**“Just a Small Skirmish”
by Dante
#2407**

**Ruins of the Sith Academy
Korriban**

The weathered solider looked through his viewers and scanned from side to side over the ruined landscape. Even after all of these years, the surface of the planet bore the scars of destructive battles that had long ago ended the Sith Empire. His unit was hunkered down along one of the many cracks and crevices surrounding the Sith Academy. Trained by him, they were ready for this battle as they would ever be, but only time would tell would become of them.

All around them, the battle was being joined by dozens of units from those loyal to the Grand Master, the rebels led by the former Grand Master, the trash from the One Sith, and, finally, those under some crackpot named Esoteric. The whole thing was convoluted, but his unit was loyal to the Iron Throne and would continue to be until they met their deaths.

In the distance, Colyn, or “Tusken” as he was called by those due to his time spent on Tatooine, could see the approach of a flight of enemy craft. As they approached, he could barely make out the insignia painted on their matte black hulls. “Scholae is sending in a batch of troops against us it looks like” he said to his commo officer. “Pass the word that they will be here in a few minutes, and we need to be ready to try and contain them to their landing zone.”

His men were armed to the teeth and clad in their trademark sand trooper uniforms. As the word spread throughout the ranks of the incoming attack, they readied their weapons and looked towards the sky.

**90th Imperial Legion
MAAT’s incoming towards the Sith Academy**

Dante readied his gear and checked the gear of the men who were aboard the same MAAT with him. The pre-battle check happened as it always had for the hundreds of combat missions that he had performed over the years. This was just the next in an ever-increasing number of missions, but the commander of the Imperial Scholae Guard was ready for this one. He had a bone to pick with those loyal to the current Grand Master due to the death of his father, and this would put the rebels one step closer to overthrowing Ashen.

The crew chief of the MAAT looked back towards the troop compartment and said “Time to go…” as they approached the LZ at an almost mind bending pace.

Rappelling down from the low flying MAAT’s, the Tough ‘Ombres were immediately set upon by the highly trained forces under the command of “Tusken” Skybender.

Blaster fire filled the air as incoming bolts poured down from the enemy positions as Dante’s troopers returned fire from their beleaguered LZ’s as the rest of the squadron of a dozen MAAT’s dropped off the remaining platoons of highly trained assault infantrymen.

Tusken smelled blood as his battalion continued their assault against the enemy forces. It looked like one of his platoons was about to overrun a small group of pinned down troopers until one of the gray armor clad troopers suddenly ignited a purple lightsaber and began slicing his way through Tusken’s men. That had to be the enemy commander as he knew that their leader was a Dark Jedi who had worked with the Army of the Iron Throne on a number of occasions. Clicking his commlink, he said “Command… Tusken here… I’m taking Grek and Krenth platoons out of reserve and moving to take out the enemy commander.”

The higher level commander said “Caution is wise, Tusken… but proceed. Command Out.”

Moving quickly down the side of the ravine, Tusken and the reserve platoons headed towards the break in his lines that had suddenly appeared. They took positions around a small outcropping of rocks that providing some cover and began laying down heavy suppressive fire on the Palatinae forces.

Victory was in his grasp, Tusken thought to himself as his men closed in on the now pinned down commander of the Scholae Guard. “Tusken here… all forces concentrate fire on the enemy command position.”

Hundreds of blasters let loose an intense barrage on the two companies of the 90th Legion who had been dropped off a few minutes before. Their dead and dying were being used by the men at the LZ’s as cover, and their position had become almost impossible to maintain.

Tusken decided it was time. “All forces…. Commence assault on enemy position. It is time to end this now” said Tusken as he moved forward and yelled “Attack!”

His forces left their positions and began a measured advance on Dante’s troopers. Their intense fire managed to keep the Tough ‘Ombres pinned down for the most part, but it was almost too easy.

Suddenly, he realized why it seemed that way, as the MAAT’s returned and began laying down their own close air support upon the now uncovered enemy forces. In addition, the AT-XT’s of the 90th’s armored battalion had finally arrived with the additional two companies of infantry. Dozens of the armored mechs had been dropped off by squadrons of LAAT/c’s just out of visual range of the enemy, and they had made their way through a nearby ravine undetected until they were called upon by Dante to engage the enemy.

Tusken realized his error just as a mortar round impacted almost directly on him and sent his torn body flying through the air. The rest of his forces met the same fate as the heavy firepower of the combined arms unit of the Imperial Scholae Guard cut their way through Tusken’s desert infantry unit.

The calculated attack had demolished the Loyalist unit beyond repair, but the price had been steep for the attackers as well.

“Just a small skirmish,” murmured Dante as he stood over the body of the enemy commander and looked out over the ravine where hundreds of dead or wounded enemy soldiers and Scholae troopers lay. He looked over at his command warrant office and said “Let’s go… get them ready to move out.”