-line disruption. The Redemption was a hugely decorated ship, and caused significant consternation for the newly formed Republic forces in contested territories. Following the destruction of the Redemption and the catastrophic losses to the Infiltrator Wing, the surviving IW pilots were returned to the TIE lines, and the remaining X- and A-wings were mothballed or destroyed.

“Fourteen years passed, and under the instruction of High Admiral Plif, Admiral Dempsey revived the Infiltrator Wing aboard our own Challenge...”

“Graf,” interrupted Marenta. “I’ll drink your booze. I’ll hear you out. But get to the point already.”

Graf nodded. “OK. Here it is. Our T-65s are forty years old. They’re slow and unreliable. At our last analysis, we’re spending an average of eight hours in maintenance for one hour of flight time. I’ve got one pilot missing, not in combat; another who managed to crawl back to our forces after his hyperdrive failed; and the possibility



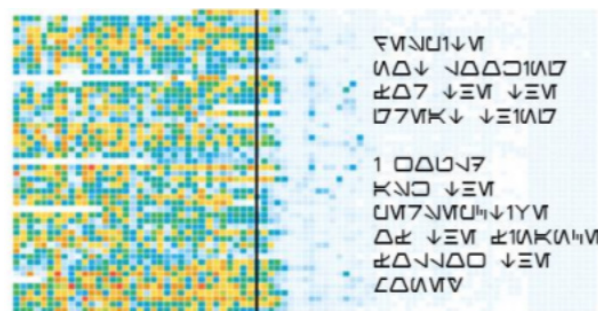
of transfer requests coming up on the grounds of personal safety which I will not refuse.

“I want to ground the Eagle X-wings, mothballed and stored in a disused hangar on an allied planet.” “You want to tear your own squadron’s talons out?” asked Honsou. “To be replaced with what?” “Fresh-off-the-line Incom-FreiTek T-85s.”

Marenta and Honsou snorted. Xylo shifted in his seat, but looked thoughtful.

Marenta said, “The NR can’t produce them fast enough for their own navies. We have encountered none since entering the Outer Regions. How are you going to get twelve brand new versions of the republic’s latest starfighter when we are hundreds of parsecs away from the closest - and I might add, armed and ready - NR squadron that actually has them?”

Graf sat at his desk, and started typing. A second later, the viewport dimmed and a solitary image was displayed on the glass. The other three officers were silent while they studied the image. Honsou spoke first, “What the hell are we looking at here?”



Marenta shushed him, her eyes darting furiously back and forth, before quietly speaking, “These are cargo manifests. He’s found twelve - well, it doesn’t say what they are - but twelve things. They’re moving across the Mid-Rim, very slowly I might add. Graf, you’d better tell us the rest of the story.”

“Marenta is bang-on. I have assessed that these are T-85s, noting their departure point, size of the freighter, and the players involved. I surmise that they’re disassembled and currently not operational.”

Xylo spoke up, “Sir, how do you know they’re T-85s. There can be a lot of things that will fit in a freighter.”

“You’re damn right. It’s a Baleen-class heavy freighter, so there is an awful lot of things that will fit. Let me show you some more datafiles...”

“Before you do that,” said Honsou. “Answer me this:

where did you get all of this info?” Graf fell silent for a beat. “I can’t say.”

“You’re trying to convince us...”

“I’m not trying to convince you,” Graf interrupted.

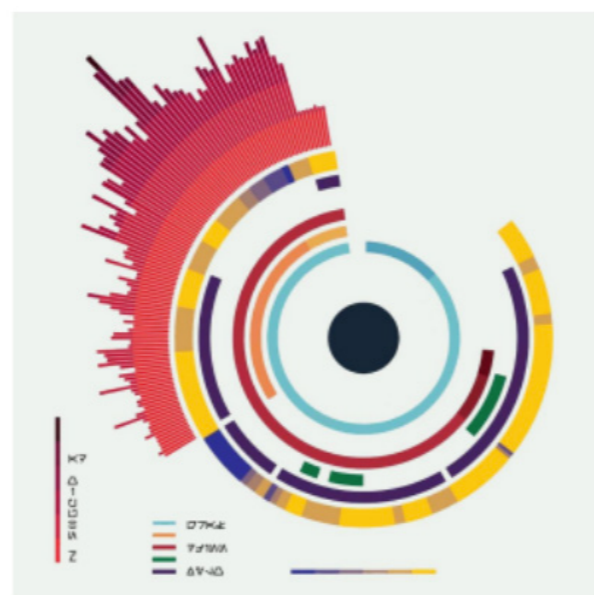
“Fine, then you’re trying to convince the Commodore...”

“The Commodore will understand that this information is valid and accurate. He will be advised where the intelligence has come from. For now, I am not at liberty to advise you any further on how this information has come to me. I have invited you here review the intel before you, and make a determination as to whether or not this is viable, and a risk worth taking. If you see value in this as a possible operation, then I will take this to the Commodore.”

The officers mulled on this for a while. Honsou leaned back in his chair, and smiled. “Fine, let’s continue.”

“Let me show you the next datafiles.” Graf replaced the previous graphic with two new analysis pieces. “What do you see here?”

Both Marenta and Xylo pulled up their own datapads and started typing. Honsou spoke first, “I know that name. Alnitak Spar. She used to work for Kuat Drive Yards, prior to Moff Maksim handing them over to the NR. A senior project director, if I recall. This was thirty odd years ago.”



“That’s right, Major, Alnitak Spar used to work for the Empire. Since, she has become an executive at Incom-Freitek.”

“And you have linked her, through credit flows, to Vrad Di?”

“Who is Vrad Di?” asked Xylo.

Honsou replied, “Vrad Di is the successor to Rinnrivin Di’s crime syndicate. Based out of Tallaan, they control virtually the entirety of the Tapani Sector. Smuggling, gambling, piracy, you name it. Heavy hitters. They rival some of the Hutt clans in wealth and influence. Well, they did, until Rinnrivin was killed.

“What’s the connection?” asked Marenta.

“This is where it gets a bit murky. Either Spar has some very serious gambling debts - of which I can find no further proof of - or its political. My guess is she wants to take a run as Senator for her home planet of Kiffu. It makes sense for Vrad Di to back her as well, considering Kiffu is virtually part of the sector. They’d make a strong alliance.”

“So she needs a lot of capital,” Honsou said. “OK, I’ll accept that there’s a relationship between Vrad Di and Spar. I’ll accept that she’s trying to buy the senatorship. How are you convinced that these are -85s?”

“Think about it - she’s only going to get the large funds she needs from an illegitimate source. Her only bartering point is products that her company manufactures. Incom-Freitek have shifted almost all of their manufacturing capability to T-85 production, following T-70s and U-wings being superceded. They continue with spare parts and engine production for older models, but the T-85 is realistically the only thing the company creates anymore. And why would they diversify? They’ve got a devastating starfighter design, and a rock-solid contract with the NRDF.”

“But why would a crime syndicate want them? Why not commandeer a frigate or even a Star Destroyer? I’m sure one of the remant Imp warlords across the Mid-Rim would be willing to offload one for the right price?” asked Xylo.

Marenta answered for Graf, “If they get a Star Destroyer, they become a literal military threat, regardless if they could even summon enough people to effectively crew it. They become a target for the NRDF. With a squadron of X-wings, they’re much less obvious. They will be arguably more of a military threat, but they can hide their numbers.”

Graf continued, “It even makes sense for them to cosmetically modify the T-85s so that any observations of their capability is further mitigated. An untrained eye will state they were T-70s; obviously still a concern, but less so.”

Honsou added, “A syndicate with a squadron of T-85 X-wings - even NRDF will think twice about attempting to intercede within their systems. To pirates and smugglers and free merchants, they will, in effect, represent a sovereign navy. What about pilots?”

“Loads of mercenaries, left over from the Galactic War, plus any number of NRDF-trained pilots who are bored and looking for a pay rise,” replied Graf. “Probably not battle-hardened, but with those ships and under a competent commander...”

“Why are they being transported so slowly?” Marenta asked. “It’s taken them, what? Eight weeks from their departure point.”

“They’re planet-hopping, under the guise of normal trade. They’re smuggling these craft out under the noses of the NR Defence Fleet. No long runs. Spending time in the ports. Probably some legitimate trade thrown in there for good measure.”

“So it means that we have time to intercept?” Honsou asked.

Graf nodded. “That’s how I see it. And I think I know where they’re stopping next.” “Skip that bit, we can return to it. Tell me about the plan to intercept,” said Honsou.

“One last hurrah with our T-65s. Considering where the freighter is likely to be, and its recent traverse of the Galaxy, sending an Imperial battlegroup is too risky. I want to depart with as much haste as possible, accompanied by a small contingent of stormtroopers aboard a U-wing, if we can get it flying in time. I’ll have one of my pilots flying the U-wing.

“Using the X-wings under the guise of NRDF on a sortie, we should be able to move across the Mid-Rim with no resistance and hopefully no detection. My pilots are well trained in navigating NR systems. Upon arrival, we will drop out of hyperspace and take up a defensive perimeter around the freighter. If we’ve timed it well, most of the crew should be planetside. Those big Baleen-class freighters can’t enter atmosphere, so they’re usually left with a skeleton crew in orbit.”

“An armed skeleton crew,” Marenta pointed out.

“Nothing that the stormtroopers won’t be able to deal with.”

“And then?” asked Xylo.

“Take over control of the ship, and make the jump to a rendezvous point with an Arquitens cruiser, where we can transfer the -85s over. Dump the freighter and hop

it back to the Challenge.”

Honsou looked thoughtful. He rubbed absent-mindedly at his elbow, and tapped his foot, taking in Graf’s basic plan and considering the angles.

“What if they’re escorted?” he asked.

“As in, the possibility that the freighter has been shadowed this whole time by a more heavily armed ship?”

“Or ships, but yes. What if you arrive on scene and are immediately under fire when your intentions become clear?”

“This is a full squadron of Eagle pilots, sir,” Xylo proudly spoke. “We can handle ourselves.”

“No doubt about it, Commander,” Honsou replied. “Let’s say that Eagle immediately comes under fire and you can deal with it - but what if the escort specifically targets the freighter? What if their instructions are ‘if that freighter so much as moves without our authority, then destroy it’? That’s a lot of work and risk for no payoff. Plus, your cover is blown by that stage and you will be hunted.”

“What do you suggest?”

Honsou shrugged. “Difficult situation. Where do you think they’ll be?”

“They’ve had quite the run. Tracking them has proved very difficult. They departed Fresia, following the Metellos Trade Route for the most part. They diverted around Corellia, but found themselves on the Corellian Run, where they made it as far out as Druckenwell before doubling back to Corellia. They’re

now on the Corellian Trade Spine. We’re going to meet them at Yag’Dhul, the intersection between the Spine and Rimma route. I think their plan is to transfer to the Giju Run, and go all the way to Tallaan. If we don’t get them at Yag’Dhul, we may have a couple of attempts at either Ghorman or Giju, but I doubt they’d stop considering how close to their destination they’d be.”

”Ooof, Inner Rim. Was hoping for a bit further out,” said Honsou. “That’ll be rough territory.”

“You’re right, it will,” Graf agreed. “Especially those trade routes converging on that system, there will be a lot of traffic. But we’ve got a number of hyperspace lanes to exit on. And, the more traffic there is, the more we can blend in.”

“As much as a squadron of X-wings can,” Honsou

retorted. “I think you either need a proper recon of the area, and ascertain as much as possible if there is an escort, or, you could try a feint.”

“How so?”

“Send in some pirates. Small crew. Something that could easily be overpowered and dealt with. It does two things. It allows you to test their defences; and it provides you with evidence of an overt armed escort. Seems unlikely they’d destroy the shipment for a pirate crew of two or three, unless it becomes obvious to them they’d gained control of the freighter and were preparing to jump to hyperspace. It would also give you an understanding of resistance and defences on-board the freighter. Plus - if they do

blow it all up, your squadron remains unengaged and undetected.”

“Its a good idea. But who would volunteer for a mission that potentially gets them vapourised?” “That’s not for me, but you’ve at least got some options to go to Silwar with now.” Graf looked over at his XO. “What do you think?”

“I like it. High risk, high reward.”

“Marenta?” Graf asked.

The Colonel stared at the datafiles before turning to Graf again. “Glad its not for me to decide. But your intel looks good. It would be quite the coup. A squadron of those starfighters would provide some very serious reconnaissance firepower. I think Silwar will have plenty of things to pick at though, which will only make any plan you execute better.”

Graf looked pleased. “Thank you all. I will take this to the Commodore right away. XP - I want you to prepare Eagle squadron for departure within 12hours. Any fighters not ready to fly are to remain grounded, and maintenance crews shifted to the remaining craft. I want Eagle pilots in the hangar assisting. We cannot afford any issues, or to lose anyone along the way like we did with Cupcake.

“Prioritise the U-wing as well. I want it ready to be test-flown by the time I return from seeing the Commodore. Full weapons and systems check.”

“Acknowledged sir. Anything else?” asked Xylo.

“That will be all. You have your orders.”

Xylo stood, saluted to his commander, and departed the room.

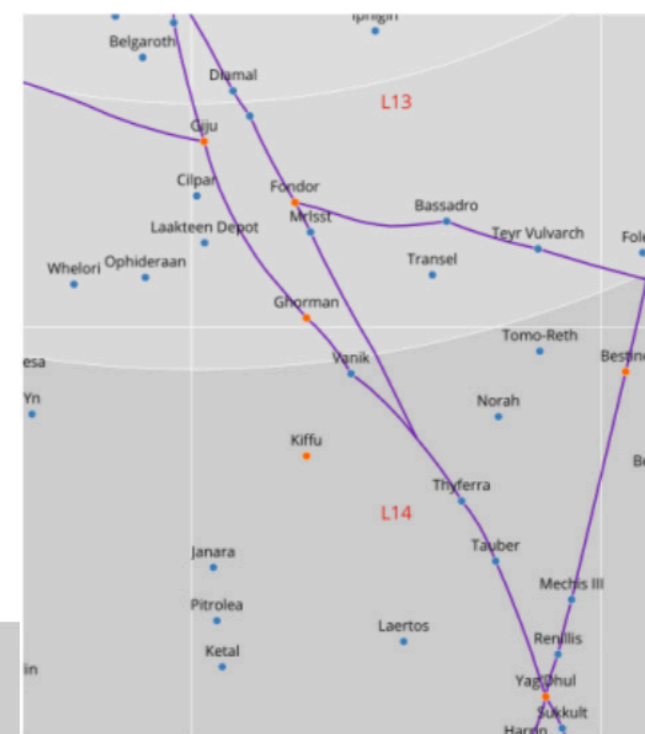
“Anything else?” Graf asked his two colleagues.

Honsou shook his head. “If you get this up, call me immediately and I will come and assist with the tactical planning.”

Marenta said, “You didn’t tell us where you got this data from, but it’s fairly obvious that you’ve got access to some serious intelligence sources. Vice-Admiral Nai’ilo may not be pleased that you have this information before he does.”

“To be fair, this was information I sought out, rather than it coming to me. But, point taken,” Graf replied.

“Otherwise, best of luck.”



THE AIRLOCK PODCAST



NEW EPISODES EVERY WEEK

WATCH AT: [TWITCH.TV/LEGIONX173](https://www.twitch.tv/legionx173)

January 5: an interview with Commodore Silwar Nailo

January 12: an interview with Commodore Phoenix Berkana

January 20: an interview with Commander LegionX himself

January 27: an interview with Honsou and members of Tempest Squadron



PILOT PROFILE: CMDR/CPT LEGIONX THUNDER SQUADRON

CMDR/CPT LegionX/Thunder/Wing X/ISDII Challenge
BS/PCx7/ISMx3/IAR/MoI-BC/MoC-1poc-1goc-1soc-7boc/MUA-Rx2/IS-2SW-1BW-3SR-13BR-2CR/LoC-IS-CS-Rx4/LoS-RS-CSx2-Rx3/CoB [Marksman 3rd] [Gunner's Mate 3rd] {TCCORE-SM/5}

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE TIE CORPS?

It's actually a funny story - one of my flight leads, LCM Ryuzokin, was the one who brought me in, even though he was never in the Emperor's Hammer. He found a poster for the TIE Corps and posted it in my Discord server, and I fell in love immediately. (Sadly, he never earned his Medal of Instruction for recruiting me... because he wasn't part of the TIE Corps at the time!) Before joining, I had been looking for some kind of community, hopping around between various Twitch servers and Discord channel, but the TIE Corps just "clicked"; a milsim-like group that focuses on Star Wars is what I've always been looking for, without realizing it.

HOW HAS THUNDER EVOLVED DURING YOUR CAREER?

I originally had no preference, and was originally placed in Thunder squadron with CMDR Tygra Shadowclaw, with CM Aval as my flight leader. The squadron

went through a little bit of a lull in activity, for various reasons, and people cycled in and out of the Reserves. When browsing the Imperial University courses, I found the Squadron Management course, and took a shot - and scored 100%! Shortly after that, Shadowclaw asked me to help out writing reports, and eventually when he had to leave for the reserves, he selected me to take over as Commander of Thunder Squadron.

Since then we've begun recruiting heavily, as we had lost a number of pilots to the reserves in the months leading up to the end of the year. But, we've already had two new pilots join this month, and things are looking positive.

WHAT DROVE YOU TO START THE PODCAST? WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE FROM IT?

The Airlock Podcast came out of a few things; for one, I wanted to increase my activity on Twitch. I'd been doing regular video gaming streams, although that fell off as I worked on my bachelor's in

Computer Science. My free time diminished, and a few years went by where I wasn't doing anything on my stream. After the previous TIE Corps Podcast was cancelled, I saw an opportunity to step in.

LEGION'S CHALLENGING TIME TRIALS: HOW'S IT GOING?

I first thought nobody was going to get under 3 minutes... and then I thought 2 minutes was an impossible goal. When LT Jospence had a time of close to minute (in a TIE Bomber, which I'd never have expected,) I had to rethink all of my assumptions.

For season 2, the times kept dropping even lower, and we had a time of around 37 seconds from COL Genie!

Season 3 will be a full-year competition with an IS-PW up for grabs, which I expect to bring a lot of attention and competition.

Listen to my interview with LegionX on the Airlock Podcast: <https://www.twitch.tv/videos/1270545267>

T/F Eagle 5 destroyed.

X-WING ALLIANCE UPGRADE PROJECT

HOW TO PLAY (AND WHY)



Pages
Gold 7 destroyed.
-Gamma 17 destroyed.
ta 6 destroyed.
Unknown 2 destroyed.
5 destroyed.

Outcome: Unresolved
Score: 892 Bonus: 30
Instructions
Harkov must be captured.
PLT/1 DS 5 must be captured.
(Bonus: 25) Complete

X-WING ALLIANCE UPGRADE PROJECT

XWAU is a massive mod for X-Wing Alliance, made for free by fans. Its most prominent feature is its graphical upgrades, with more detailed and higher-resolution models. It also allows for playing multiplayer co-op missions, including the game's campaign as well as custom missions. Most impressive is the work put in to creating more detailed models for all of the spacecraft, stations, utilities, planets, and backdrops made available for fans of one of the best space sims in the last couple of decades.

Their website, <https://xwaupgrade.com>, explains everything. Below, we'll explain how to install it and how to play co-op and pvp missions.

INSTALLATION

First, you'll need a separate, clean install of XWA.

If you're using GoG, all you have to do is open GoG Galaxy, select XWA, go to "Extras", and download the offline installer. From there, you can make as many copies as you want.

If you're using Steam, you'll need to go into your library, and click under the "play" button where it says "Auto-Updates Enabled." You will need to disable automatic updates, as XWAU will modify your install. From this point forward, only use the XWAU launcher as described below.

Next, you need to download the "Mega Patch" from the XWAU Downloads Page. Navigate to <https://xwaupgrade.com/index.php> and click on "Downloads" on the left side, and accept the agreement. You will also want to download the latest Upgrade Pack from the same page, currently version "XWAU 2020 Update Version 5.0".

First, install the Mega Patch. I suggest keeping the defaults, only updating the graphic resolution ratio.

Next, install the update, again keeping all of the defaults. This will make sure you have the latest ship models and patches.

To play the game, you will use a new launcher rather than the previous XWA launcher or Steam's "Play" button; it will be an icon of a Rebel helmet titled "Star Wars X-Wing Alliance". This will launch XWAU.

MULTIPLAYER PLAY

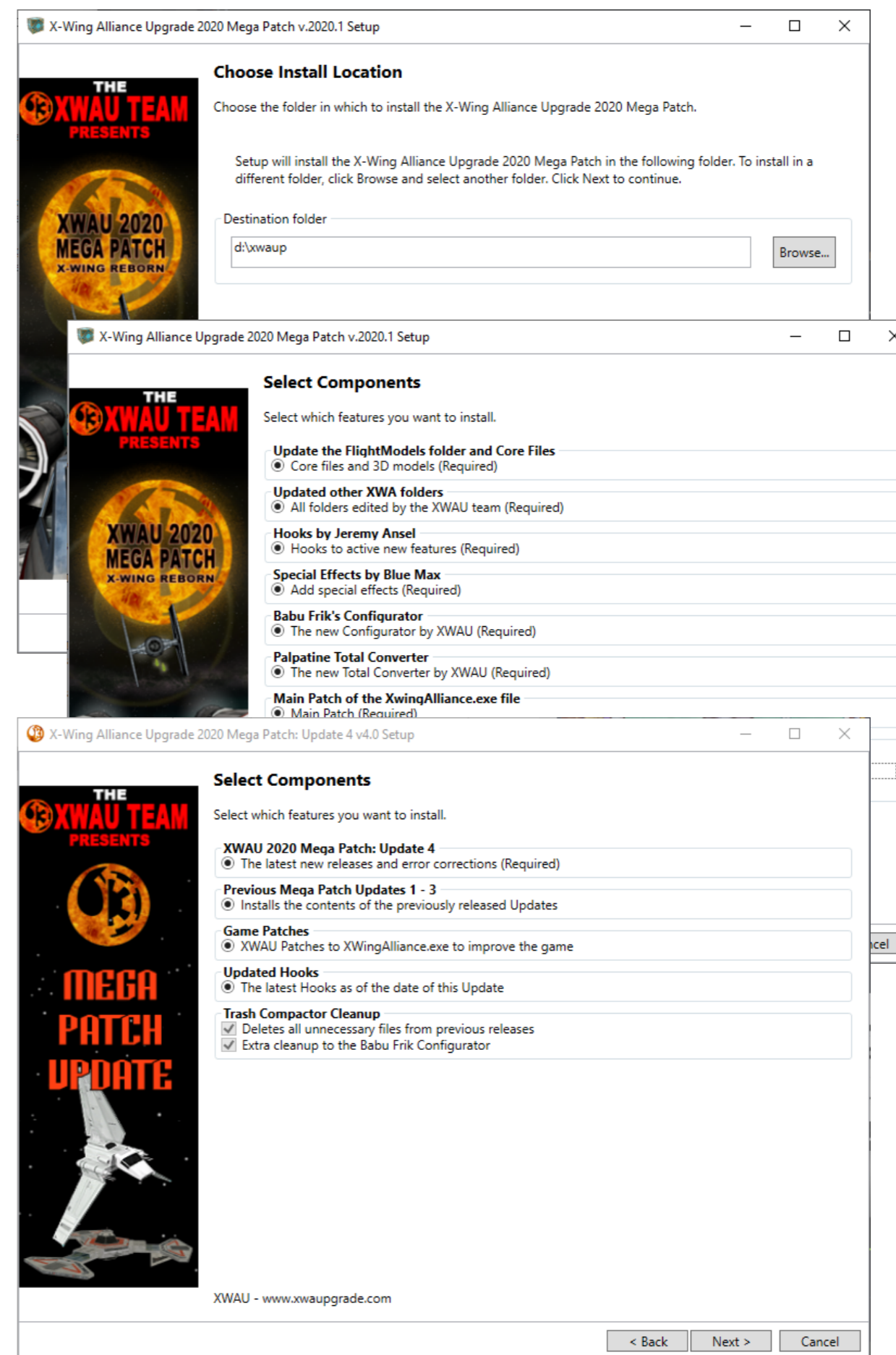
As of November 2021, the Combat Operations Officer

supports playing XWAU as an official multiplayer platform. That means that you can earn Legions of Skirmish and Combat for flying with or against human players!

For matchmaking, it is suggested that you first install Gameranger (<http://www.gameranger.com/>), which is a tool for creating lobbies and matchmaking. This will greatly simplify the task of getting everyone together in a game. After installing, you will need to go to your gameranger settings and make sure that the "XWA" game points to your XWAU install (or revert it if you're switching back to vanilla XWA.)

All you have to do then is create a Gameranger lobby, ask your wingmates to join, and click "host". You should now have a lobby open and can choose a mission for PvE or a skirmish for PvE or PvP.

As a host and player, it often helps to hit "esc", go to Network Options, and adjust Update Settings to the maximum, 59.



HOLO HOME

LCM SYLAS PITT

PART I

Sylas stepped out of the elevator as it came to a stop on the Infiltrator Wing corridor. Briskly walking through the corridor, he made it to his assigned room. While punching in his key code, he was able to make out muffled groans coming from within. Placing his hands on his SE-14r Pistol, he punched in the last number, unlocking, and opening the door. He unholstered his pistol, rushing in and aiming at the source of the noise. Much to his surprise, the intruder happened to be none other than Badkid lounging on his bed with an empty bottle of Chalquilla cradled against his chest. Sylas sighed and holstered his weapon, as the door automatically closed behind him with a soft hiss.

“You can’t be serious.” He mused as he walked closer to the semi-conscious Lieutenant. Badkid looked up at Sylas, smiling softly.

“Oh heeey, took ya long ‘nough,” he said through a drunken smile. He attempted to sit up, only for Sylas to catch him before he dove face-first onto the metal floor. “I’m okay,” he mumbled, trying to push Sylas away. Sylas sighed as he steadied him on the edge of the bed, taking the empty bottle from his hands and placing it on his desk. “Where ya been?” Badkid asked with a heavy tongue.

“Just got back from the planet, we got their power stations up and running.” Sylas responded as he sat at his desk. “Why are you here?” He asked as he watched his friend attempt to stand, only to flop back onto the bed.

Badkid shrugged, looking around for something. “I wanted to share a drink with my friend. Is that not allowed?” He asked before muttering to himself “Where the hell is that bottle?”

“You drank it all, dillweed.” Sylas responded, pointing to the empty bottle on the desk. “I’m curious as to how the hell you’re still breathing after drinking that much, honestly.” Badkid shrugged with a giggle.

“Guess the universe ain’t allowing me to die just yet.” Sylas rolled his eyes to the cynic response.

“Right... Anyways, you should probably go to med bay. Before you actually die.”

“Awww you care about meeeeee,” Badkid teased, smiling from ear to ear.

“No, we just can’t afford a short-staffed squadron.” Sylas responded coldly. He stood and approached Badkid on the bed, grabbing his arm and pulling him up to his feet. “Come on, get up, you drunken lard.”

Badkid groaned as he stood, swaying on his feet as Sylas walked him to the door. Punching in the numbers on the keypad, Sylas opened the door. Just then, Lieutenant Commander Xylo Pethtel was walking past towards his quarters. He stopped when he heard the hiss of an opening door, watching Sylas escorting a drunken Badkid through it.

“Oh, hey Sylas,” he said cheerily. He looked at Badkid with scrutiny. “Is he alright?”

Sylas shook his head, trying his best to keep Badkid on his feet. “This idiot decided to drink a whole bottle of Chalquilla,” Xylo’s eyes went wide as Sylas nodded in understanding. “My reaction exactly.”

“Well, get him to med bay, then.” Xylor muttered, watching Badkid sway and mumble some words to an obscure song.

“I plan to.” Sylas responded. He turned to walk down

the hallway towards the elevators when Xylo spoke up again.

“Oh, hey, did you happen to hear?” Sylas stopped to listen to Xylo, keeping a tight grip on Badkid’s arm, keeping him on his feet. “Admiral Silwar approved holo messages to our families this year.”

“Really?” He asked as Xylo produced his data pad, showing the announcement posted by the Admiral. Sylas subconsciously grabbed the data pad to better read, causing him to release his grip on Badkid, who fell with a solid THUD on the ground, followed by a groaning complaint. Sylas ignored him as he read through the guidelines and expectations. “Interesting...” He mused as Xylo knelt by Badkid to check on him. Xylo looked up at Sylas, who simply handed him his data pad back, turned on his heels, and walked back towards his quarters.

“What about BK?” Xylo asked as he glanced down at a delirious Badkid.

“Tag, you’re it.” Sylas responded flatly as he opened his door and stepped back in.

“WAIT A MINUTE—” Xylo began but Sylas closed and locked his door. Xylo groaned and looked down at Badkid, who had begun to drool and giggle incoherently. He sighed and grabbed Badkid’s legs, dragging him down the hall towards the elevator shafts. “Fluff you, Sylas...”

PART II

After setting up the holographic camera, Sylas changed into his Dress Uniform. Adjusting his ribbons in front of a mirror, he quietly mused about what to say. It had been far too long since he last spoke to his mother, let alone sent any sort of message home. After adjusting his slacks, he took a long look at himself in the mirror.

Just a year ago, he was a wanderer among the stars. Seeking purpose had brought him to the doorsteps of the TIE Corps. Shortly after his training, he was assigned to the Infiltrator Wing aboard the Challenge; an assignment he reluctantly accepted. However, the assignment has been nothing short of serendipitous, seeing his squad and ship mates slowly become a family to him. Brothers and sisters in-arms, fighting for a common goal. He smiled to himself as he finished adjusting his Dress uniform, stepping away from the mirror and standing before the camera. Taking a deep breath, he set his camera to record.

“This is Lieutenant Commander Sylas Pitt,” He began,

attempting to use an authoritative tone, holding his head high. “This message is intended for Rika Pitt.”

He paused for a minute before shaking his head and stopping the recording. “No, that’s too serious...” He muttered to himself, as he began to pace, racking his brain for alternatives. The light tap of his boots on the metal ground was the only sound in his quarters, as he fiddled with the hem of his Dress uniform pensively. He stopped and faced the camera again, taking a deep breath before beginning to record again.

“Hey mom, I hope this message finds you well,” he began, taking a moment to steady himself before continuing. “It’s been a while since we’ve seen each other, let alone speak, but I wanted you to know that I’m okay. I, uh... I hope you’re okay, too...” He trailed off, feeling suddenly lost for words.

He sighed and stopped the recording before flopping down on the edge of his bed. He held his face in his hands with a groan, placing his elbows on his knees and leaning forward. He held himself there for a minute, trying to think and clear his head at the same time. Sitting up straight and looking at the camera, he pondered about how to best approach this message home. His mother was once an Officer in the Imperial Navy. He couldn’t decide if she expected proper formalities, or if she expected a simple message from her only son.

Better safe than sorry, I guess, he thought to himself as he stood up and fixed his Dress uniform once again. He stood before the camera, taking another deep breath, steadying himself and taking a formal stance. Setting the camera to record, he began once again.

“This is Lieutenant Commander Sylas Pitt of Firebird Squadron aboard the Challenge,” he began, maintaining his posture with his arms behind his back. “I hope this message finds you well, mother. It has been almost two years since we last spoke or saw each other. I want you to sleep easy knowing that I am safe and alive.” He smiled softly, beginning to relax his posture.

“We are currently in orbit around the planet of Tusorix. It’s a small, independent system that will soon join us in our fight against the New Republic. Peace negotiations have been rocky, to say the least. We were supposed to have a moment of respite on the tropical planet before they were savagely attacked by an unknown entity. We had scuffles along the atmosphere and shores, but, thankfully, we triumphed. Some of the natives thought it was our presence that caused the attack before they realized that the attacks came from their own oceans.” He paused for a moment, reeling in his memories of the battle, remembering seeing Badkid’s Y-Wing go down into the water, followed by his own, waking up

on the shore, and eventually fixing the destroyed power supplies of the planet. He sighed before continuing.

“BK made it here, safe and sound. I’m not sure if he’s going to record a message for his parents, considering he had to be dragged to med bay verging on alcohol poisoning. So, if you could, as a favor to me, let his parents know that he’s alive and well? I’m sure he’d appreciate it once he sobers up.” He chuckled softly.

“As far as my career goes...” he paused, thinking for a moment before continuing. “My career has been steadily going. Due to the nature of my assignments, most of the information I’m sure you’d want to know are severely classified. I can mention, however, how well it’s been going. As you heard in the beginning of this message, I have been promoted up to a Lieutenant Commander, and there are rumors that my promotion to Commander is not too far from now.” He smiled a bit, unfolding his hands from behind his back, clasping them in front of his torso. He sighed, taking a moment to compose himself, feeling tears well up in his eyes.

“I miss you, mom... The two years I spent wandering have been difficult and full of hardships. I worked on Corellia for a year and made my way to my assignment aboard the Challenge. I...” he trailed off for a moment before coming back to it. “I wish you were here, mom. It terrifies me to know that you are on Coruscant by yourself, surrounded by sympathizers of anarchy and discord.” He shook his head, wiping his tears, slightly sniffing. He sighed and looked at the camera again. “My salary isn’t exactly the best, but I have been able to save up some credits so far... And I plan on getting you out of Coruscant, mom. We’ll have plenty of land to have a farm, away from the denizens of the New Republic.” He smiled at the camera, imagining his mother smiling at the message as well.

“The Corps has been amazing, mom. It’s... quite a bit different from the old Empire. In a good way. There are some Ewoks and Wookies that work with us, and, arguably, some of our best pilots as well.” He chuckled softly. “The Corps has completely removed the Xenophobic guidelines that the old Empire enforced, and it has helped us realize that by not excluding someone of a different race, we can grow and become stronger, working together towards a common goal: Peace and order in the galaxy. We realized that structure is not a human concept, and any race willing to fight for order is welcomed in our fold.”

He fell silent for a moment, lost in thought, before looking at the camera again. “Well, like I said, it has been a rather successful year for us. The Challenge has been awarded the title of Flagship of the TIE Corps after an arduous month of competing against the other ships. It was... A painfully long month, but we came out

victorious.” He looked down at his ribbon rack on his chest, reaching up and gently holding the Bronze Star beneath it. “I earned this for my participation.” He said with a smile before letting go of the star and looking back at the camera. “As far as my assignment goes... I can’t say much other than the fact that we have been making it difficult for the New Republic to get a solid footing against us or Imperial interests.” He smirked, giving the camera a wink. He chuckled softly, adjusting his uniform once again.

“Well... That’s all I really have to say for now. I miss you, mom, and I hope you are doing well. You can surely expect to hear from me soon, possibly to get you out of there. Until then, please, stay safe. I love you, and I hope you have a wonderful holiday season. This is Lieutenant Commander Sylas Pitt, signing off.” He gave a quick salute before shutting the camera down.

He sighed softly, reaching for his data pad on his desk. Glancing at the screen, he saw that Xylo had messaged him.

“You owe me for this.”

“Oh, shit, I forgot about BK.” He said as he ran out of his room, still wearing his Dress uniform.

PART III

The med bay doors hissed open, as Sylas stepped through to find Badkid on a bed to the left. Sylas sighed and walked over to him, sitting by the bed. Badkid groaned and turned his head to face his friend, scrutinizing Sylas for a moment.

“Uh, why exactly are you wearing your Dress uniform?” He asked, sitting up a bit.

“Admiral Silwar green-lit holo messages back home,” Sylas responded. “I just finished recording mine to mom.”

“Oh, sweet... I thought I died for a minute, and you were already preparing the funeral.” Badkid chuckled softly.

“Trust me, if you died, I’d be first in line to pull the lever on the airlock,” Sylas joked as he leaned back in his seat. “Not much of a ceremony if you’re just a Lieutenant.” He smirked as Badkid glared at him.

“It’s not my fault I haven’t been promoted.” He grumbled.

“Actually, it is.” Sylas said as he pulled out his data pad, opening Badkid’s personnel file, and handing the pad to

him. “You’re just too dense to figure it out.”

Badkid yanked the pad out of his hand, as his eyes scanned the screen. He paused and shrugged before looking back at Sylas. “Okay...? Mind giving me a hint, then?”

Sylas rolled his eyes before snatching the pad out of Badkid’s hand. “Passing IWATS was only for you to be assigned to a squadron, ya dunce.” He leaned back in his seat, putting his data pad away. “You gotta pass the TCCORE exam.”

Badkid rolled his eyes and groaned, laying himself back down. “I didn’t join a military operation to study.”

“No, but you’re expected to know what is expected of you. Including your knowledge of Pilot Manual.” He smirked, knowing his friend all too well. “Speaking of expectations, do you plan on sending a message home to your parents?” He asked curiously.

Badkid sighed and shrugged. “I don’t know, honestly. What is there to say? I’m alive, I’m well, I’m working and making credits... There really isn’t much to report.”

Sylas chuckled softly before standing up. “Well, I told mom to give your folks your regards. Now, focus on detoxing. We got a lot to do when you get better.” He began to walk out of the med bay as Badkid called out after him.

“The hell does that even mean? Did something happen?”

“No, but you got a lot to study,” Sylas responded with a smirk as the med bay doors hissed closed, cutting off the protesting groan from Badkid.

CREDITS

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Art, p. 8

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Content p. 14-17

SYLLAS

Content p. 50-53

The Climbing Challenger

or how we've tiptoed our way into some pretty fine glasses



Onward and upward, climbing the ladder, striving to succeed. All that ambition can wear you out. So, five years ago, when our Chalquilla took its first timid steps across to the other ships, we knew we had our work cut for us.

You see, on board the ISD Challenge, they had been enjoying our Chalquilla for years.

On the other ships, discerning drinkers had long before committed themselves to other tipples.

Instead of taking brash steps to change all that, we decided that good taste would ultimately prevail. And it did.

After all, who could resist that blend of fine Chalquilla from our five separate distilleries?

But what now? Should the Climbing Challenger just sit back and enjoy its own little nip of success?

Sadly, we can't.

Because between you and us, when a newcomer tiptoes their way into the upper glasses, they have to fight to stay there.



**The Finest Chalquilla in
the Outer Regions**