

Recon Run – RTF Fiction Submission #6 – GN La’an (#10540)

His sensors began to hiss and stutter, the control panel showing static or conflicting reports as La’an pushed ahead, all while his early warning suite alarmed loudly in the tight confines of the TIEs cockpit. The initial hard return had been replaced by a wash of static jamming, but he was still being looked at by a system powerful enough to cut through their own jamming of his systems – fortunately such a powerful sweep would be visible to Horus at the trailing limits of the system and he would be heading into hyperspace as soon as he cleared the asteroid belt. Clearly Admiral Dempsey had established a presence in system, but it was down to La’an to figure out its scale.

Flying by eye alone he began to pick out the gleam of starlight reflecting from metal hulls, fighters emerging from the shadow of the gas giant’s outermost moon and the ominous form of a Nebulon-B following them like a slowly stirring predator – presumably the source of the jamming. At a glance it looked like the same frigate he had encountered earlier, which he at least knew was two fighters down on whatever complement it held – not much of a reassurance as he counted four separate attack craft heading for him. The distance closed to 10km and he finally managed to pick out additional details, noting the three lead fighters looked to be TIE Interceptors, with a more lumbering TIE Bomber in their wake and falling further behind as time flew by.

Checking his warhead load he realised that he was down to the last three missiles in his magazine, so he stood no chance at all of doing anything to hurt the frigate. Going by his previous encounter he knew the TIEs would be unshielded but with launchers of their own, so whatever he was going to do he needed to do fast. The distance continued to narrow, 5km, 3 km... the warning tone of multiple lock ons began to sound in the cockpit, followed by the steady tone of confirmed launches. Three fighters, each having launched a pair of missiles, followed their warheads in to switch to lasers and finish him at close range. He imagined their surprise as he made no evasive actions, forcing all 6 warheads to approach him in a tight cluster and at a narrow angle. Counting down the 30 seconds until their detonation, La’an waited till he hit 20 and fired one of his own missiles – adjusting the warhead to a remote detonation. As his own weapon flew to intercept the 6 he keyed its activation, the early blast of simulated energy taking out the sensors on the incoming projectiles. La’an felt a moment of guilt at exploiting the known weakness of training warheads and their susceptibility to interference, in this case as much due to their own frigates insistence on blanket jamming the area.

Switching to quad bursts he began to fill space ahead of him with energy, subtly twitching the nose to weave a spread of fire across the advancing fighters – two broke away in an instinctive response to the incoming lasers, the last staying the course to get his own confident volley away. La’an hit first, the Interceptor going slack as its systems shorted in response to an exercise kill. Twisting away from his previous course he pursued the nearest TIE, slicing two rapid bursts into its stern and banking away with a satisfied smile as it too went dead. The final fighter proved considerably more difficult to pin down, the sheer erratic nature of its evasive actions enough to throw him off for several seconds. Letting their distance open to a full kilometre he switched to a missile lock and took it out with a single warhead, leaving one left in his magazine.

Snapping into a barrel roll, bringing his fighter around to face the gas giant once again he checked his distances – the lumbering bomber was still on approach at 3km, while the frigate was effectively out of the fight, over 6km away but gaining slowly. The bomber, realising its impending doom, seemed to abandon common sense or any effort to launch its own payload and turned away to close back to

the cover of it's mothership's guns. La'an didn't let it get there, loosing his last missile on a solid lock at 2km. He waited for a positive impact and simply turned the fighter away, picking up speed as he accelerated back towards the outer system. He wasn't going to push his luck any further – if the *Obsidian* had carried out it's duty properly there would be additional units within reach of the system in less than 2 hours. They could take on the frigate if it was stupid enough to hang around, but either way it gave the Warrior a trail to follow.