

Boots on the Ground

This interview is taken from 70 years after the eleventh Great Jedi War. Callus Bo'amar was an Obelisk Exarch serving as Quaestor to House Karness Muur of Clan Plagueis. We have done our best not to lead the subject and just allow his memories to come back naturally there are times where you will see that we did feel the need to ask a question to the subject. It will be denoted as such using asterisks and quotation marks.

I suppose I should start at the beginning because to be fair you know how it all ends.

Callus was still an imposing figure despite the ravages of age. He still did his best to sit tall and carry himself with a strength despite being nearly 100 years old. The man looked like he could still go a few rounds in a bar fight and walk away from it. It was clear that the Force was still with him, radiating from him even though he was most likely trying to mute it.

Korriban was a hellhole before it was drowned in the blood of thousands upon thousands of combatants. For the most part, decent folk - with several notable exceptions including myself - following orders and what their superiors believed was right. Of course that doesn't mean we all bought in wholeheartedly. I'm not saying some didn't, but it just didn't seem right for all them people to die. All because some Sith with a complex decided he was the biggest son of a bantha in the galaxy and some folks disagreed. Like I said though you knew all that before you came here.

It was after Ashen destroyed Antei that we came to Korriban. To be fair we missed all the punches at Antei and for once I'm glad to say I missed out on a fight because the end wasn't worth it. I couldn't believe it when I heard that Ashen had sacrificed thousands of lives for some macabre ritual for immortality. I knew the old lion had been slowly losing his mind, being wrapped up alone in the Force can do that to a guy. Muz felt threatened and that is when a cagey old cat is most dangerous; when his back is to the wall. From all accounts Cotelin isn't much better off, old and worn this conflict will most likely be the death of them both. Even if Ashen is successful at the immortality bid, the real Muz Ashen that I've known will be completely dead.

But you asked about Korriban. It's important to understand that I had been to Korriban before this battle and I hated it back then so the disdain I have for the place now is even more so. At any rate I dropped into Korriban with a load of battle droids, my apprentice and my Aedile - remember at this time I was a Quaestor hard to believe I know - We set down some 20 klicks from the academy the fighting was so intense in the sky above us

I'm surprised we even got that close. Our forces, Plagueis, had set up a decent enough staging area secure enough at least that we didn't get shot just debarking from the shuttle. Other teams had come before us and I could see the remnants of them being lugged around by medical teams and the like. My apprentice, Kelly, hadn't seen anything of the kind before and I could tell just by looking that she was disturbed by it. It's hard to remember back that far but I'm sure I was disturbed the first time I was witness to unabated death and violence, or maybe I wasn't and I was already disturbed not that it matters now. There was something surreal about it, the sounds of the wounded and dying drowned out by the whine of blasters, engines, missiles, it all just turns into white noise when you're out there and the only thing that matters is survival. I'm sorry I keep getting lost hopefully you'll forgive an old man his wandering mind.

Callus coughed and reached for a glass of water, you really could see in his eyes his mind ticking over and searching for the memories of that day. It was fascinating that this man was still alive much less that he could recall the details of one day 70 years ago.

We had one goal, to take the Sith Academy, we could then secure the tomb of Darth Bane and the artifacts there. If it were up to me I would have just slagged the place from orbit but then I guess they didn't put me in charge for a reason. I think we had the best possible position in the conflict as the third wheel so to speak. Ashen and his loyalists had a deep, reciprocated hatred for Cotelin and his rebels so much so that they would take losses from us just to ensure that their adversary also took losses. That's honestly how we ended up winning the war, they were so preoccupied with killing each other they never noticed we were stabbing both of them in the back. So we began our march to the Academy and as soon as we mount a ridge that overlooked the battlefield it was clear that most of the people in this valley would never leave it. I sent our droids ahead with orders to slaughter anything that wasn't affiliated with us. Most Dark Jedi don't think twice about battle droids, but these droids were special designed specifically to deliver efficient slaughter even against Force users. I wasn't worried about the 30 some droids I sent, mostly because I knew they would fight until they couldn't move and that there were hundreds more in reserve. In that regard they are far superior to organic soldiers, they don't question and they don't care about their own lives. No droid tries to be a hero though but then heroes often are just lucky. We went around the long way no one figured 3 Plagueians all alone could do much damage.

Now I'm not trying to toot my own kloo horn here but during this time in my life I was quite the sight. All muscle and the skill to back it up, I could take your ears off with a lightsaber and not even singe the hairs on your head, I was that good. Was I the best? Not by a long shot, at least not for a few more years. Taranae and Kelly, well to be fair I

never expected them to make it through the fight, I just hate that I'm right most of the time. They really did try but when you're out of your depth it is hard to even tread water.

*Callus' eyes seemed to defocus as he stared off into a far off battlefield from decades ago. I prodded him "Callus, what about Kelly and Taranae?"

Oh well you know it's war, you lose people that is just how it happens. Though to be honest I can't confirm either of their deaths just at the end of the day when you don't see them again you assume they're finished. We made our way as stealthily as possible to the academy there was the odd skirmish with some foot soldiers and even the occasional journeyman and low level equite. Not much of a challenge, well at least not enough to write home about. That is until we ducked into a dilapidated tomb for cover, Ajunta Pall maybe? Hard to be sure now. I realized we had been picking up some more attention than I wanted, I had us duck into the tomb thinking it would take some heat off of us, I was wrong. Turns out two Twi'lek Jedi had also decided to hide in the tomb. Ust'essi sisters if memory serves.

My first move upon encountering these Jedi was to send Taranae and Kelly on a head I knew without much study that they didn't stand a chance in this fight. Of course once we were alone they attempted to use their feminine wiles on me, along with a judicious application of the Force. I would have been offended if they hadn't tried something like that. I was happy to disappoint them though. That's not to say they weren't attractive because they were, and then some. A spectacular shade of teal and bodies that could stop traffic, legs that wouldn't quit. Reminds me of a dancer I knew back on Galantos. Ashwaria? Ashmina? What was her name? She moved like flowing water that had the boiling heat of passion. A good kid, shame what happened to her really got mixed up with the Hutts.

I coughed here to try and get Callus back on track.

Ah right well it was about what you'd expect we fought and it was about as ferocious as you would imagine. The details are a bit foggy, so much violence over the years all that's really left are scars.

Callus stood and pulled up his shirt revealing a body marred by scars and age. He searched for a moment and traced a long faded scar that started at his left oblique and tracked upward to a stop under his collar bone.

That was the one they left me with. Could have been bad if it'd been deeper but I was pretty spry back then, you know able to get out of the way a little faster. You know you watch these old holos of Jedi having these lightsaber battles and they are so intricate and perfect examples of form and style it's nothing like that in real life. In a real battle you're trying to kill the other person before they kill you. I have studied all types of lightsaber combat in my life and never once was I taught to strike at someone else's weapon, you aim for their body. I watched some Old Republic holo the other evening and saw them executing perfect form velocities and had to laugh. I did learn the velocities, as did anyone else who studied even rudimentary saber combat but I can't recall ever using them in a real fight. No a real fight you're just trying whatever you can to kill the other person. Even Jedi will go for a killing blow despite their pedantic nature. You'd be surprised at the number of elbows, punches, knees and just pushes happen in a real lightsaber battle. People always describe a lightsaber duel as some sort of 'dance of death' like a 'bloody ballet of battle'. I liken it more to a street fight. One goal, survive. If you go into a lightsaber fight with the intention of winning, you're not in a real fight.

I may not remember every step of that fight but I remember it was a time I really felt that I would end up dead on the floor. Of course there were more times than I would admit mostly because I was stupid and bit off more than I could chew. How I walked away from this one is beyond me, aside from being good with lightsabers these two sisters also had powerful command over the Force. I think I broke a few ribs, definitely a handful of fingers to shatter one of their jaws. When you've got adrenaline and the force running through you though it doesn't matter you can block the pain for the relatively short time these battles last. I can't say for sure but I think this one was over in less than 4 minutes. It all happens so fast, when it's over it is hard to believe that it actually happened. It is like when you realize that everything that has ever happened to you in your life is just a memory and you think how malleable memory is to influences like time and manipulation. I...

We lost Callus here for a moment he sat quietly for a few minutes with his head in his hands trying to reconcile his memory with actual events. You really could tell in his voice and in his eyes that the years had finally caught up with this warrior. There was no mistaking the fact that this man had been ferocious and powerful, his body attested to that but his mind had been just as sharp and that was the hardest part to reconcile for him as well as the interview crew. He was starting to lose that tenuous connection between reality and senility. How easily it could affect people young and old wasn't lost on us. I wanted to end the interview but Callus insisted on continuing.

When it was all over I was slumped against a collapsed statue and the two sisters had run each other through. The wound in my chest was still smoking and I just remember sitting there in the dirt, and dust for several minutes my lightsaber still lit in my hand. I knew despite my injuries that it wasn't over I had a mission to finish but, as with everything in that stupid war, it was never easy. I must have looked dead though because several Arconan troopers entered the tomb and didn't even give me a second look until I was behind them cutting their throats with my boot knife one by one. The poor journeyman leading them, a Kel Dor, didn't have much of a chance. It attacked with an armory blade that I batted away before I wrapped my hand around it's throat and crushed it.

Callus lifted his hand and mimed crushing a throat. His hands seemed to still contain the power to do something like that but the gesture caused him pain. We wondered if that was the hand that he had broken the fingers on one of the Ust'essi sisters. We all urged him to continue his story at this point.

It was rather uneventful to be honest. I hobbled my way to the academy and by the time I got there we had the place secured. I was able to get the necessary medical help from there and that's where the first day of that pointless war ended for me. Sorry it wasn't more interesting. I'm glad you folks are getting this recorded because I probably won't be able to remember myself for much longer should be fun to watch some guy who looks like me talk about something I can barely remember.

We ended our interview here. Despite protestations we could tell that Callus was tired, not just from the time but mentally having to dig into his memory that far to recall events from 70 years ago. We did spend about an hour more with the man just talking.